



The Trompette



The Newsletter of the Westchester Chapter - American Guild of Organists

AUGUST 2011

VOLUME 10, #12

Greetings From the Dean...

How is your summer going? Hopefully, it's not been too busy. Here, we have finally slowed down enough to stop and smell the roses. That is, if one could find them in all the weeds!

It's hard to believe the Convention for Regions I and II was a mere three days; it was so packed with great organ playing and workshops. The organs were fabulous, and three of the venues were within easy walking distance of the hotel. Creativity, personality and great ensemble-playing were in full display. A gorgeous Skinner organ was played by Ken Cowan at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in a concert including "The Soul of the Lake" by Karg-Elert (so many different and beautiful registrations), Danse Macabre by Saint-Saens (Cowan's transcription, again with so much creativity) and Healey Willan's "Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue." The recital played by Tom Murray at the Cathedral Baslica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, on a Schantz, also displayed a rich variety of colors in a program again including Saint-Saens, plus J.S. Bach, Hindemith and Widor. The two young winners of Region I and II, Kenneth Miller and Michael Hey, respectively, while thrilling us with their virtuosity, were also delightful for their personalities and how they expressed themselves both in their music and program introductions. Finally, (because if I don't stop, I could keep writing for pages about the convention), Marilyn Keiser astounded the audience by her phenomenal accompanying and soloing in a concert that went from one incredibly difficult piece to another. We all felt very privileged to witness this and all the other convention events.

Listening to these different organs back-to-back really brought home to me how important the space is. Organ sound is organ-plus-sanctuary, they can't really be separated, which is different from other instruments. Also, where we found ourselves sitting became a big factor in how we heard each concert. I *think* I was sitting too close for some venues; I could feel it in my teeth! However, too far away, and my mother had difficulty hearing. Anyone interested in a program about acoustics and the organ, sometime?

If you would like to share your experiences about this convention or another regional convention, workshop, etc. that you were privileged to attend this summer, please write your thoughts and impressions and send them to **John Ceconi** for an upcoming newsletter. And thank you for taking the time to share with us.

A package just arrived! It's music ordered at the convention exhibits. (Difficult to resist trying them out on the piano right away!) From Wayne Leupold Editions: "Exodus Suite for Organ, A tribute to Harriet Tubman" by Sharon J. Willis, which uses some musical themes based on spirituals; "Yankee Doodle Variations for Organ" by Dennis Janzer; "Lord, Send Your Power," a Nigerian Choral Anthem for SATB and piano by Godwin Sadoh, and "Eloge I" by Jean Guillou (for my mother, to keep her busy.) Great Organ Transcriptions, edited by Rollin Smith, published by Dover, has some nice realizations of two of J.S. Bach's solo violin partitas and romantic orchestral classics.

Sadly, due to travel I missed our field trip to Wanamaker Day in Philadelphia on Saturday, June 25th, but what a boost to receive an e-mail from Webmaster **Virginia Bender** with the picture of all the smiling attendees! Thank you to Registrar **Kevin Walsh**, our Wanamaker enthusiast, for the inspiration behind this program for our Chapter. Thank you to **Joyce Gardner** and **Tim Keenan-Devlin** for helping coordinate the passengers (squeezing them into the van?) and thanks to Virginia Bender for her article to the TAO magazine and Wanamaker organ photos, all of which can be seen on our website. Please read John Andre's interesting article in this issue: "The Influence of the Wanamaker Organ," which describes the very beneficial, cultural impact this instrument has made.

It's going to be a busy and exciting August for the WAGO board as we prepare for our 60th anniversary season! Your input, questions and offers to help are always welcome. Contact me or other members of the Board, whose information you have in the Directory and from the front page of *The Trompette*. We are all here to help, so please don't hesitate to ask when you need something from Westchester AGO.

Bye for now. (Gotta go play my new music!)

Alice Avouris

Dean

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Concert Calendar

To view the schedule of music events at Grace Church, White Plains, go to:
www.dtmusic.org/

To view the schedule of musical events at Hitchcock Presbyterian Church, Scarsdale, go to: www.hitchcockpresby.org/secondary/4_0.html

Reminder:

Dues are due! If you haven't already done so please send your dues and advertisement payments to the Registrar.

