



VOX OCEANA

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DEAN'S MESSAGE

"Life is a shipwreck but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats." –Voltaire

Vacation time and Spring Break are here or just around the corner, and people from all walks of life are making their travel preparations. I have always been fascinated with travel which led me to a career as a commercial pilot. But rather than taking to the skies I will be traveling by sea. Today, the enormous cruise ships appeal to many people, but I am not part of that group. I prefer the Ocean Liner such as the Queen Mary 2 or the decommissioned QE2. Cruise Ships such as the Allure or Oasis of the Seas for me are nothing more than a city on the water and lack the personal touches and romanticism of a liner. I wondered if the organ, when it was still popular as a form of entertainment as well as for services, made it aboard an ocean liner. I found out:

The HMHS (His Majesty's Hospital Ship) Britannic was the sister ship to Olympic and Titanic, but had been redesigned upon the sinking of the Titanic to alter the short-comings of that ship uncovered by the disaster of 1912. Britannic was first known as Gigantic but the name was changed as it was a reminder of Titanic. However, all three sister ships would still end with "ic". The third and only decommissioned sister ship was named Olympic. The Britannic was designed with more lifeboats and a much stronger hull making it even more "unsinkable" (no less than three hours to submerge) yet the ship managed to go down even faster than Titanic. In fact Britannic sank in 55 minutes, less than half the time of Titanic. Research shows that Britannic hit a mine placed by German UB73.

Britannic was commissioned originally as an Ocean Liner for the White Star Line which would later merge with Cunard after suffering major financial losses. Her construction began in 1913 but when World War I broke out, Britannic was requisitioned by the British Government as a hospital ship.

The most interesting amenity on board this luxury liner was a large pipe organ manufactured by the Welte Organ Company, Germany. This organ was removed during the transition from ocean liner to hospital ship and returned to Welte. Approximately five years passed without mention of the whereabouts of this organ until 1920 when it was purchased by Dr. August Nagel, who had it installed in his home in Stuttgart, Germany. When Dr. Nagel sold his home, the organ was once again returned to Welte. The organ sat in storage until 1937 when Dr. Eugen Kersting bought the organ for his electronics manufacturing company, Radium Lampenwerke. The Welte Organ Company had fitted all their organs with the use of roll players if an organist was not present. This allowed Kersting to have the organ played for his employees located in the assembly rooms.



In 1969, the Swiss Museum for Music Automats bought the organ from Radium and appointed Werner Bosch, organ builder for Welte, to maintain the organ. One year later the organ was officially inaugurated, accompanied by a gift of 1200 rolls by Bosch. In 1998, the organ was once again dismantled and restored completely by 2006. During this undertaking the original woodwork inscribed for Britannic was found. This confirmed its intentions for use on this luxury liner.

Note: Above is the only known photograph of the Welte Organ installed on the Britannic.

EVENTS

Sunday, March 4, 3:30 pm: The **Providence Singers** presents Benjamin Britten's epic *War Requiem* blending traditional Latin Requiem texts with the battlefield poetry of WWI soldier, Wilfred Owen. Features 300 musicians including New England Philharmonic, Chorus pro Musica, the Boston Children's Chorus, and vocal soloists **Sarah Pelletier, Frank Kelley** and **Sumner Thompson**. Tickets: \$32; groups of 6+: \$26. Students free with ID. For tickets: www.providencesingers.org or 401-751-5700 for group sales. Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul, Weybosset and Fenner Streets, Providence.

Sunday, March 18, 4:00 pm: Mark Steinbach, Brown University Organist, will perform Johannes Brahms' *Prelude and Fugue in g minor*, Anton Heiller's *Passacaglia in c* and *Vesper* on the 1903 Hutchings-Votey organ. He will be joined by acclaimed baritone **Andrew Garland** for Gustav Mahler's *Rückertlieder* transcribed for organ and voice. Sayles Hall, Brown University, (865-3234), handicapped accessible; admission free.

