



Newsletter

American Guild of Organists
Utah Valley Chapter
2009-2010



February 2010

No. 6

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Dean's Message

My association with the Guild enhances my life and gives me opportunities I otherwise wouldn't have. It's immensely gratifying to learn and grow as I participate in our chapter events. Here are some examples of what I mean:

SLCAGO Super Saturday

With great delight I attended the Salt Lake City chapter's annual Super Saturday on January 8. The keynote by Jerold Ottley can be read on SLCAGO's Web site. Inspiring! I attended Dr. Roger Miller's lecture on "the Berlioz Requiem as a model for colorful registration" and learned concepts useful in more advanced registration techniques. Enlightening! Then I wanted to meet Ryan Murphy, the new associate director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, so I attended his session on choral conducting. He's a cracker jack of enthusiasm, and I picked up pointers to help me with my choirs. Exciting! Then I wanted to see Clay Christiansen in action as he held a master class featuring Dr. Don Cook's gifted students. We listened to three on-fire young organists and observed Dr. Christiansen giving suggestions and tips on improving their pieces. Enjoyable! After a light lunch, Dr. Christiansen played a stunning recital on the Lively-Fulcher organ in Libby Gardner hall, sponsored by the Alexander Schreiner Foundation. Breathtaking! It was a lovely morning, renewing old acquaintances and meeting new organ friends. The Salt Lake City chapter and its leaders are to be congratulated for an inspiring event. Unforgettable!

Informal

January's informal was held at Claudia Johnson's home in Cedar Hills. We had a small but faithful group of members and friends attend, and we enjoyed the playing and the visiting. Thank you, Claudia and Brent, for your hospitality. The informals provide a unique opportunity to play for just enough people to make you a little nervous, but in a relaxed setting that provides comradery and friendly encouragement. We play our favorite preludes and hymns, and once in a while someone plays their latest "project." Ruth Ann Hay plans this event for us each month.

Felipe's Presentation

We enjoyed a wonderful evening with Felipe Dominguez on January 22, discussing the implications of fingerings in articulation and how they affect the musical conception of Baroque and Early music. His detailed preparation and engaging presentation, using a Power Point, handout, and demonstrations on the Portativ organ, was very informative and enlightening.

Festival of Hymns

I'm excited to announce that the chapter's February event will be presented by our very own David Chamberlin in a "Festival of Hymns" on Sunday, February 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the Grove Creek Stake Center in Pleasant Grove. The program will feature David playing his own hymn voluntaries and

other pieces, as well as some congregational singing. If you need a spiritual boost and some quality family time together, we invite you to come and enjoy this lovely musical program.

Bach Recital

Our chapter's annual Bach recital will be held at the Utah State Hospital chapel on Papa Bach's 325th birthday, Sunday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m. Claire Rogers is coordinating the event and asks for chapter members and non-members alike to submit the titles of their pieces "sooner rather than later." In the past, these recitals have always been inspiring and motivating. Several years ago, Ruth Ann Hay asked me if I would play the Passion Chorale (LDS Hymn #197) on the recital as a congregational hymn. I got my feet wet, and the following year I played a different four-part chorale. This year I plan to play one of the "Little" Preludes and Fugues. I'm taking baby steps, but I'm getting braver and learning more and more each year. I invite you to do the same. Make that call to Claire today (801-374-5310), and make a commitment to participate. We would love to have you join us as a performer or even as an audience member.

Our March informal will be held on Friday, March 19, at the State Hospital chapel to give those who will perform on the recital an opportunity to play the organ there. It would really be great to have our "seasoned" professional members play on this recital, as well.

UVAGO's Super Saturday, April 24

Last but not least, please circle April 24 for our chapter's Super Saturday in the Harris Fine Arts Center at BYU. Start letting your organ and choral friends know about this wonderful opportunity to learn and grow as musicians. This annual event is a perfect first exposure to the organ for pianists, and there will also be many offerings for experienced players. Stay tuned for more information in future newsletters as the date approaches.

I hope February 2010 brings you joy in your service and fulfillment in your efforts. Whatever talents you possess, share them liberally and joyfully; your gifts will return to you ten fold and bless the lives of many others.

