

American Guild of Organists Newsletter

Utah Valley Chapter
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Dean's Message

Here it is March already. Thanksgiving and Christmas are only a memory. Spring is on its way. In spite of intermittent snow storms that put a kink in our plans, we are looking forward to the first blooms of spring, opening our windows to let fresh air into our homes to replace the dusky smells of winter. The inversion layer that plagues some of us is on its way out, replaced with the clean fresh air pregnant with springtime potential. "Fun" seems about to take its rightful place again in our vocabulary. We will no longer be stuck inside because of the cold or the foul weather.

Because my daughter is an Irish dancer, March is a fun month. She has spent the last several months getting ready for one performance or another. Irish dance is so much fun to watch. When she's done, I feel tired. She is supposed to teach the YSA group a traditional Irish Reel on the 17th as an activity. Even without a large mug of Guinness, that should be absolutely hysterical to watch.

This past week, the 'final five' have had their final auditions and performances for a position as Tabernacle organists. I am sure that most of us know at least one or more of those finalist. Our hearts and hopes go out to all of them! A job very well done! Good luck to each and every one of them, I'm sure we will hear the results of the choice very soon!

The last three months of our AGO year are before us, which will end in our May closing social. The year has passed by so quickly! We have so many wonderful things planned for these last few months. Peruse this Newsletter, and mark your calendars to take part in these activities. You won't want to miss any of them. Our annual Bach recital is coming up, and it's time to really polish off those pieces!

I would like to encourage the members of our Chapter to take a moment to jot down some possible ideas for our upcoming year. Perhaps some of your ideas can be incorporated. It isn't possible to fulfill every wish, but it's always wonderful to hear new ideas. What worked for you, what didn't. Suggestions are always welcome!

To my fellow Chapter officers, again, my deepest thanks to each and every one of you for jobs very well done! I am personally hoping to be able to participate more often, health allowing, and take part in these wonderful activities and the camaraderie that we share as a group!

As my family genealogy can attest, my ancestors came to this country in the early 1700's from Dublin, Ireland. They settled first in the Carolinas and then continued to move south, and I would like to share their blessing to you:

May you always have work for your hands to do.
May your pockets hold always a coin or two.
May the sun shine bright on your windowpane.
May the rainbow be certain to follow each rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you.
And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

Have a wonderful St. Patrick's Day! Have a little fun, keep your wits about you, and remember, there is a little (or a lot) of Irish in all of us!

Sincerely,
Nancy Christensen

J.S. BACH AND NUMEROLOGY

Johann Sebastian Bach was a convinced and adept practitioner of numerology. The application of its principles in his final musical offering to God seems like an attempt to send his maker a message in a very personal code." Using the number scale, God would of course be symbolized by the number 1; Jesus Christ, the number 2; the Trinity, 3." In the chorale prelude of "The St. Matthew Passion" the Ten Commandments are symbolized with the basic theme appearing ten times. In the alphabet, the letters B-A-C-H equal 14 (e. g. B is 2 because it is the 2nd number in the alphabet). Bach and other composers used these letters and their equivalent to make musical themes. The portrait of Bach by Elias Gottlieb Housmann shows Bach's six-buttoned coat as a reference to the six-part fugal work held in his hand. Bach submitted this work as an "approval piece" (14 Canonic Variations of Luther's hymn, 'Vom Himmel Hoch') for his acceptance as a member to Lorenz Mizler's famed musical society. Bach was also the 14th member of the society. He planned that by waiting until George Fredrick Handel became the 13th member.

Trinitarian symbolism appears in the third part of the Eb Prelude (BWV 552) with a key signature of 3 flats and the fugue with its 3 subjects. The total of measures comprising Bach's B Minor Mass equals 2,345. When added together, they equal 14, the familiar musical signature of Bach. This is just a small sampling of Bach's treatment of his significance with religious numbers. The important message is Bach's close connection with his Creator and Bach's dedication to glorify Him. (Sources: "Johann Sebastian Bach: As His World Knew Him" by Otto Bettman, pages 139, 140 and "Bach" by Malcom Boyd, pages 194, 214, 234)

Submitted by Meg Griffith

Quote of the Month

"The works of his (Bach's) creation--the highest outcome of an essentially national art, whose origin lies in the period of the Reformation--are like a precious seed which bursts the soil at last to be garnered in perennial sheaves. Henceforth it will not be possible that Bach should be forgotten so long as the German people exist. His resurrection, in the works of a later generation of artists, has already begun; but we who are not of the mystic guild have our duty too, each in his degree, to labour that the spirit of the great man may be more widely understood and loved." (Philipp Spitta, Vol. 3, page 278)

PIPES IN THE DESERT



THE NEXT MID-WINTER CONCLAVE

EXPERIENCE ORGAN AND CHORAL MUSIC IN THE BEAUTIFUL SONORAN DESERT

EXPLORE WAYS TO RE-ENERGIZE CHURCH MUSIC

ENJOY MUSIC AND HOSPITALITY WITH A SOUTHWESTERN FLAIR

FOR ADDITIONAL INFO VISIT: WWW.AGOIXAZ.COM

**TUCSON, ARIZONA
JANUARY 20-24 2008**

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.

