

American Guild of Organists

Newsletter

Utah Valley Chapter

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Region IX Mid-Winter Conclave in Las Vegas, NV

Highlights of Conclave by Carol Dean:

Sunday - 1/08 - In UNLV's Beam Music Center/Doc Rando Hall on the Rudolf von Beckerath 53-rank organ, the *Pipedreams Live* presentation that would occur on Tuesday for workshop participants was previewed. Michael Barone working with the host chapter of the AGO and the area's public radio station, built a program around available resources and regional talent from Region IX. The program theme was "Around Bach: Music by Sons and Students, and In the Bach Spirit." *Pipedreams Live* performers included: Dr. Jeffrey Campbell, Martin Green, John Karl Hirten, Dr. Linda Margetts, Nancy Metzger, Dr. Mark Ramsey, Dr. Dorothy Young Riess, and Dr. Melody Steed.

Monday - 1/09

Opening Convocation - The Reverend Michael R. Link challenged all to always be open to learning new things and to make learning a life-time pursuit.

Multi-Media Presentation - Dr. Ann Labounsky presented/narrated Jean Langlais's life, captured in his own words, videos, and music.

Evening Concert - Las Vegas Master Singers

Tuesday - 1/10

Morning Organ Recital - Chelsea Chen presented an electrifying concert, all from memory, on the Beckerath. For those of you at Salt Lake City AGO Region IX Convention in 2003, she was one of the youth competition winners. She since commuted to Julliard from California to receive her bachelor's degree and is currently a graduate student there. Her performance of Bach's Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542, was the best I've yet heard. I don't care much for Reger, but her performance of his Chorale-Fantasy on *Hallelujah! Gott zu loben, bleibe meine Seelenfreud* took my breath away.

Wayne Leopold Workshop on Discovering the Organ - This workshop started on Monday and turned out to be the "reason" I needed to be in Las Vegas. I now know an organ teacher does not have to wait for a student to have enough piano to be able to sight read hymns before they can start organ lessons. I will go into greater detail on his presentation later in the newsletter. Be sure you read it carefully.

Workshop on "What the AGO Can Do for You"

Being an officer in our chapter, I felt I should attend this meeting. Some excellent information was given out. But the one point that I wanted to pass on to all of you is that "The percentage of national funding for organizations

such as the American Guild of Organists (based in New York City) depends upon the percentage of members of the guild who contribute to their organization.” It does not matter how much you contribute but just that you contribute something, even if it is only \$5.00. So as an officer in the Utah Valley Chapter of the AGO, I urge each of you to sit down and write out a check today to the American Guild of Organists for the Annual Fund. First-time contributions to the Annual Fund will be doubled dollar for dollar in matching gifts. The “Fund” is used to strengthen educational programs and services that support the *King of Instruments* and those who play it—a detailed listing of these programs appeared in the Nov 2005 issue of the *TAO*. Send your contributions to: AGO National Headquarters, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260, New York, NY 10115 **or** you may make an online contribute at <www.agohq.org>.

Murray/Lohuis Duo - I had never heard organ and violin together before and it was a treat. In talking with Dr. Ardyth Lohuis (organist) and Dr. Robert Murray (violinist), they felt that obtaining a good balance between organ and violin was much harder than with any other organ/instrument duo. In the Doc Rando Hall, Dr. Murray was way up stage from the organ. His violin was an Italian beauty created in 1772, a few years before Bach died. The violin’s name was “Carlo”, and it was never left alone while in Vegas.

Wednesday - 1/11

Cook’s Tour III - Jane Dye Residence - Since I was staying in Jane Dye’s home (an old and dear friend), it was very logical for me to attend her organ recital (lent my moral support, acted as page turner/stop puller, and contributed my pineapple cheese balls to her reception afterwards) to feature the Cook, Opus 9, tracker organ she has in her music room. The organ builder, Steven Cook from Washington State, tried an experiment of building three “identical” mechanical action organs concurrently to try to save costs (Opus 9A, Opus 9B, and Opus 9C). He said he did not save money at all, nor was he able to save much time as he duplicated the process all by hand. Cook says he will never try that type of project again. But the three owners of the Cook organs in Las Vegas are thankful to have these instruments in their homes.