Mike Carson, Dean

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 16 Sean Bennion Sophomore Recital (student of Doug Bush), 7:30 p.m., Assembly Hall, SLC
- Feb. 19 Chapter "Informal" - TBA
- Feb. 21 February Chapter Event - "Festival of Hymns" presented by David Chamberlin, 7:30 p.m., Grove Creek Stake Center, 1176 N. 730 E., Pleasant Grove
- Mar. 19 March "Informal," 7:30 p.m., Utah State Hospital Chapel
- Mar. 20 Faculty "All-Bach Recital" - Douglas E. Bush, 7:30 p.m., Madsen Recital Hall, BYU
- Mar. 21 Chapter Event - Bach Member Recital, Utah State Hospital Chapel (Contact Claire Rogers with your pieces.)
- Apr. 24 UVAGO's "Super Saturday," Harris Fine Arts Center, BYU - more information to come

Election Year

Elections of our new chapter officers will take place in April or May. The nominating committee is required to submit their slate by March 1st. We are open to suggestions! And we are even more open to volunteers, as in "I would LOVE to serve the chapter as dean!" It would be really great to have more than one nominee per office (for a change), and practically everything is open--dean, sub-dean, secretary/treasurer, newsletter editor, publicity chairman, historian. With the emphasis on hearts (Valentines) this month, we hope you will look deeply into yours and find the courage and good will to serve in your chapter.

Yours truly, your Nominating Committee:

David Chamberlin david@chamberlinmusic.com 376-1399

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David Worlton dalo68@comcast.net 768-8597

Organ Bench for Sale

Adjustable organ bench from Don Cook's office for sale. Heavy duty mechanism and wood construction. Rodgers charges \$2,500 for this extra heavy duty bench brand new. The price Dr. Cook is asking is only \$1,000. Contact Mike Ohman at 801-422-3149 if you are interested.

Procurement of the Conference Center Organ

Submitted by Meg Griffith

(Source: Magnum Opus by John Longhurst)

The story of the magnificent organ in the Conference Center began on Easter Sunday in 1996 in general conference when President Gordon B. Hinckley made the startling announcement that a new and very large structure would be built to accommodate more people than the Tabernacle can hold. John Longhurst happened to be the organist at this session. His thoughts immediately focused on what kind of organ would be considered. He thought of the great amount of space inside the building and what purposes would be expected of the organ and what specifications would be required. When the building design was shown to John Longhurst and Clay Christiansen, it showed a lack of space for a pipe organ and seemed as if an electronic organ was in the plans. They did not hesitate to express their disappointment. At this, the architect suggested they call in a consultant. They decided on Jack Bethards, president and tonal director of the Schoenstein & Co. He had experience with the Tabernacle organ, and they knew him to be an open-minded and honest man. He told them the truth about the consideration of a pipe organ, and, if it was possible, that he might take on the project. He told them that if he thought it wouldn't work, he would not take on the risk of failure. Before making a definite decision, the men traveled to different large buildings in the country to observe electronic organs, some with pipes added, and considered the tonal effects and costs of purchase and maintenance of an electronic organ. They decided that an electronic organ would not be the best choice for the Conference Center.

As Jack Bethards observed the evolution of the new building, he reported, "As someone outside the Church, I can assure you that the Tabernacle Choir and organ represent the Church to the public more clearly and forcefully than does any other symbol. People will be watching this project with intense interest and, in many cases, will use whatever example you set as a model. Like it or not, you are looked upon by most of the Christian world for musical leadership. A pipe organ should be the musical backbone of the new assembly building."

A pipe organ was presented to the First Presidency, and they were informed of the observations about electronics. During this meeting, Wendell Smoot, the Choir's president, offered a beneficiary contribution of 1.5 million dollars from the Choir's private funds. Longhurst did not expect this gesture and was overwhelmed by this offer. President Hinckley said that he

would consider what was presented and give a decision later. After “several suspenseful and prayer-filled days passed,” word came that a pipe organ was approved! It was never learned “what factor(s) weighed most heavily in their decision.”

The Schoenstein crew worked hard with much overtime to make deadlines and even gave up their August vacation to meet the time frame allotted. Voicing and tuning were a problem, because complete silence was required but was rare with so much going on inside the building. Some ranks are placed either horizontally above other ranks’ platforms or upside down (wooden) to fit into the space provided. The organ was completed in 2004, making it a five-year project, but a very rewarding one. Longhurst expressed about the organ and its home: “From the beginning, a special ‘something’ seemed to be guiding both projects. Perhaps it was the same fervor that enabled the pioneer Saints to sing and dance their way across the plains, as they willingly sacrificed all to find ‘home’ in a barren desert. Perhaps it was the faith of Joseph Ridges when, in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, he, too, determined to build an organ in a magnificent new edifice on Salt Lake City’s Temple Square.”

Free Bach Downloads

The complete organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach, recorded by James Kibbie on original Baroque organs in Germany, are now available as free Internet downloads. The University of Michigan’s Block M Records label is offering free downloads of all 270 Bach works in MP3 and high audio-quality formats at www.blockmrecords.org/bach. James Kibbie recorded the series on seven historic organs by Silbermann, Schnitger, Trost, Bielfeldt, and Hildebrandt. To date, there have been approximately half a million downloads from the site.