Please note:

Bob Chase is preparing a history for Westchester Chapter. However, he has absolutely no program information for the years 1973-1998. If anyone has any information, even if it's only one Chapter program, please contact Bob at his email address, so the blanks can be filled in. He also has no data on the Dean, Frederick Young (1971-72).

Reads & Mixtures

Community Choir for Healing Event on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 in Mt. Kisco

A community choir will be formed to sing at this 4:00 PM event on Sunday, 9/11/11, at the Fox Lane High School in Mt. Kisco. Please alert your choir of this opportunity to join together to sing 5 songs for the hour long gathering. Music will be sent via e-mails to each director who gets in touch with **Eileen Laurence**. Copies of the music will be available at the first rehearsal on Tuesday evening, 9/6 from 7:00 - 9:00 in the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church, 31 Bedford Road in Katonah, NY.

This will be a combined interfaith/civic gathering with clergy from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions and many civic dignitaries in attendance sponsored by Unity Made Visible, a local interfaith group. President Clinton has been invited and has indicated that he might be able to come. If that is the case, we certainly will give him an expanded speaking opportunity. A drumming circle will open the event and an international Flag ceremony will conclude our time together.

The First Presbyterian Church of Katonah, along with the Croton Falls Presbyterian Church, the Antioch Baptist Church of Bedford Hills, the Jewish Family Congregation of South Salem, and the Upper Westchester Muslim Society of Thornwood, were all founding members of Unity Made Visible in 2004. Since then UMV has welcomed representatives from other houses of worship and became a cooperation circle of the United Religions Initiative (URI), a world-wide organization whose purpose is to promote enduring multi-faith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the earth and all living beings.

The purpose of the event on 9/11/11 is to redirect the conversation surrounding this tragedy away from divisive rhetoric and toward transformative dialogue. Please get in touch with Eileen Laurence, for details and a list of the music.

The Influence of the Wanamaker Organ

The Wanamaker organ is not just an exceptionally large instrument. It has had a profound influence on the American organ scene and literature.

On June first, 1910, Dr. Alexander Russell, himself a fine concert organist, was appointed concert director for the John Wanamaker New York Auditorium and the Philadelphia Wanamaker Store. Dr. Russell began to bring organists to tour America; therefore, some of the most famous organists of Europe were heard here. Among them were Enrico Bossi, Marcel Dupre, Fernando Germani, Alfred Hollins, Siegfried Karg-Elert, Gunther Ramin, Louis Vierne, Nadia Boulanger and Charles Courboin. Dr. Charles N.M. Courboin became the organist of the Philadelphia store. This was during the brilliant period when the then unprecedented organ was heard in formal evening recitals with such other attractions as Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Guest organists would open in New York and then perform in Philadelphia. Without the motivation of the Wanamaker organ and the successful commercial enterprise supporting it, these artists might not have come to America.

Very early was formed the association of Dr. Russel and Bernard R. Laberge, Claire Coci's husband. Laberge continued the management long after Dr. Russel and Wanamakers were no longer involved. Later Laberge's employee Lilian Murtagh bought the agency.

Rodman Wanamaker had installed the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition organ in the Philadelphia store in 1911. Additions were made rapidly, so that by 1921 the organ had grown from 140 to 232 stops (18,000 pipes), controlled by a five manual console. In 1921, after a fire, Wanamaker replaced the Austin organ in the New York store auditorium with a very large organ and sent to France for an organist to inaugurate it.

The organist was Marcel Dupre. On his first six-week visit to America in November and December 1921, Dupre played 14 concerts alternating between the Wanamaker stores in New York and Philadelphia.

Like other French virtuosi Guilmant and Bonnet, Dupre ended each concert with an improvisation on a submitted theme. But Dupre came with a more novel accomplishment: he improvised entire symphonies!