March 21st at 7:30 P.M. is A Celebration of J.S. Bach's 322nd Birthday performed by Dr. Bush in the [Madsen Recital Hall](#).

April 4th at 7:30 P.M. Jenya Tyltina will give her Senior Recital at the [Assembly Hall on Temple Square](#)

April 11th Einst Kubitschek from Innsbruck Austria will be playing at the [Cathedral of the Madeleine at 7:30](#)

April 17th at 8:00 P.M. Ruth Eldridge will be giving her Senior Recital at the [Cathedral of the Madeleine](#).

April 28th will be our Super Saturday. Linda Margetts will be our keynote speaker, 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 now till March 31 the cost of joining AGO for the 2006/2007 year will be reduced to \$50.

For those of you interested in what is new among organs, this is a website with a new portable organ. It looks like a very interesting alternative to conventional organs. <http://www.hoffrichter-kirchenorgel.de/>

In commemoration of the reopening of the Salt Lake Tabernacle following the most extensive renovation in its 140 year history, a third "American Classic Organ Symposium" will be held on April 18-22, 2007. Events include recitals by Gillian Weir and Ken Cowan; daily noon recitals featuring members of the resident organ staff; a concert by the Utah Symphony; lectures by Jack Bethards, Ken Cowan, Joseph Dzeda, and others; a round-table discussion featuring symposium principals; a behind-the-scenes tour of the refurbished Tabernacle; and the regular Thursday evening rehearsal and Sunday morning broadcast of the "Music and the Spoken Word" program featuring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. All events (with the exception of the Saturday evening banquet) are free of charge.

We encourage those who are planning to attend all or part of the symposium to pre-register so that we can be sure that facilities and printed materials are adequate. For detailed information and to register online, go to www.mormontabernaclechoir.org/acos.

JOHN OBETZ TO BE HONORED AT AGO RECITAL AND GALA BENEFIT RECEPTION IN KANSAS CITY

NEW YORK CITY — The American Guild of Organists (AGO) will sponsor a RECITAL and GALA BENEFIT RECEPTION honoring organist JOHN OBETZ on Sunday, April 15, 2007. The Recital will begin at 3 p.m. at the Community of Christ, Independence, Mo. The Gala Benefit Reception will follow in downtown Kansas City. All proceeds will be placed into the AGO Endowment Fund in John Obetz's honor. Performers will be John Obetz, Frederick Swann, Janet Kraybill, T. Jared Stellmacher, and the choir of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral. American Public Media's Pipedreams host Michael Barone will serve as master of ceremonies. The performances will feature both the Auditorium (IV/113 Aeolian-Skinner) and Temple (IV/102 Casavant) organs of the Community of Christ. Admission is free. A free-will offering is requested. Tickets for the gala reception are \$100 per person and must be purchased in advance from AGO National Headquarters by telephone (212-870-2311, ext. 4308), e-mail <gala@agohq.org>, or online at <www.agohq.org>. The gala is sponsored by the AGO National Council and its Development Committee, Bruce P. Bengtson, AGO, director. Major funding for the gala is provided by Quimby Pipe Organs Inc., Revell Inc., and J.O. Love.

JOHN OBETZ, a resident of Leawood, Kans., has been one of America's most widely heard organists. From 1967 to 1998, he was the principal organist for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ) in Independence, Mo., where thousands of listeners heard his weekly half-hour recital, "The Auditorium Organ," via satellite broadcast. Dr. Obetz has concertized throughout the United States, England, and Europe.

Dr. Obetz received both the bachelor of music and master of music degrees from Northwestern University, and earned a doctorate in sacred music at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he studied with Vernon de Tar. Further study included work with Marie-Claire Alain and participation in the International Academy for Organists in Haarlem, The Netherlands. He served as adjunct associate professor of music at the University of Missouri at Kansas City until his retirement in 2005. An active member of the AGO, Dr. Obetz served on the AGO National Council for 19 years, chairing several committees. He is a past Dean and Regional Chairman.

The AGO's lively concern for education and outreach prompted the formation of the AGO ENDOWMENT FUND in 1994. The purpose of this fund is to expand programs for leadership development among AGO members; educate new organists; and cultivate new audiences for organ and choral music. Tax-deductible contributions to the Endowment Fund are invested in perpetuity to produce continuing income support for essential Guild educational programs and projects.