Welcome to Our Newest Member!

Sheri Peterson (Sheri studies organ with Don Cook)
Springville, UT

Reduced National AGO Dues Rates Available

Special reduced National AGO dues rates are available **for new members only** (this also includes those who have already joined our local chapter as “friends,” and have not as yet joined the National Guild) for the remainder of the 2010-2011 membership year. Join during the period between February 1 and March 31, 2009, and you will receive nine monthly issues of *The American Organist* magazine, beginning with the March 2010 issue. AGO membership is initiated through local chapters. The chapter portion of the dues is also reduced and is set by each chapter. The overall reduction of the National portion is approximately 23%; the reduction of the Utah Valley chapter portion is 33%. Simply contact the UVAGO chapter registrar, Joan Barnett, and indicate at which level you would like to enroll. The categories and dues amounts are listed below:

Regular: national portion \$41.50 + chapter portion \$18.50 = \$60

Special (over 65, under 21)/disabled: \$29 + \$15 = \$44

Student (with school ID): \$18.50 + \$6.50 = \$25

Partner (2nd member at same address): \$23 + \$19 = \$42

Dual (member of two or more chapters): \$18.00

Student Dual: \$8

Chapter Friend: \$13

Spotlight

Lella Pomeroy

Member-at-Large

Submitted by Mark Clark

Lella Pomeroy serves as a member-at-large for our chapter. In 1853, her great grandfather arrived as a youngster from a journey across the plains. The Crandalls were one of the first families to found and settle Springville. That same great grandfather left Springville with two wives and headed to Vernal. After the Manifesto, unwilling to separate his families, they made a run for Mexico. Unable to cross the border, he had to leave one wife in a Mormon settlement along the Gila River. Hence, Lella is considered an Arizona pioneer.

Lella was born in Washington, DC, because her father was studying law at George Washington University and was working for the FBI on the side. He eventually became a special agent with an expertise in espionage/internal affairs. It began with working one-on-one with J. Edgar Hoover, translating German documents (Lella’s father had just returned from a Church mission to Germany). So began a 40-year career as an agent that took the family many places--Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Chicago, Santa Fe, and then on to Phoenix, where Lella finished school and married.

In January of 1961, Lella married Benjamin Errol Pomeroy, a returned missionary, who had served in Brazil, Ben was a CPA. At that time Lella played the piano for a number of groups and did vocal coaching in the home. Ben died suddenly at the age of 38, leaving her with five young children and one on the way. Young Ben was born 6 ½ months later. Lella says, “Some of you know him; he is mentally challenged, but the best kid I know!!”

Lella’s involvement with the organ began at age 15, when she was called to be the Sunday School organist. She was given no instruction except on how to turn it on (a Hammond!). She played in stocking feet, left-footed, and the same piece every week until somehow she began to pick up bits and pieces of information here and there. When she was 26, John Longhurst was sent to Phoenix to conduct six weeks of training (he had just finished his Masters at the University of Utah and was soon to leave for the East). There the foundation was laid. She became so enamored with the organ, after finally getting a glimpse of how it was supposed to be played, that she would go to the public library to see what she could find to read about it. Eventually, she made arrangements to take lessons. However, her husband died the day before her first lesson. Several years later, she heard about a group class at Phoenix Community College and joined it. That is where she was when she made the decision to go back to school at Santa Barbara.

Larry Blackburn and Lella were in the Arizona Mormon Choir, he as accompanist and she as an assistant. They both met James Welch at a Church Music Workshop and both decided to move from Phoenix to Santa Barbara to study there. Lella worked on her Master’s degree in organ performance at UC Santa Barbara. She took her four youngest children and moved there to continue the schooling she had not completed at age 17-19. She spent eight years in Santa Barbara, where she studied organ with Jim Welch. Larry Blackburn, Lella, and Jim were the only LDS in the organ area, and were also all in the same ward. In addition to service in their own church, they each had another “church” job. Lella played the organ at St.

Andrew's Presbyterian Church for five-and-a-half years. For the last year she was interim choir director also. She played for the San Marcos High School Madrigals and got into their theater program as well. She did Fiddler on the Roof, Once Upon a Mattress, Guys and Dolls, Can-Can, Where's Charley, and Brigadoon. She did Boys from Syracuse at UCSB and March of the Falsettos for Santa Barbara Community College.

