



# VOX OCEANA

OCTOBER 2011

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS | VOLUME XLIV, NO. 8

## RI CHAPTER OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENTS 2011-2012

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## MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

2012  
Kathy Hart: 837-8873  
Philip Martorella: 885-3431

2013  
Joe Gama: 942-6144  
Jean-Richard DuPont: 434-8476

2014  
Margaret Clark: 726-4128  
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[www.riago.org](http://www.riago.org)

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## FROM THE DEAN

*"Enlightenment must come little by little—otherwise it would overwhelm"* –Shah, Idries

Practice can be stressful for me. Perhaps it is the same for you. Others who do not find it stressful may ask why. There are three contributing factors that cause stress during practice. First, I realize that there is a deadline: the performance. Second, I may find myself frozen on a particular measure. Third, the anticipation of learning the music is exciting. When I combine all of these elements, my body and mind become a tangled web of emotions and sensations.

I strive to perform quality music branded with my signature and style. This goal requires me to take small steps and be patient. Indeed, new music must be mastered little by little. It is similar to reading and understanding a book. If I race through the music, my chances of detecting nuances and inner voices are dramatically reduced. This is much like failing to identify a book's character traits and personality. If I look at a lengthy piece, I can easily be overwhelmed. I counteract this tendency by treating the music like a book. I read the title, followed by the composer's prologue or introduction and then look for any repeating themes or sequences. I do this when on a plane, train or automobile ride.

A common lesson from my teachers has been to write in the proper fingering and pedaling. Fingering and pedaling principles vary with the "school" and are subject to criticism. The purpose of learning proper fingering and pedaling is to achieve organization and physical ease with the added benefit of clarity. I look for music without an editor's fingering or pedaling. The editor may use a different technique than I was taught, and my fingers are not clones of his or hers, so an editor's fingering may feel awkward. I pencil in the fingering and pedaling that is comfortable for me and trust my technique. I use the same fingering and pedaling on repeated sequences. This simplifies learning and reduces confusion.

I take great pride in my tonal registrations. However, I do not add any tonal color when I practice. I use the basic 8' 4' 2' Principal or Diapason. I want to hear any mistakes or inner voices immediately. As I progress through the piece I pencil in registrations that may sound good for that section. The debate continues over Bach and the resources that were available during his lifetime. I feel that if Bach was alive today he would have drawn on the mammoth organ and tone colors available. Bach would have used a Celeste and the Swell Shade.

I practice only when I am ready. I cannot force myself to learn music. When I am distracted and unable to concentrate I take care of what is distracting me and then return to the console, physically and mentally prepared. I memorize all music with registrations and cues. This is a natural gift for me but only comes if I practice. I am a horrible sight-reader, so learning new music is hard for me. During practice, I learn from my mistakes. I practice slowly and carefully so I am not overwhelmed. Practice may not always make perfect, but it's the best way to approach perfection.

–Kevin

## EVENTS

**Sunday, October 2, 5:00 pm:** Choirs of St. Paul's, Wickford, **Mark Steinbach**, Director, present Festival Choral Evensong to celebrate the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels at St. Paul's Church, 55 Main Street, Wickford. Reception follows. Free. Handicapped accessible. 294-4357

**Sunday, October 2, 5:30 pm:** Solemn Evensong and Benediction - Feast of St Michael and All Angels (transferred) will be celebrated at St. Stephen's Church, 114 George Street, Providence. 421-6702 – Offering works of Thomas Tomkins, Jacob Handl, and Herbert Howells sing by the Choir of Men and Boys, Parish of All Saints', Ashmont, Boston. **Andrew Sheranian**, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

**Sunday, October 16, 2:00 pm: Mychal Gendron** in *Impressions for Guitar*, a recital of lyrical and intimate classical guitar music featuring compositions by Leo Brouwer, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Yuquijiro Yocoh, Bernard Piris and Astor Piazzolla. The First Baptist Church in America, 75 North Main Street, Providence. Free admission; donations accepted.

**Sunday, October 23, 5:30 pm:** Memorial Organ Recital. **James Busby**, Organist and Choirmaster. *Messa delli Apostoli* - Girolamo Frescobaldi-Joseph Bonnet with The Men of the Schola Cantorum; *Chamber Sonata II* (1995) - James Woodman with **Tobias Andrews**, French Horn; *Fantasie und Fuga Über den Choral "Ad nos, ad salutarum undam"* - Franz Liszt. St. Stephen's Church, 114 George Street, Providence; 421-6702. Offering.

