



John Ferguson Hymn Festival

This month it is our privilege to have Dr. John Ferguson come to present a master class on hymn playing on Saturday, February 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, in the Madsen Recital Hall at BYU. (There will be a reception and refreshments afterwards in room E-400, HFAC.) The next evening, Sunday, February 9, will be the Hymn Festival Fireside at 7:00 p.m. in the deJong Concert Hall at BYU. The entire community is invited to come and join in singing hymns. **Please invite family, friends, church members, etc., to come.** Members of the Salt Lake Chapter (and other chapters) are invited to join us, too. This is sure to be an educational and enjoyable experience.

Dr. Parley Belnap submitted the following information about Dr. Ferguson:

"John Ferguson is the Elliot and Klara Stockdal Johnson Professor of Organ and Church Music and Cantor to the Student Congregation at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. His responsibilities include directing the church music-organ program, teaching organ and conducting the St. Olaf Cantorei. Dr. Ferguson came to St. Olaf in 1983 from Minneapolis where he served Central Lutheran Church as Music Director and Organist, an appointment accepted in 1978 after a 15-year tenure on the music faculty at Kent State University. While at Kent State he also served as Organist-Choirmaster of the United Church of Christ, Kent, Ohio, during which time he served as music editor for the United Church of Christ *Hymnal*, 1974. He has spent summers as visiting professor at the University of Notre Dame and was invited to spend sabbatical leave time as visiting professor at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

"Dr. Ferguson's degrees are from Oberlin College, Kent State and the Eastman School of Music, where his doctoral study in organ was with Russell Saunders. He is respected as a fine teacher and performer, and his skill as improviser and leader of congregational song has received national acclaim. Each year he prepares and leads many festivals across the country both for local congregations and professional gatherings. A Ferguson hymn festival is much more than an inspiring organ recital, according to Emily Brink, Past President of the Hymn Society, 'He involves everyone present in a glorious community of sound. Everyone gets to *perform*.'

"Dr. Ferguson is the author of numerous books and articles on church music and organ building. His choral and organ music is published by Augsburg, Concordia, Galaxy, G.I.A., Hope, Kjos, Ludwig, Morning Star, Selah, and Stainer and Bell.

"Since he joined the St. Olaf faculty, Dr. Ferguson has become more widely known for his skills as choral conductor and creative arranger. He brings a special combination of experience as choral singer (Oberlin College Choir under Robert Fountain), church musician, and participant in the St. Olaf choral tradition, and his workshops in conducting and repertoire for church choirs are consistently rated as highlights at conventions of professional organizations. He was invited to design and present a hymn festival held in the Washington National Cathedral as a major event for the recent national convention of the American Choral Directors Association. In July 1996 he led workshops and presented a hymn festival in Seoul, Korea, and for the summer of 1997, he has been invited to design and lead a hymn festival in the Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway, as part of the celebration of the millenium of the birth of St. Olaf."

Utah Valley Chapter Newsletter

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January's Town Hall Meeting

We appreciate those of you who braved the cold and ice to come to the Town Hall Meeting. We had a good discussion and came up with some interesting ideas.

If you weren't able to attend the meeting, it's still not too late to submit any suggestions you have for the future of AGO to either Larry Tomkinson or DeeAnn Stone. We have until March 1st to send in the ideas from our chapter to National Headquarters. So, if you care about the direction AGO will be taking, be sure to make your wishes known!

Upcoming Chapter Events

February 8 (Saturday) - John Ferguson, master class on hymn playing, 9 - 12 noon, Madsen Recital Hall, BYU.

February 9 (Sunday) - John Ferguson, Hymn Festival Fireside, deJong Concert Hall, 7:00 p.m.

March 18 (Tuesday) - Bach night

April 15 (Tuesday) - Dr. James Drake, Dean Cache Valley Chapter, Alexander Technique on relaxation

May 20 (Tuesday) - Closing social/expert on copyright laws

Salt Lake Chapter

February 18 (Tuesday) - Kenneth Udy, organ recital, Assembly Hall on Temple Square, 7:30 p.m. The first half of the program will feature a fugue, chaconne, sarabande, and toccata by J. S. Bach. In the second half he will perform corresponding "forms" by American composers of the 20th Century: Near, Ashdown, Roberts, and Elmore.

March 8 (Saturday) - Mini-convention at Summerhays Music, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The featured clinicians will be Dr. Kenneth Udy on "How to Register a Small Organ" and Dr. Don Cook on "Marking Your Hymnal for Meaningful Performance". Between the two classes enjoy bagels and juice.

Recitals

February 22 (Saturday) -Carol Dean, organ, *Orgelbüchlein* - "Pentecost to General," Provo Central Stake Center, 7:30 p.m.

April 12 (Saturday) -Carol Dean, organ, *Orgelbüchlein*--"Passion to Eastertide," Provo Central Stake Center, 7:30 p.m.

Music for a Sunday Evening

Fourth Sundays at 7:00 p.m., State Hospital Chapel, 1300 E. Center, Provo. Contact Claire Rogers for details.

 **AGO Region IX Convention** 
Honolulu, Hawaii—July 16-19

Cartoon submitted by Ruth Ann Hay

Pipedreams



Cathedral 89
K B Y U - F M

Tuesdays at 9:00p.m.
with Michael Barone

February 4 – Going on record:
A review of recent recordings.

February 11 – Follow the Star

February 18 – Famous Frenchmen

February 25 – Cathedral Concerts

March 4 – An Austrian Succession

(see December and January issues of TAO for details)

Off the Net

Building on Pipe Dreams

Bigelow Organ Builders crafts its masterpieces
in the European tradition

Story by Dennis Romboy, Deseret News staff writer
Published 30 January, 1997, Deseret News Publishing Co.
Found on the Deseret News website

The old American Fork 2nd Ward Chapel resounds with "music making" even though the original organ was removed years ago.