The organ program at UCSB required students to play a recital every quarter. Sometimes they had a theme. For instance, one quarter they played the entire *Orgelbüchlein* in one evening. Jim divided it all up between himself and all the students, and off they went. It was well done and a wonderful evening. The concert hall at UCSB had a small Flentrop tracker. (They practiced on a very small Schlicker in the practice room.) Another of the student recitals was dedicated to reproducing the recital Mendelssohn gave in Leipzig, playing Bach's music. Lella was the only one to not play from the original program by playing Mendelssohn's entire Sonata V to represent him as a recitalist. They also rounded out their studies with a quarterly trip to LA to an organ concert or workshop. They even ventured up to the Bay Area for a week-long organ crawl. Several times their jaunts to LA would turn into a bus load of AGO friends and members.

Lella's AGO chapter in Santa Barbara was very small, somewhat like Utah Valley, but without the potential for growth. They were required to participate, each taking turns at different duties and participating in recitals and events alongside the organ peers of the community. Lella's turn to serve as dean came in 1990-92. By that time she had attended the Regional Convention in San Diego and the National Convention in Houston and began to feel quite comfortable in the organ world. Her days in Santa Barbara were filled with the widest range of learning experiences possible and have been such a blessing to her life and her ability to serve with music.

In 1985, the Bach year-300th year birthday-Lella ventured to East Germany for three weeks to walk in the "master's" footsteps. Jim Welch and one other LDS organist were also on the tour. They searched out the branch of the LDS church in Dresden and attended both Sundays they were there. Their arrival coincided with the open house of the temple in Freiburg, the first LDS temple in Eastern Europe and behind the Iron Curtain. So off they went in a tiny car crammed with saints in a little convoy to see the temple. Lella says, "Ask me sometime and I will show you my pictures." Lella says that this short little "blurb" talking of the trip cannot come close to expressing the enormity of the effect this experience had on her spiritual growth as the maturity it gave her with the organ and its literature.

By 1992 Lella was nearly finished with her master's degree, with the exception of a German exam. With UCSB permission, Don Cook proctored her many "takings" of the exam so that she could achieve her degree. Lella says, "It was the hardest road I've ever traveled, but I refused to quit. With Don's help and support, I did it!!" Lella says it has been so worth the challenges she went through to get her organ training. Her last word: "Never give up. If something is worthwhile, go for it. Learning is important. Our knowledge is all we take with us. Always look for more to learn, more to know." Lella is a great asset to our chapter.

AGO Pipe Organ Encounters with the King of Instruments Provide Opportunities for Education and Fellowship

Ten Summer Educational Programs for Teenagers and Adults Announced by the AGO with Generous Funding Provided by the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America and the American Institute of Organbuilders

NEW YORK CITY—The American Guild of Organists (AGO) is proud to announce seven PIPE ORGAN ENCOUNTERS (POEs) and one POE (Advanced) for students aged 13–18; and two POE+ programs for adults in 2010. Generous funding from the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America (APOBA) <www.apoba.com> and the American Institute of Organbuilders (AIO) <www.pipeorgan.org> will support the summer programs, which will be held from coast to coast.

"The AGO and APOBA have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship since 1975," declared AGO Executive Director James Thomashower. "Likewise, the AIO has been active in supporting the Guild's educational programs, beginning with their partnership in Pulling Out All the Stops, a video produced jointly by the AGO, AIO, APOBA, the Organ Historical Society, and the American Theater Organ Society in 1996. Collectively, APOBA and the AIO have contributed more than \$325,000 in support of the AGO's educational programs over the past 15 years. For their ongoing, committed generosity in supporting the Guild's mission to 'promote the organ,' we are extremely grateful."

Complete contact information for each Pipe Organ Encounter can be found in The American Organist Magazine and online at <www.agohq.org>. The summer schedule follows:

POEs for Teenagers

June 13–18	Columbia, SC.
June 13–18	St. Louis, MO
June 21–26	Bloomington, IN
June 27–July 2	Fairfield, CT
July 18–23	Waukesha, WI
July 25–30	Fort Worth, TX
July 25–31	Irvine, CA

POE (Advanced) for Teenagers

July 18–23	New York City, NY
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POE+ for Adults

July 26–30	Eugene, OR
August 8–13	Winchester, VA

January "Informal" Submitted by Ruth Ann Hay

Six people met at the home of Claudia Johnson for our January informal recital. Thank you, Claudia and Brent, for opening your home to us. Most everyone played and talked about music for the church service. Mike Carson played his Bach piece for the March recital and also played a couple of his latest hymn arrangements. *Ring Out, Wild Bells* was energetic and built to an exciting climax. *God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son* was warm and introspective. Mike, Florence Hawkinson, and David Chamberlin have a number of excellent hymn arrangements on www.wardorganist.com. Don't forget this valuable resource.