**Sunday, October 30, 3:00 pm: Geoffrey Greene** plays music of Bach, Nelson, and Alain at Newman Congregational Church, 100 Newman Avenue, Rumford. \$5 donation; reception. (See enclosed flyer.)

**Sunday, November 20, 2:00 pm:** Music at Trinity presents bass-baritone **Michael Pelletier**, pianist **James Busby**, and cellist **Matthew Knippel** in songs from Fauré to Leonard Bernstein. Hawes Room of Trinity Church, Queen Anne Square, Newport, RI. Tickets: \$20; \$18 Senior; \$8 student. (401) 846-0660; [www.trinitynewport.org](http://www.trinitynewport.org).

**The Boston chapter AGO will sponsor organ virtuoso Joan Lippincott in two events:**

**Saturday, November 12, 10:00 am - 12 noon:** Masterclass on hymn playing, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 16 Great Road, Sudbury. Co-sponsored with the Worcester Chapter. Attendees are welcome to play. 1988 J. W. Walker organ. Free admission.

**Sunday, November 13, 4:00 pm:** Organ recital, Parish of All Saints, Ashmont, 209 Ashmont Street, Dorchester. (Around the corner from the MBTA Red Line's Ashmont Station; church is handicapped-accessible.) \$20 general admission; \$15 students, seniors, AGO members. Music of Ned Rorem, Bach's *Passacaglia*, Mozart's *Fantasia in F Minor*, K. 608; Liszt's *B.A.C.H.*; Jehan Alain's *Trois Danses*. 1995 C. B. Fisk organ

## INVITATION FROM THE DEAN

As Dean, I feel strongly about supporting Guild members. I would like to observe you in your own environment whether at a Service/Mass or a rehearsal. These visits are not meant to be adjudication or threatening, but a way to gain insight for your benefit and that of other members in similar circumstances. Please set up your date by email [kdilorenzo@riago.org](mailto:kdilorenzo@riago.org) or telephone 401-524-4484.

## CIENNIWA BUSIER THAN EVER

RIAGO's own **Paul Cienniwa** apparently didn't take a summer vacation and he has a lot to show for it:

- A 2-CD set of music by Larry Thomas Bell, is set for winter release on Albany Records.
- An article, "Dear Harpsichordists, Why Don't We Play From Memory?" in the September issue of The Diapason, focuses on the decision to perform concerts from memory and encourages other concert harpsichordists to do the same.
- An arrangement for SATB choir of a work by Francois Couperin, a vocal setting of the first Kyrie from Couperin's *Messe pour les convents* will be published by Thorpe Music Publishing Company.
- In the works: A first solo CD, *Harpsichord Music for a Thin Place*, featuring works by Bach, Bell, Byrd, F. Couperin, L. Couperin, Forqueray, Froberger, Rameau and Sweelinck.

# A MEMOIR OF MY MUSICAL LIFE

by BRIAN LARKIN

*The following is excerpted from Brian Larkin's response to a request from his family and friends to share some of his wide-ranging recollections as an organist. Many readers will recall with him some of the people, events, and places that figure in his evolution from student to director of St. Dunstan's Summer School for Church Musicians. We thank him for sharing and hope to publish segments periodically.*

—The Editor

## PART 4

St. Dunstan's College of Sacred Music was the dream child of John Nicholas Brown and a group of visionary men who gave it life, if ever so brief. As a college it has a charter which is still in effect and the corporation meets periodically. When I retired as director of the Conference, I urged the corporation never to let the charter slip out of their control since the state legislature would never grant the broad powers that St. Dunstan's College has. The property was on Benefit St. near St. John's Cathedral. The plan was to assemble a world class faculty to train students in the organ performance and the choral arts. Charles Winfred Douglas, one of the original faculty, edited the now famous and rare St. Dunstan's Editions of anthems and settings of plain chants. He wrote "He Who Would Valiant Be" – the tune called *St. Dunstan's*.

The students were to take their courses in music at St. Dunstan's and their other credits at Brown. The set-up was reciprocal with Brown students. This in 1929 was deemed "a work of far sighted genius" by the newspapers of the time. In addition to Douglas, early documents indicate that Lynwood Farnum, then organist at Holy Communion in New York, along with a young E. Power Biggs were tapped as advisors and visiting faculty. It was a grand plan and the college had a brief shining moment before the stock market crash in October of 1929. I have some course catalogs dating from 1932 but it appears the college closed soon thereafter while the boys' choir school continued to flourish for many years, supplying choirs to a number of Episcopal churches in the diocese.