Sunday, April 15, 4:00 pm: Gala inaugural organ recital and reception introducing the new 3-manual Rodgers Allegiant 698 instrument. Four guest recitalists, **Diana Norton-Jackson, Kevin DiLorenzo, Philip Faraone** and **Stephen Martorella** will play wide-ranging repertoire, including improvisations by the artists. Greenwood Community Church, Presbyterian, 805 Main Ave, Warwick.

SUMMER IN SWITZERLAND

Betty Maisonnat, organist, Lyon, France sends information about an organ summer course in Switzerland coupled with a competition for a composition prize. Information and form: www.orgues-et-cimes.org. Printed leaflets are available on request; email: betty.maisonnat@orgues-et-cimes.org. Deadline is June 30. (*The information is in French.*)

TRAVEL WITH PHILIP

From Philip Faraone:

Dear Friends,

Many of you know that I have retired from teaching at Cranston High School West. Since then, I have been asked by Travel Leaders (Garden City) to host a tour to Italy, including Florence, Rome, Lake Como, Assisi, Milan and other cities. After working on the arrangements for several months, the time has come to announce this wonderful tour. The tour leaves on Labor Day and is for 11 days and 9 nights, departing from Logan Airport with transportation to and from the airport. First class hotels, breakfast and dinner each day (including wine with dinner). Contact Philip at 401-323-8600.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Brenda Muoio, 2 Potter Court, Coventry, RI 02816.

Donald Dame, 1259 Hartford Pike, North Scituate, RI 02857; 647-4654 donaldduck147@verizon.net. He is organist/music director at St. Joseph Church Hope Street, Providence. 421-9137.

CONDOLENCES

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of **Helen Miller**, former Dean of RIAGO and organist for many years at Pawtucket Congregational Church. In the 1990s, Helen was the moving force behind a series of annual concerts in the Blackstone Valley involving choirs from the area representing many denominations in a joint effort to raise funds for a local homeless shelter. She died on February 23. A Memorial Service is being planned. Tentative date is March 17. Members will receive details by e-mail as plans are finalized, or may consult the RIAGO website. Our condolences go to Betsy Miller and the rest of Helen's family.

A MEMOIR OF MY MUSICAL LIFE

by BRIAN LARKIN

PART 8

Very early on in the history of the Conference, the old schedules that I have indicate that both George and Nancy Faxon were giving lectures. George's were always along the lines of a "fireside" chat—full of good humor and practical advice. Nancy's engaging southern drawl was often imitated by the likes of a young Tom Murray, but all kidding aside, she was full of wise advice from a long career as a composer and a treasure trove of "insider" information thanks to her travels with George. She was a delightful conversationalist at post conference parties, and years later when I was running the Conference, she would show up with wonderful jars of orange marmalade made from dwarf fruit grown in her home in Chestnut Hill.

George was always fun to be with. I always wanted to learn Dupre's *Variations on a Noel* and at one of these parties, he told me we'd have a lesson on it. "It's all very simple you see...nothing but a bag of tricks." To this day, I struggle with it. We never did have that lesson and I fail to see that much of the score is in the "trick" department. His sense of humor and timing was priceless. He often opened a lecture with his definition of an "expert"... anybody they bring in from more than twelve miles out of town... the further out of the town the better, the further distance bestowing more "expertness" to the visitor. I still use that line myself

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LARKIN continued

and always get a laugh. We may not have had that lesson in the Noel, but George did, over the years, pass on to me numerous scores of old music I was after, some of it original and some in his own "attic edition" reprints. These he did with a Xerox machine, scotch tape and a sewn binding with distinctive board covers. I treasure them still. When he gave me a copy of Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* he told me not to bother trying to play it alone. The reference was to Anthony Newman's celebrated recording at the time. George said "he had help." He did share with me several scores that Clarence Snyder had brought from Longwood Gardens when he was organist for the Duponts. Some even have the library numbering on the covers.

