

American Guild of Organists Newsletter

Utah Valley Chapter #928
2007-2008

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Tribute to Olivier Messiaen

By Meg Griffith

This article was submitted 27 April, the anniversary of Messiaen's death date in 1992. This modest genius started composing at age 8. He became a teacher of organ, composition, harmony and analysis. He wrote a book on technique and didn't retire until age 70. While he served in the Army, he was a POW in 1941 for a year. During that time, he composed his work, "Quartet for the End of Time" and got permission to perform it with some other prisoners with what inferior and damaged instruments that were available (e.g. a cello with 3 strings and an out-of-tune piano with broken keys). That concert had a profound encouraging impact on 5000 other prisoners who were refreshed with Messiaen's music.

Messiaen was the organist at l'Eglise de la Sainte Trinite in Paris for over 40 years. The 3 elements that describe the works of Messiaen are the theological creed of the Catholic faith, the theme of love and interest of nature. His interest in bird songs was inserted into his music. He said, "I listen to them with great concentration and in great joy, and also with some humility. I do not take their gift simply as it comes to me. When I transcribe a birdsong, there is always something on my own that goes into it, some little matter of style, some answer to a technical need. I am a musician, not an ornithologist, after all!"

His musical style stems from Greek meters, medieval rhythmic procedures, Hindu rhythms and later developments of the rhythms of Western music. Much of his music has references to his religious beliefs. He had a major influence on contemporary music. He was well known for his work, "Trois petites Liturgies." "His music is so innovative and complex that much of it still awaits its fullest appreciation. By the end of his long life, both the composer and his compositions had won universal recognition and praise." He taught his students to appreciate freedom and to explore their own composition freedom. This did not refer to fantasy, disorder, revolt or indifference, but a constructive freedom, with self-control, respect for others and the search for truth. He was a man of peaceful composure and thoughtfulness of others.

(Sources: "The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music" - Choir & Organ magazine, May/June 2008 and "Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers")

May 16th 7:30: Our May informal will be at Susan Jorgensen's chapel in Orem.

The address is **800 East 545 South**.

It is just north of Costco/University Mall. Coming from State Street in Orem, turn east on 800 South and then north on 800 East, church is on east side of street about two blocks from the light.

Coming from University Parkway/Diagonal, turn north on 800 East (Red Lobster is on the northeast corner) continue heading north through 800 south traffic light, church is on the east side of the street about two blocks for the light.

May 20th 7:30: **Franklin D. Ashdown
The Provo Tabernacle**

After remarks from Frank: Don Cook, David Chamberlin, Frank Ashdown, and James Drake will play eight of Frank's compositions. Frank also mentioned he would have some of his music to hand out that night. Bring some refreshments to share if you have time. If you don't have time or the desire to bring food, just bring yourselves.

Felix Hell will be giving two concerts, a short one at Libby Gardner Hall on Fathers' Day, [June 15th](#), and a full length one on the [17th June](#) at the Tabernacle. To learn more about these events go to the Salt Lake AGO chapter website at: <http://www.slicago.org> Dues for the 2008-2009 year are now payable and due by 31 July. Forms may be accessed by going to our website at www.geocities.com/uvagonewsletter. and clicking on membership form. DeeAnne Stone has not had a chance to update this form, but everything is the same as last year except the date. Just cross out 2007-2008 and replace it with 2008-2009.

Quote of the month

"We are brothers in Christ, and brothers in music, too."

- Jean Langlais

Congratulations to our new chapter officers. We look forward to your fresh ideas and energy.

Dean—Mike Carson

Sub-dean – Gayle Farnsworth

Secretary – Karl Kamper

Treasurer – Joan Barnett

Newsletter editor –Carol Dean

Historian – Florence Hawkinson

Educational concerns – Lori Serr

Student representative – Felipe

Dominquez

Member-at-large – David Chamberlin

Member-at-large – Ruth Ann Hay

Member-at-large – Lella Pomeroy

Member-at-large – Claire Rogers

AGO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES UNVEILS NEW PRODUCTS

New CDs Featuring the Organ Works of Dieterich Buxtehude and Conversations and Lessons with David Craighead Added to AGO Bookstore

NEW YORK CITY—The American Guild of Organists (AGO) and its Committee on Educational Resources are excited to announce the addition of two new products to its catalog of educational resources: *Playing Dieterich Buxtehude's Works Rhetorically*, by Leon W. Couch III, and *Conversations and Lessons with David Craighead*, by Judith Hancock. Both are available for purchase online at <www.agohq.org> or by calling 800-AGO-5115.

