

American Guild of Organists Newsletter

Utah Valley Chapter
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Dean's Message

January is already over! Time passes too quickly for most of us. The New Year resolutions that we have made are either already well on their way to becoming part of our daily lives, or as most of us can admit, are already broken. The Christmas decorations are put away, (at least for most of us) and the stores are filled with Valentine's Day decorations and candies. My goodness how time flies.

In my Stake, our Stake Music Chairman has already made great plans and carried some of them out, to improve the music in each Ward. Like many Stakes, we do the best we can with the people that are willing to serve in music callings. Those of us with extensive musical training, really have our work cut out for us.

In this edition of our monthly newsletter, I have included some new information that is being asked of the organists that serve in the Temples of the Church, as the requirements for playing in all of the Temples is now being coordinated to be uniform regardless of where one serves. Please look over the new guidelines for Temple organists regarding the playing of hymns that is included in this newsletter. It will prove informative to many. (*found on page 4*)

One of the issues I would like to briefly touch on in this edition is the music in our Sacrament meetings. Many of us serve as Ward organists, and have the same challenges. How do we make the weekly meetings REALLY mean something, as far as the music is concerned, when we play so much of the hymns? Unfortunately, the organists at our Roundtable discussion at my Stake, are of the opinion that "it's only the hymns, who cares?" One of the organists present made a comment that may voice the opinion of many by saying "nobody listens to my prelude music anyway, nobody sings when I play, so why prepare?" As members of the American Guild of Organists, how can we change these attitudes? I'm not sure I have an answer. Perhaps one person at a time. Perhaps the first change we must make is in our own attitudes as organists. Myself included. Most of the time, I prepare faithfully to present the music in Church in the best way that I can, but there are Sundays, mind you, that I just 'play' what is written without too much consideration, mostly because like most of us, I get frustrated too at the lack of consideration for the music during prelude, and the lack of participation during the congregational hymns.

As this year is off to a strong start as a Guild, I would like to encourage us as a group to give one another some extra feedback on possible solutions to the musical mediocrity in our individual Wards and Stakes. Let's try to raise the level of musicality that we present to our Wards and Stakes, one member at a time, if necessary. I don't have all the answers, that is for sure, but there have been enough of us that discuss this issue among ourselves to warrant some careful thought as to the solutions.

My thanks to my fellow members and officers in the Utah Valley Chapter during my recent illness for being supportive and caring. I don't know what I would have done without their faithful fulfillment of responsibilities, and their help in fulfilling mine during the last month. You have my love and my respect, as well as my deepest gratitude. I look forward to continuing to work with each and every one of you.

Sincerely,
Nancy Christensen, Dean

Wednesday, February 7th 700 N. 600 E in Provo at 7:30 PM
David Chamberlain will be sharing his experiences in Germany. He got to 1. hear the Bach B minor Mass at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, 2. tour the Cathedral in Naumburg and then spent 2 hours on the Hildebrandt organ, 3. tour the Meissen Porcelain works and museum, 4. tour the rebuilt Frauenkirche in Dresden and then 5. give his recital on the 1714 Gottfried Silbermann organ in the Freiberg Cathedral.

Ruth Eldredge will also be sharing her experiences in Portugal. The following is a prospectus she sent to a conference about her trip: Portuguese historians speak of the devastating 1755 earthquake as if they had seen it themselves. Indeed, many of them see its effects daily in water-damaged books or the occasional remaining crack in a cathedral wall. What they likely notice more keenly, however, are the effects of the earthquake they cannot see: destroyed buildings, disintegrated manuscripts, and artifacts with an untraceable history. Such is the case with scholars researching Carlos Seixas, the most prominent Portuguese-born musician of the eighteenth century. Of his 700 listed works, only a handful survive in posthumous manuscripts housed in archives surrounding Seixas' home in Lisbon. In a series of fortunate events, I was permitted scholarly examination of these manuscripts as well as period churches and instruments pertinent to Seixas' career.

Music on a page, however, comprises only part of an expansive world of music. Upon receiving a special invitation from the Lisbon Academy of Ancient Music, I attended its annual Summer Performance Course held in the medieval village of Tomar. As one of fifty-five musicians from seventeen countries spanning six continents, we studied, practiced, slept, ate, and performed in an 11th century Templar's chapel and adjoining convent. Ketil Haugsand, a Virgin Records recording artist specializing in Seixas, administered my harpsichord lessons and masterclass each morning, while members of the English Baroque Ensemble, and Bach-Collegium Consort taught chamber music classes comprised of ensembles we organized with our new friends. Making our way through Portuguese, English, and German, we received high-speed training in preparation for our public concerts held each evening in the ancient nun's chamber. In the spare moments of mealtimes, Dr. Haugsand and Ana Mafalda Castro, a Portuguese harpsichordist recently commissioned to record the complete works of Carlos Seixas, offered their personal views on Seixas in the 21st century.

Research methods combined primary source research with musical performance experiences. Access was granted to the music archives of the Portuguese National Library and the Ajuda Royal Library, both in Lisbon, where four eighteenth century manuscripts were made available for examination. Viewing of period churches and instruments was gained, as was admission to the Lisbon Academy of Ancient Music for practice in preparation for the Academy-sponsored Summer Course. The week-long course included daily keyboard lessons with leading Seixas scholars, daily public student performances, and scholarly interviews with recording artists currently involved in the forthcoming release of Seixas' complete keyboard works.