Each of the three home recitals were around 40 minutes duration, all played by the owners of the organ and followed by a reception. A “Las Vegas Suite” commissioned by the owners and written by Mary Beth Bennett was featured at each of the three recitals. It was a delightful and well crafted four-movement work with the idea of representing the “flavor” of Las Vegas, yet being versatile enough to be used for church services later. The movements were entitled: I. *The Excalibur* (Winchester Old), II. *The Venetian* (Italian Hymn), III. *The Imperial Palace* (Kings of Orient), and IV. *The New York-New York* (National Hymn).

Since three days is my limit for being away from my normal “grind” and since I felt that I had been richly rewarded and uplifted for being to the first three+ days, I did not stay for the last day of the Convention but drove back to Provo Wednesday afternoon. Let me now outline what I learned from the Wayne Leopold Workshop.

Wayne Leopold Workshop

Mr. Leopold has a B.M. and a MM. in organ performance from Syracuse University. He has been involved “free lance” in music publication with McAfee Music for years, and then formed his own Wayne Leopold Editions, Inc. in 1989. For 37 years he has been editor of *The Organist’s Companion*, a bi-monthly journal of easy organ music. Since 1991 he has been involved in developing a program to introduce young people to the keyboard. At the workshop, he had copies of all the method books for each of us to peruse as he “walked” us through the program.

The very first series is *Discover the Basics - a Beginning Series for Any Keyboard Instrument*. There are four books (plus a Christmas book) which are designed for young students who have shown some interest in the organ but can be taught on any keyboard instrument with lessons, repertoire, technique, and theory **combined in one book**. A graphic artist was hired to make the books very appealing to children, and the different parts of the organ are given names and personalities in the drawings. Mr. Leopold says he watches for any interest toward

the organ by children in his congregation. He then invites them to assist him at the organ bench on Sundays by having them push general pistons for him. When they have assisted him enough and he knows for sure they want to learn more about the organ, he will give them a free lesson to get them started. They practice on pianos or keyboards at home and come to the organ at the church only for their half-hour lesson once a week. As soon as they get any repertoire under their fingers, he has them assist him with prelude or postlude and makes sure that all extended family and friends are invited to the service for additional positive reinforcement. Mr. Leopold says he has had much success getting young people started on the organ in this way. Interested adults with no previous keyboard training can also use these books. This is also a perfect series for parents working with young children to introduce them to the keyboard.

The next series is called *Discover the Organ*. There are four levels. Each level has a separate book called: Basic Organ Repertoire, Modern Keyboard Technique, Christmas Season at the Organ, Easter and Pentecost Seasons at the Organ, and Organ and One Instrument. Level 3 has an A and B volume for repertoire and technique. A teacher can start a student with some keyboard experience at whichever level is appropriate for them. Leopold has also printed *Teach the Organ! - A Handbook for Organ Teachers* with his philosophy of teaching the organ, advice for parents and teachers, an explanation of each book and the curriculum level, an organist assistant program (explaining how he works with children in his congregation), proposals to churches for music classes during Sunday School time, how to start an “organ academy” in your local church, etc.

I have scanned a listing of all books and order nos. and an order blank which I have attached to this newsletter. Or you can call Claire Rogers at 374-5310 and have her order books for you. We as organists “cry” that there are not enough people learning to play the organ. Now we don’t have to wait for a student to study piano for three years before we can start interesting them in the organ. I own all the books I’ve talked about if you want to come to my home to see them. Anyone who has even a little bit of keyboard experience can work through these books with students and get them excited about playing the organ. We each need to do our part to be an “enticing influence” to draw more young people into studying the organ. We all know what a positive, replenishing, healing influence the “King of Instruments” is in our own lives. **Let’s make time to introduce at least one young person to the organ this year!**

January Chapter Event

We didn’t give you much notice (January 3rd), but we had quite a respectable turnout to hear our dean’s evening of sharing his hymn voluntaries with us. Four of the musicians from the stake where the meeting was held were in attendance, and about 12 regular members were there. Before David played his pieces for us, he explained his compositional train of thought regarding the creation of each piece. For someone like me without a creative bone in my body, it was most fascinating. Thank you, David! You are on the downhill side of your Deanship term, and after May 2006, we may not have your investment of time in the AGO to the same degree it’s been for the past 18 months. We want you to know how much we have appreciated your willingness to share your vast store of talents with all of us.

February Chapter Event

Tom Hinckley, past Dean of the AGO, along with his home ward will be providing our February chapter meeting (2/12/06 at 7:00 p.m.) for our edification. The address of the ward building is corner of 100 S. and 200 E., in Santaquin. Tom loves hymnody and is very knowledgeable in this area. We hope you will all make the effort to come and participate. It will be a very appropriate way to spend a Sunday evening.

