



Central Arkansas Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

www.cacago.org

The
Clarion
August 2011

Mission Statement

The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members.

2010-2011 Officers

Richard Hixson, *dean*
Wayne Simpson, *sub-dean*
Jess Anthony, *treasurer*
Betty Anderson, *secretary*

Executive Committee

Jo Lee Fleming
Conner McMains
Adam Savacool

Committees

Program

Wayne Simpson
Bill Fox

Membership

Bill Fox

Financial

Larry & Molly Kircher

Clarion Editor

Adam Savacool

Professional Concerns

Lynn Payette

Historian

Betty Deislinger

Reporter

Jess Anthony

Publicity

Betty Cohen

Telephone

Virginia Strohmeyer-Miles

Dinner Reservations

Marian Berry

From the Dean

I believe it is fair to say that we find ourselves deep in the dog days of summer. Sirius is basking close to the sun and the heat index today (according to channel 7) is to be 115 degrees. Folks are short of breath, short of temper, and short of time. Therefore, if we expect choristers and parishioners to show up and cheerfully give of their time and talents we must offer something exemplary. We must be punctual if we expect others to be. For example, just starting three minutes late in rehearsal with a group of twenty has wasted an hour collectively. Ten minutes yields three and one-third hours, etc. If we are not well prepared, cheerful, and excited how can we expect anyone else to be? Are we actually offering something that challenges and excites the intellect? Is it appropriate liturgically? Have we allotted enough rehearsal time so that we are not frustrated and snippy? Rehearsal and performance should actually be fun. People

have to look forward to it to put it on their schedules. We actually are supposed to minister to our singers. By some miracle most are very loyal and forgiving, but we are working for them. Together we make the worship experience more transcendent.

Please note that our Sub-Dean, Wayne Simpson, has out done himself once again in programming a season that most major metropolitan chapters have not matched. We owe him a great debt of gratitude. We also owe the members that donate each month to the program fund and the angels that sponsor artists each year a very special THANK YOU!

I also wish to thank each member and their church that has agreed to host a meeting this coming year. The upcoming programs will be announced soon.

"Make a Joyful Noise All Ye Lands!"

WRH

Opening Service and Installation of Officers

Our opening service and installation of officers will take place September 9 at Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church. The service will feature Rev. Karen Akin, Associate Pastor of Second Presbyterian Church as speaker and worship leader.

Worship leaders will include Tracy DePue (Director of Worship, Music, and Arts at St. James United Methodist Church) and Allan Pieroni (Director of Music and Organist at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew).

Music will be led by the Holy Souls Parish Choir under the direction of Fred

Graham (Music Director and Organist). Organists will include Robert Lindley (Organist at St. James United Methodist Church), Adam Savacool (Organist at Second Presbyterian Church), and Fred Graham.

CACAGO officers for 2011-2012 will be installed by Craig Chotard (Organist-Choirmaster at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church). The festival service will be open to the public—churches and choirs are invited to attend.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Friday, September 9, 2011

Opening Service

Installation of Officers for 2011-2012

Punchbowl — 6:15 P.M.

Dinner and Meeting — 6:45 P.M.

Program — 8:00 P.M.

Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church
1003 N. Tyler St.
Little Rock, Arkansas

The cost for dinner is \$10.00. For dinner reservations, contact Marian Berry via email (dinner@cacago.org) or phone (501) 663-1693. Marian is accepting reservations until noon on Wednesday, September 7. Your reservation will be confirmed via phone or email. If you do not receive a confirmation, please contact Marian to assure your reservation has been received.

Results of Annual Election

The annual election of officers was held May 13, 2011 at First Presbyterian Church in Little Rock.

The 2011-2012 Officers are:

Wm Richard Hixson, *dean*

Wayne E. Simpson III, *sub-dean*

Mike Metzler, *secretary*

Jess Anthony, *treasurer*

Bob Bidewell was elected as member-at-large to the Executive Committee. The new officers will be installed at the September meeting.