George used to kid Hollis about all the stolen stuff in his house in Little Compton. The house was a converted barn at the corner of Shore Road and Grange Ave. Hollis and Hazel had worked on it for years, decorating it with mementoes of their world travels, gifts from friends and things Hollis had salvaged from various locations. The house had fabulous gardens and a fairytale interior of mahogany paneled rooms, oriental carpets and all manner of choice bric-a-brac. Over the years he passed a lot of things on to me, and his style and taste obviously rubbed off. Our gardens even now reflect Hollis's influence and feature items that came from the house in Little Compton. There were paintings given him by John Nicholas Brown, bronzes, books and architectural details both in and outside the house gleaned from several mansions on Providence's Eastside that were razed in the 1950s. One he often mentioned was the Gambrell house near St. Stephen's. Faxon used to say that Hollis's place was like the Smithsonian. Among several things I still have from Hollis is an alms box that apparently was on a wall in St. Stephen's many ages ago. It hangs in my back hall and I replaced the word "Alms" with a prim sign that announced "College Fund." One night George was leaving by the side door and I spied him looking at the box. He fished in his pocket and put something into the coin slit, patted the lid and went out with Nancy. The next morning I remembered the incident, opened the box and there was a twenty dollar bill!

Excerpted from Brian Larkin's wide-ranging recollections as an organist. We thank him for sharing. —The Editor

PLACEMENT LISTING

Contact Brian Larkin (272-8318) for more details or changes.

Newport Presbyterian 11/11
Everett St., Newport
Janet Jones: 401-683-6438
Tony Ruggiero: 401-847-4223
O/ChM Negotiable 1975 3 m Casavant

First Baptist Attleboro (American Baptist) 12/11
118 South Main St, Attleboro, MA 02703
Linda Snyder, interim pastor: 203-927-5387
O/ChM Austin 1925/1975 Call Brian Larking for salary info

St Augustin (RC) 2/12
Eastnor Rd, Newport, RI
Kyle Medeiros: 401-816-0079; 401-855-5585
O/ChM Negotiable 3m Rodgers Trillium

SUBSTITUTE LISTINGS

Contact Brian Larkin (272-8318) with changes.

AVAILABLE SUNDAYS & WEEKDAYS

Brown, Ronald: 508-222-0824 (please inquire)
Clarke, Margaret: 401-726-4128 (all)
Dupont, Jean-Richard: 401-434-8476 (all, no weddings/choirs)
Funk, Richard: 401-272-0693 (all)
Gourd, Jacqueline: 401-828-4057 (all, no weddings)
Kohl, Karen: 401-787-2695
Larkin, Brian: 401-272-8318 (all, interim, consultant)
Norton-Jackson, Diana: 401-783-0402 (no RC or weddings, \$150 min)
Phelps, Howard: 508-224-8475 (no RC)
Scheibert, Beverly Jerold: 508-339-0579 (all, weddings/funerals)
Tagen, Julia L.: 401-885-7438 (all)
Taylor, Terry: 401-253-9030 (No RC, pipe organ only)
Wiant, William: 401-683-3178 (all, weddings/funerals)

AVAILABLE WEEKDAYS ONLY

Bush, Brink: 401-245-4065 (weddings, funerals)
Cienniwa, Paul: 508-676-8483 (\$150 min)
Conboy, Lois: 401-658-3838
Hart, Kathy: 401-837-8873 (funerals, no RC)
Markham, Susan: 401-821-6786
Martorella, Philip: 401-885-3431 (weddings, funerals)
Nicholson, Nancy: 401-521-9097 (no Sunday AM)
Nolan, Robert: 401-884-7172 (weddings, funerals, non-Sun. services)
Sobaje, Martha: 401-626-0099 (weddings, funerals, no RC)
Westhaver, Verna: 401-683-2636 (midweek only/no RC)

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline: 20th of each month
Submissions: Send Word or Text files to aallard@ccri.edu or to Althea Allard, 166 Suffolk Ave., Pawtucket, RI 02861.
Advertising: Word doc, PDF (print ready), JPG (high resolution), TIFF, or EPS. All files should be grayscale at 300 dpi resolution. Email to camacphee@gmail.com.

ADVERTISING RATES

1/4-page ad (3.5"W x 5"H): \$18
1/8-page ad (3.5"W x 2.5"H): \$10
Flyers you provide (for RIAGO members): \$10
Make checks out to RIAGO and mail to Althea Allard by the 20th.