Local Recitals

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| 2/23/06 | Thomas Watkins Sophomore Recital (student of Don Cook), 7:30 p.m., De Jong Concert Hall, HFAC, BYU |
| 3/25/06 | Brian Mathias Sophomore Recital (student of Don Cook), 7:30 p.m., Libby Gardner Concert Hall, University of Utah |

Upcoming Chapter Events

- 2/12/06 Tour of Hymns - Tom Hinckley and Ward, 7:00 p.m, Santequin
 3/18/06 Member Bach Recital, 7:30 p.m., Provo Central Stake Center (I need your pieces by the first week in March)
 4/08/06 Super Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. BYU (lunch included)
 May Closing Member Recital/Picnic, Utah State Hospital Chapel (TBA)

February Informal Recital

The informal recital this month will be held Friday, 2/17/06, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Nancy Christensen in Salem, UT. Her address is 60 E. 100 N. Drive south through Spanish Fork. After the Chevron, turn left at the Gas'n Go and then right. Her home is the first one on the left hand side. She has a Rodgers organ.

Salt Lake Chapter Event

2/11/06 **Pedals, Pipes & Pizza** - a half-day outreach program for Children and Youth! - come play the organs of The Cathedral of the Madeleine, The Cathedral Church of St. Mark's, and First Presbyterian Church. 8:00 a.m. check-in at First Presbyterian Church - 12 C Street (South Temple and C Street, 370 East) You do not have to play an instrument in order to participate. Adults who wish to participate must bring someone 18 or younger. All registered children (under 18) will receive a **FREE** "Young Person's Guide to the Pipe Organ" (\$12 value). **Pre-Registration (by 1/31/06) is a must** to ensure adequate supplies and pizza! Contact **Teresa Beckstrand** (teresabeckstrand@yahoo.com) or call her at 486-2887 to register. (Flyer is attached)

Rodgers Organ for Sale

Susan Marshall bought a used stake center model Rodgers a year ago and now needs to sell it for \$4000. It is in excellent condition (for particular info regarding model and features, call David Bagley at 362-5811). To talk to the owner, call Susan at 373-9775 or her hubby, John, at 362-7474.

LDS Organist Group

Check out this site at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ldsorganist>

Countdown to Chicago!

Dear Friends,

The 2006 National Convention in ChicAGO is fast approaching. Act now to enjoy early registration savings before 1/31. The convention will be . . .

DAZZLING! Symphony Center concert spectacular with organists Thierry Escaich, Philippe Belanger, Maxine Thevenot and David Schrader performing recently composed and newly commissioned works for organ and orchestra conducted by the sensational Julian Wachner

DIVERSE! Thomas Murray playing the 1922 E.M. Skinner at St. Luke's Episcopal, Chelsea Chen playing the new Fisk at St. Chrysostom's, James

O'Donnell playing the Dobson/Schlicker at Valparaiso University, Chicago Community Chorus and Mickey Thomas Terry at Moody Church, Sophie-Veronique Cauchefer-Choplin of Paris, Alexander Fiseisky of Russia, Wolfgang Seifen and Stefan Engels of Germany.

DARING! An unprecedented array of workshop choices from Gregorian chant to Gospel music, Hispanic resources to Dutch organ music, playing the pedals to performing arts medicine.

DELIGHTFUL! Exquisite dining, unparalleled shopping, fabulous fireworks and all the sights and sounds of Chicago. **DON'T MISS IT! HURRY!** Register online now to take advantage of the **EARLY REGISTRATION DISCOUNT THROUGH JANUARY 31st**. For complete details and registration information, visit our website

www.agohq.org/2006. Join us July 2-6, 2006, at the Chicago Marriott Hotel on the "Magnificent Mile." We look forward to seeing you!

James Thomashower, Executive Director

Fred Swann, President

Ron Vanderwest, Convention Coordinator

Karen Rich, Councillor for Competitions and Conventions

\$20,000 Grant

The American Guild of Organists was awarded \$20,000 grant money from the National Endowment for the Arts which will support the new music performances at the AGO Biennial National Convention in Chicago, IL, July 2-6, 2006.

Sorry I was slow getting this newsletter out. Trips wear me out, and I've been gone this month more than I've been home.

- Carol Dean