I'm sure their experiences will be something we won't want to miss.

PIPES IN THE DESERT,
the 2008 AGO Region IX Mid-Winter Conclave,
is pleased to announce a competition for
new organ music:

A COMPOSITION FOR ORGAN
of 3–5 min. duration, on a desert theme from
Scripture, and suitable for performance in a
church or concert setting.



This competition is open to residents of, or students in, AGO Region IX (no age restriction) who have not yet had commercially published works.

The 1st place award consists of \$1000, performance of the piece as part of the conclave, informal publication of the piece prior to the conclave, and free conclave registration. The 2nd place award consists of \$500 and informal publication of the piece prior to the conclave.

Submissions must include a CD or cassette tape, a score (Finale or Sibelius format preferred) of the work, and a resume. Send all submissions to

AGO Tucson 2008
P.O. Box 42495
Tucson, AZ 85733-2495

Deadline: March 31, 2007

February 3, 7:30 in the chapel at [the intersection of 2950 N and Canyon Rd.](#) in Provo. Thomas Watkins will give a recital dedicated to his grandmother. If you go North on Canyon Road (from BYU) it will be on the left hand side just after the bend in the road.

February 3 at 7:30 P.M. At the [Barrus Concert Hall, BYU Idaho](#) there will be a concert given by Cherry Rhodes who teaches at Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California.

February 10 the Salt Lake Chapter is having a Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza. To get information on this activity go to their website at <http://slcago.org>

February 11, 7:00 PM at the Utah [State Hospital Chapel](#) recital by Douglas Bush.

February 26, 7:30 PM in the [Provo Tabernacle](#), will be Amy Johnson's senior recital.

March 16th we will have our Bach Festival. It will be in the [Provo Central Stake building, 500 North 1220 West](#). We will need to have the pieces (with BWV numbers), you are planning to play as soon as possible so they can be approved by the Stake President. Please call Ruth Ann Hay at 801-375-2124. Our informal recital will be the day before **March 15th** so we can practice performing on the flat pedalboard.

April 28th will be our Super Saturday so be sure to mark that day on your calendar.

Please be aware that times and places may change for some of these events. Be alert for e-mails and be sure to check the most recent newsletters for the date.

From February 1 to March 31 the cost of joining AGO for the 2006/2007 year will be reduced to \$50.

BRIEF HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE PEDALBOARD

Submitted by Meg Griffith

Before the pedalboard existed, a key in the lower range on a manual was held down by a hook or lever to produce a pedal sound. The first true pedals (fifteenth century) were 3 or 4 wood mushroom shaped stubs played with the toe. Pull-downs were used from the HAUPTWERK or the BLOCKWERK; no separate ranks.

Eventually, a 35 key pedalboard of a short octave, starting with F could be found in some French classic organs. Gradually, the pedalboard grew and by the sixteenth century, the Pedal division had its own stops and chests in the form of PEDAL TOWERS.

The pedalboard developed more fully in northern Europe with the function of carrying the melody line, during the time of Bach. This progress permitted Bach to compose his works with prominent pedal parts. Joseph Fielding Smith is quoted in "Doctrines of Salvation": "Those who make these discoveries are inspired of God or they would never make them."

Flat, straight pedalboards were the first common shape with narrow spaces between them for playing with just the toes. In the mid-nineteenth century, the concave and radiating pedalboard was developed by Henry Willis in England. This hybrid became the standard pedalboard of the AGO. Flat pedalboards are returning as a preference with some organ builders in America so a visiting performer from Europe must be prepared to play on pedalboards that are flat, concave but radiating, radiating but flat, or radiating and concave!

[The Organ Encyclopedia](#) by Douglas Bush and Richard Kassel, Pages 397-399

Quote of the Month

"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds
Is fit for treasons, stragems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus.

Let no such man be trusted."

Shakespeare

The following is provided to members as information only. Policies to organists are available to organists at each Temple, so only basic information regarding the playing of the hymns is provided here. The playing of music in each Temple used to be individualized, but is now being globally changed to provide consistency. Approved lists of hymns are provided by each Temple:

Playing of Hymns for L.D.S. Temple Organists

A. Hymns are to be played as they are written in the Hymnbook and the Children’s Songbook. Only the approved hymns and children’s songs should be used.

B. They can be played with variety by using different registrations or by using a solo stop for the soprano line with a soft accompaniment on the other manual. Playing the melody an octave lower also adds a nice variety. Usually, all verses should be played, but if the hymn is very long play at least two verses before moving to another hymn.

C. Some styles are not appropriate for temple worship because they are too dramatic and should be avoided. These include: Using the expression pedal up and down throughout the hymn, and adding trills, turns, grace notes, or other embellishments.

D. Our brothers and sisters come to the temple, not only to do work for the dead, but to draw nearer to the Lord, seek specific inspiration, or to find comfort. Our music helps this happen if it is soft, reverent, and does not draw patrons’ attention away from their meditation and prayer. The music is intended to set a mood, not to draw attention to itself.