Enter into this saga, young Hollis E. Grant. Mr. Brown took Hollis under wing and made arrangements for him to archive his personal library while taking courses at Brown. Hollis used to say he was always worried he wouldn't graduate because his work archiving Brown's

collection necessitated his skipping some required physical education classes, notably swimming. There's a lengthy anecdote about his "final exam" in swimming. In a nutshell, all he had to do was put on his trunks and appear at poolside to pass. Mr. Brown took care of dismissing the requirement for graduation and Hollis went on to gain untold skills in art conservation, antiques and books. By then he was already a talented musician and along with a friend, George Faxon, the two sat at the feet of a great musical mentor, Everett Titcomb in Boston. Titcomb, a prolific composer, had much to do with Hollis's arranging skills later. Faxon of course went on to fame as a recitalist and legendary teacher at Boston University. So Hollis was there from the beginning and a natural to get involved in John Nicholas Brown's many projects, especially musical ones. Brown's affection for Hollis was clearly evidenced when the Browns asked Hollis to be godfather to their son, Nicky, later director of the National Aquarium. Another son and friend was Carter, former head of the National Galleries in Washington. Hollis moved in rarefied circles and I was always happy to tag along when invited.

While the college plan languished, the choir school for boys was located at the two houses on the northwest corner of Church and Benefit Streets. This was an Episcopal Choir school with grades 1-9 that provided boy choristers for St Martin's Church on the East Side and Grace Church downtown. I'm not sure when it closed but it was certainly by the mid 1960s. The property was sold and the papers and archives were moved to the University of Rhode Island where they can now be accessed on line. The trustees of the corporation, which still included many of the founders, invested the proceeds from the sale. The name and charter for the private school was bought by a separate corporation to found another school on the East Side, still often confused with the original choir school on Benefit Street.

It was the mid to late 60s when this second school attempted to sue for control of the investments of the College. Brown and his trustees bristled at the thought and knew they had to do something with the money rather than allow it to accrue interest indefinitely. John Brown called on his old friend, Hollis Grant for ideas, and along with George Faxon and several other interested parties, conceived the plan to start a sacred music conference that would meet perhaps for a day or two once a year. Who could foresee how that idea would evolve!

## PLACEMENT LISTING

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

First Congregational Church of Sharon, MA (UCC) 3/11  
29 N Main St., Sharon, MA 02067

Martha MacMillin: 781-784-2631; 781-784-1816

Children's choir D/O \$300wk/10 months Roche

Brian Larkin has more details if interested: [brianlarkin1@cox.net](mailto:brianlarkin1@cox.net)/  
401-272-8318

St. Anthony's RC Church 3/11

2836 East Main Rd, Portsmouth, RI 02871

Fr. Daniel Gray: 401-683-0089

Organist full/part time Salary Open Rodgers

## FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Yale Institute of Sacred Music has recently established the ISM Fellows in Sacred Music, Worship, and the Arts. The Institute seeks a group of fellows to join its community of scholars and practitioners for a one-year term to pursue their scholarly or artistic projects within a vibrant, interdisciplinary community.

Applications for the 2012-2013 academic year are now open. For successful applicants, the ISM will provide:

- A stipend of up to \$52,000
- Suitable housing during their fellowship year in New Haven
- Funds for travel to New Haven (up to \$5,000)
- Research funds
- The opportunity to teach (with additional compensation according to academic rank and experience)

Fellows will be chosen for the quality and significance of their work, and project proposals should relate to the mission of the Institute. For complete information on the fellowship, please visit [www.yale.edu/ism/fellows](http://www.yale.edu/ism/fellows), or email the Fellows Coordinator, Glen Segger, at [ismfellows@yale.edu](mailto:ismfellows@yale.edu).

## SUBSTITUTE LISTINGS

Contact Brian Larkin (272-8318) with changes.

### AVAILABLE SUNDAYS & WEEKDAYS

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)

Westhaver, Verna: 401-683-2636 (all, interim)

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)

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)

Tagen, Julie: 401-885-7438 (weddings, funerals)

## NEW ORGAN FOR LOCAL CHURCH

From Kathy Hart: Greenwood Presbyterian in Warwick, RI, is purchasing a new Rodgers 3-manual Allegiant 698 organ. The congregation raised almost the full purchase price in a month, and the organ should be installed by Thanksgiving. Check it out at: <http://www.rodgersinstruments.com/rodgersOrgans/allegiant>

### SUBMISSIONS

Deadline: 20th of each month

Submissions: Send Word or Text files to [aallard@ccri.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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.