Playing Dieterich Buxtehude's Works Rhetorically

This three-CD presentation by Leon Couch provides a stimulating discussion of the historical, rhetorical, theoretical, and practical aspects of musical rhetoric. He demonstrates how a practical application of rhetoric to the music of Buxtehude can make a dramatic impact. The resource was designed to benefit both the accomplished organist as well as the beginning student. This product includes

three CDs: two lecture CDs, and a CD containing performances of sample works, the complete lecture texts in PDF documents, and a printed lecture text booklet with examples. Funding for this project was generously provided by the Boston (Mass.) AGO Chapter Special Projects Advisory Committee, Converse College, the District of Columbia AGO Foundation, and Goshen College. \$25.

Conversations and Lessons with David Craighead

The AGO Committee on Educational Resources endeavors to preserve the legacies of famous organists and teachers. In *Conversations and Lessons with David Craighead*, this renowned teacher shares his insights in an interview and in recordings of his lessons. David Craighead was professor of organ and chair of the organ department at the Eastman School of Music from 1955 to 1992. An accomplished organ artist, he has been the recipient of many awards throughout his career. Dr. Craighead was an exceptionally gifted teacher, and many of his students now hold prominent positions across the country. As Judith Hancock plays *The World Awaiting the Saviour* (Dupré) and *Jesus Christus Unser Heiland* (Bach), Dr. Craighead's discussion touches on teaching methods, score preparation, touch, and other topics of interest for organists at different levels of proficiency. \$10.

For further information, please contact AGO Manager of Educational Resources Harold Calhoun, 212-870-2311 (ext. 4318) or e-mail <hc@agohq.org>.

There are still openings for our region's **Pipe Organ Encounter**, to be held June 15-20 in Salt Lake City, Utah, and hosted by the **Salt Lake City Chapter**. This is an amazing opportunity for teen organists and pianists to learn and to socialize together. Contact [Ingrid Hersman at hersman@sisna.com](mailto:hersman@sisna.com) or visit the website at www.slicago.org for more information.

There is still time to register for our National Convention in the Twin Cities June

222-26. Visit <http://www.ago2008.org/> for all the information. The Hilton hotel is full, but you may also get the convention rate at the nearby Marriott City Center. There will be a door prize at the Annual Meeting, so don't skip it – you must be present to win! It's a good one – 2010 national convention expenses paid!

You are invited to the **Regional Meeting** during the convention. It will be **Thursday, June 26, at 4:00 PM** and will be short so that we all have time to eat dinner before bus departures. This meeting is for **all** members of our region, not just officers

International Year of the Organ: See information about the October 19 Organ Spectacular and events listed at <http://www.agohq.org/events/index.html>.

NEW YORK CITY—The American Guild of Organists (AGO) is holding the biennial election of its National Council for a term of two years, July 2008–June 2010. Voting is underway as of April 1. All regular, special, student, partner, and independent members of the AGO are eligible to vote and encouraged to do so online at <www.intelliscaninc.net/organists> or by using the paper ballot that was mailed with the April issue of *The American Organist Magazine*. All ballots must be submitted electronically or returned by mail postmarked by June 1, 2008. Ballots will be received and counted by an independent election management firm, Intelliscan Inc.

Eight officers and national councillors and nine regional councillors will be elected to serve as the governing board of the AGO, the largest organization in the world dedicated to the organ and sacred music profession. Results of the election will be announced and the new National Council installed at the AGO Annual Meeting on June 25, 2008, during the AGO National Convention in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn. Those elected will serve for a term of two years, July 1, 2008–June 30, 2010.