M.L. Bigelow & Co. Organ Builders occupies the building, one of the first LDS meetinghouses erected in the community. The four employees construct classic European-style tracker organs from scratch. Evidence of their work is scattered throughout the old church.

The grand sounds of the craftsmen's painstaking labor fill cathedrals and concert halls across the United States, for Bigelow is one of few American companies that makes pipe organs in the tradition of those on which Bach composed some of his masterpieces.

"We hearken back to that," said proprietor Mike Bigelow, who opened his shop in 1978. But unlike their 17th-century predecessors, Bigelow organs take only one person to play. An electric blower powers the instrument's "lungs" in place of an organist's assistant who raised the bellows by hand or foot.

The company handles every aspect of organ building from design to installation. A typical model requires about 50 design

drawings, 10,000 hours of hands-on work and two years to finish.

The tracker organ derives its name from the narrow strips of basswood that run underneath the console and up the back of the instrument to connect the keys to air valves under the pipes. Tension strengthens the otherwise flimsy pieces of wood.

The size of an organ is measured in stops. A stop is a set of 58 pipes. Bigelow's Opus 24, a 36-foot-high white oak behemoth under construction for Conception Abbey in Missouri, has 40 stops. Stop knobs with names like "gedackt" and "chimney flute" turn on and off the sets of pipes.

"You've heard of the expression, 'Pull out all the stops.' Well, that comes from organs. When you pull out all the stops, that's when you get all the big sound," Bigelow said.

The phrase sums up the way Bigelow builds organs. The company cuts no corners, meticulously fashioning thousands of components to work in harmony with each other. The sawdust-laden shop is filled with an array of machines, including saws, planers and shapers.

Woodworkers Shayne Ward and Robert Munson carefully mill and fit each piece of wood that goes into the instrument's interior and exterior. Tonal director David Chamberlin inspects the sound quality on as many as 2,300 pipes in some models, ranging from a thunderous 16-foot-long, 2-foot-square wooden bass to a shrill half-inch-long metal whistle. Bigelow oversees the operation.

The foursome builds and tests an organ in the shop, dismantles each part, packs the pieces in a semi for delivery and reassembles them on location. Installation takes weeks.

Bigelow's interest in organs goes back to his childhood. At age 12 he was trying out his church's new electronic organ while his friends played basketball. He was the church organist two years later. He even skipped school once to play a particular model of the instrument.

"I was always fascinated by organs," he said. After graduating from the University of Utah in psychology and entering architecture school, Bigelow reached a crossroads in life: He had to decide to continue with graduate studies in architecture or pursue his fascination with pipe organs. He chose the latter and accepted a job with Abbot & Sieker in Los Angeles, the only tracker organ builder in the West at the time.

Bigelow gained an understanding and appreciation for the obscure profession while helping install several tracker organs in Los Angeles. On weekends he made pilgrimages to a growing number of Dutch, German and Swiss imports on the West Coast. He was mesmerized by tracker organs' superior sound. Bach came to life. Tours of Europe followed.

"If you want to know how to build good organs you have to go back to the fountain of all organs -- Europe," he said.

The history of the pipe organ can be traced back nearly 2,000 years. The major features of the modern instrument were developed from the 1200s to 1500s. From the 1500s to mid-1700s, many European composers, including Bach, wrote organ masterpieces. Organs are fixtures in most churches today.

A majority of the 24 pipe organs Bigelow has made reside in Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. There is one in an LDS Church stake center in Provo, and Bigelow just installed a practice organ in Brigham Young University's music department.

Chamberlin, who does the computer-assisted design work for the company, shares Bigelow's passion for music and organ building.

"It's like a disease. A rare disease," he said.

Chamberlin encountered several noteworthy organs studying abroad while earning a music performance degree from Brigham Young University. He also has dabbled in organ building at Bigelow. After earning a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., his perspective changed. He discovered he preferred building organs full time and playing them part time.

"I've always loved music and mechanical things. The organ is the perfect intersection of those two," he said. "It's an art and a science."

For Chamberlin, who plays professionally at Zion Lutheran Church on Sundays, nothing quite compares to the thrill of performing on an organ that he helped design and build. "I guess it's sort of like building an airplane and taking it out for a ride," he said.

Once the solo ends, it's back to the drawing board for Bigelow & Co.'s next opus.

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Art: A Possibility for Love

Johann Wondra

Capitalizing on the corruption and evil designs that, in the last days, are present in the hearts of cunning men, Satan uses the power of art to suffocate the concept of salvation and to lead our world to destruction. Ennobling art, though, helps prepare the elect for the message of the gospel and permits us to hope for a Zion where the Saints will live together in a culture of peace, of love, and of beauty, where our lives will become art. I have experienced in my own life the effect of ennobling works of art as it prepared me for the gospel of Jesus Christ. (p. 144)

The key by which to judge whether a work of art is inspired by God or by evil is clear and unmistakable: "Every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God" (Moroni 7:16). Art that is from God will praise the Lord and his creations, awaken love and sympathy for neighbors, and never injure the dignity of man. Art is therefore a possibility for love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Divinely inspired art will express a love of God in that it praises the Lord, his creation and his work on earth. It will promote love of neighbors in that it teaches Christian virtues in daily life. Whoever masterfully controls artistic forms and patterns and has the most love will bring forth the greatest works of art. By means of love, we are one with the Creator and can create as he did. This love is a gift of God that he gives freely to those who keep his commandments and ask for this gift. (p. 152)

In Arts and Inspiration, edited by Steven P. Sondrup.
(Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), pp. 143-153
Found on BYU website