Yearbook Advertising

The Advertising Committee would like to ask the chapter members to consider purchasing a \$20 greeting in the upcoming CACAGO yearbook. Also, please consider asking your church or business to purchase an ad for the yearbook. All of the ad revenue collected stays in the chapter and helps fund our programs. The form is available on the website (www.cacago.org). If you purchase an ad, please notify one of the members of the Advertising Committee:

Elizabeth Plowman, Chair

(eplow@aristotle.net)

Bob Bidewell

(bbidewell@sbcglobal.net)

Betty Anderson

(elizabeanderso6647@att.net)

Betty Cohen

(bettylc@conwaycorp.net)

The deadline for submitting advertising is Friday, August 26.

Membership Renewal

If you have not already renewed your membership for the upcoming year, please do so as soon as possible. As all Memberships expire as of July 1st, the earlier you get yours in to the Treasurer, the less chance you have of your subscription to The American Organist being discontinued. And the earlier it gets returned to us, the easier it is for our Treasurer to process it and get the information off to the New York Office. The renewal form, along with a letter from Bill Fox, Membership Committee Chair, is available on the website (www.cacago.org). Please note, you only need to print out the very last page of the form to return with your check to the Chapter PO Box.

Yearbook Entries

If there have been any changes in your contact information or employment since you renewed your membership, please send them to David Scribner (yearbook@cacago.org) so that he can incorporate them into our yearbook.

Program Calendar

Our Program Committee has worked very hard over the summer, planning another year of excellent programs for us. The final details are being arranged now, and then the programs will be approved by the Executive Committee. The schedule for the rest of the year will be announced in the September Clarion.

Thank You!

The following members have joined or renewed their memberships as of July 30

Betty Anderson
Don & Lynda Anderson
Jess Anthony
David Beckius
Nathan Beethe
Bob Bidewell
Frank Block
Steven Bullock
James Cathey
John Churchwell
Betty Cohen
Betty Deislinger
Ansley Fleming
Jo Fleming
Bill Fox
Stephen Garner

David Glaze
Fred Graham
Robert Green
Keith Hearnberger
Pat Henry
Richard Hixson
Ann W. Johnston
Linda Dale Kennedy
Robert Lindley
Barbara Lusk
Jim Maase
Carol Majors
Kay McAfee
William E. McCandless
Mike Metzler
Bert O. Miller

Michael Monnikendam
Becky Newberry
C. Joseph Nichols
Morris Parker
Rees Roberts
Joe Santo
Adam Savacool
Sally Sedlow
John Senner
Bill Shepherd
Margaret Shook
Wayne E. Simpson III
Virginia Strohmeier-Miles
William Trantham
Ralph Wilcox
Trevis Young

David Baskeyfield wins competition

David Baskeyfield has won First Prize and Audience Prize in the 2011 St. Albans International Competition, and Second Prize in the Pipeworks Festival: Dublin International Organ Competition.

David Baskeyfield is a doctoral student at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. He was organ scholar at St John's College, Oxford, where he read Law. After a year as organ scholar at both Anglican cathedrals in Dublin, he began a Master's at Eastman and now continues in the studio of David Higgs, studying improvisation with William Porter. In 2010 he won first and audience

prize at the Miami International Organ Competition, first prize at the Mader organ competition, Los Angeles, and first and audience prize at the AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation. Active as an accompanist and continuo player, he also enjoys frequent access to the large Wurlitzer organ in the Auditorium Theatre downtown and has been elected to the Board of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society.

David was our recitalist, this past April, for the Eighth Annual Organ Recital Celebrating the Life of Robert Young Ellis.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 15, 7:30 P.M.

Little Rock Chamber Music Society
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Sunday, September 18

Monday, September 19

Thursday, September 22

River City Men's Chorus
Trinity United Methodist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Sunday, September 25

Organ Recital: Nigel Potts
Trinity Episcopal Church
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Unusual Perception and Depth from Organist Laube

by Brian Jones

This week the Boston Chapter of the AGO (American Guild of Organists) is hosting one of its “Pipe Organ Encounters,” programs designed for young, aspiring organists. The course is chockablock with concerts, visits to organ shops, master classes, private lessons and myriad other offerings. Sunday evening, the opening concert at the First Church of Christ, Scientist (often called “The Mother Church”) featured twenty- three-year-old Nathan Laube, playing the splendid Aeolian-Skinner organ, which with more than 13,000 pipes is the eighth largest in the world.

If Nathan Laube is any indication, the organ has a much brighter future than some would believe in this age of broadening definitions of church music. This young man is an unpretentious, attitude-free, and brilliant artist who, it would seem, has to be one of Malcolm Gladwell’s “Outliers:” if he hasn’t practiced for 10,000 hours yet, he certainly sounds as though he’s on his way to Gladwell’s benchmark. His playing speaks for itself with lucid phrasing, uncanny use of solo and ensemble color, and perception and depth unusual in someone his age. He also spoke about the music with great maturity, and half of Sunday evening’s program was music he had arranged for the organ. No Virgil Fox or Cameron Carpenter flamboyance for this young artist: the music comes first.

Leading off with the Liszt Symphonic Poem from Les Preludes, “Poeme symphonique # 3, Laube made the organ sound as though this music had been written for it rather than an orchestra. I have never heard so many gloriously beautiful sounds emerge from this magnificent instrument, and I’ve enjoyed some superb players there through the years; the Christian Scientists have often welcomed guest organists to their glorious building. The bass themes in this work sounded compelling with the Armageddon-like pedal stops on the organ, and it would be hard to imagine a more convincing performance of this work, by an orchestra or the organ. Playing from memory, young Laube nonetheless must have pushed at least several hundred “pre-sets” (combinations of stops which the organist sets up in advance for a piece of this complexity), and the playing was not only compelling, but flawless in every way.

Moving on to his own arrangement of Mendelssohn’s piano work Variations Serieuses, Laube explained that he had long felt this piece deserved to be played on the organ. As a great fan of Mendelssohn’s piano pieces (especially as played so stunningly by Murray Perahia), I doubted it would work. But by the time the theme had been given out and one or two variations passed, my anxiety gave way to wonder as I heard things I’d never heard before: in the very best sense, the piece sounded “new” to me, and more “modern” in intriguing ways. I heard Marcel Dupre here, and other older composers there. In one variation, Laube’s use of the silken Diapasons (the fundamental organ tone) on this organ was

vivid and rich, achieved both by adding and subtracting stops as well as varying the volume by the use of the swell shades.

Bach’s great Passacaglia & Fugue in C minor led off the second half, and was played in a somewhat traditional way, as well as with phrasing informed by recent ideas of performance practice. The Neo-Classic ensembles which this organ features (along with the richer solo and ensemble colors heard in the first half) were registered so that the music was absolutely clear, while at the same time rich. Where we might twenty years ago have played the basso ostinato of this great theme and variations with a strict legato, Laube’s treatment was more cleanly delineated, and it worked. He kept the pedal line mostly clear of 16’ tone (which sounds an octave below the pitch in the pedals), which had the curious effect of unifying the left and right hand lines with the pedal, revealing and enhancing the cohesion of Bach’s musical texture. The Passacaglia seemed in the most legitimate way to be a bit restrained, but productively so, after which the “take no prisoners” approach to the Fugue restored perfect balance to the pairing of pieces. JSB himself would have reveled in this performance.

Julius Reubke’s Sonata on the 94th Psalm concluded the program. This work could be called an organ warhorse, a “right of passage” piece for aspiring players, and Laube was more than up to the challenge. As the performer had reminded us, the King of Instruments can “roar like a lion” and “purr like a pussycat,” and I’ve never heard it do so more gloriously than during this piece. Some of the quiet, evocative portions of the music, based on the 94th Psalm, sounded like woodland scenes, and the sounds sometimes all but evaporated before our ears — at once clear, atmospheric, and several times hushed down to the vanishing point.

A standing ovation followed, after which Nathan Laube said that since he’d practiced up until the last minute on the program, would we mind if he took a minute or two to set the stops for an encore? Of course we didn’t, and were rewarded with a dizzying romp through another piano piece, the Chopin C-sharp minor Etude. Flawless technique again made this music sound perfect on the organ, and we went out into the night, grateful for a musician who at the tender age of twenty-three can play to this astounding standard, at the same time without a trace of shallowness or overwrought showmanship. Don’t miss him the next time he’s in town!

Brian Jones is Emeritus Director of Music and Organist at Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston, where he directed an acclaimed program from 1984-2004. Active as organ solo artist and guest conductor, he has performed widely in the United States, Canada, England, Mexico, and Bermuda. His website is www.brianjonesmusic.com

(source: <http://classical-scene.com/2011/07/20/organist-laube>)