It was at his third recital in Philadelphia on Thursday evening, December 8, 1921, before 8,000 people, with an improvisation on six disparate themes submitted moments before, that Dupre created his "Symphonie-Passion, a Musical Delineation of the Life of Christ." Later in his hotel room Dupre hastily made some notes while still under the divine fire of inspiration. The written work was completed in the summer of 1924. Few musical compositions owe their origin to so bizarre a set of circumstances. Now, 56 years after its composition, the "Passion Symphony" has maintained a popular place in the standard repertoire and has been recorded in its entirety more times than any other symphony for organ.

Further additions were made to the Wanamaker organ from 1923 to 193, including the 88 rank string division (the organ has 115 string ranks), when the six-manual console was finished, bringing the total to 451 stops and 30,067 pipes.

Information from "American Composers Sketch No. 45" by T. Scott Buhrman and "Marcel Dupre's Passion Symphony" by Rollin Smith, as printed in "The Stentor."

Norman A. André

The *Friends of the Wanamaker Organ's* next major Centennial event is on Saturday October 1, 2011: a concert with Peter Richard Conte, conductor Rossen Milanov and the Symphony in C orchestra. Works include the Charles-Marie Widor Sixth Symphony for Organ and Orchestra, Joseph Jongen's "Hymne"

and "Alleluia," and the Guilman Symphony No. 2 for Organ and Orchestra. The event is held in full partnership with Macy's.

FOR TICKETS: Tickets are on sale now exclusively at SymphonyinC.org, or by calling (856) 963-6683. Because the orchestra will be on the balcony in front of the organ, the best seats for hearing and seeing the orchestra musicians are in the back of the Grand Court, with the very prime seats directly opposite the Organ or opposite the Console in raked rows on the Second Floor. There are seats available for every pocketbook. Ticket proceeds benefit the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ. All seats are general admission by section. Because Symphony in C patrons are also buying tickets, and because there is strictly limited seating for this event, it is strongly suggested that you secure your seats as soon as possible. For details on visiting Macy's and Philadelphia see the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ website at wanamakerorgan.com

The AGO Annual Fund

You can give to the AGO Annual Fund as an individual member of the Westchester Chapter. The easiest way is to go to the website, agohq.org, scroll down and look for the small box titled "AGO Annual Fund". Click on this, and see all the wonderful things the AGO does with these contributions. Supporting AGO-sponsored organ competitions, helping reach to teach young potential organists, certification prizes and other support for standards of excellence are just some of the uses that our support as individual organists make possible. Consider making a difference now and helping to guarantee the future of our profession by contributing today. If you prefer to use surface mail, a hard copy of the donation form is provided below:

AGO Annual Fund
American Guild of Organists
475 Riverside Drive, Suite # 1260
New York, NY 10115

I would like to support the ongoing programs of the American Guild of Organists.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to the AGO Annual Fund

\$ 

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Please print, complete and mail form to above address.

From Your Newsletter Editors...

The Dean and the Executive Committee encourage you to send informative articles and any other items of interest for publication in the Newsletter.

The Trompette is sent out by email, and by regular mail to those members without an email address. The electronic versions are sent out immediately after finalization, but processing the printed copies can take a week or more, plus the delivery of the regular postal mail can additionally take a week or more. If you have an email address, but are presently receiving your copy by postal mail, consider receiving it electronically instead, saving the Chapter postage expense. Send your email address to: Lois Simmonds

Please send us your material by the **20th of each month** to ensure that we will be able to deliver the Newsletter to the membership on or about the 1st of each month. If still relevant, late submissions will be published in the subsequent issue.

Do not send in items more than once. For the Concert Calendar, include event, date, time, location, cost (if any) and an information phone number. (Incomplete or unclear submissions cannot be printed.) Due to space constraints, articles and notices are frequently edited.

If you have provided a notice for the “Empty Benches” section, please be advised that postings will be carried for 3 calendar months unless we are advised that the position has either been filled or is still active. Newest listings appear first. Listings carried more than one month will be arranged alphabetically by organization and will indicate the month they were first run. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping *The Trompette* accurate and up-to-date.

Send your concert notices, articles, and other materials to:

John Cecconi (MS Word is preferred)

Be sure to visit the Chapter Website: www.agowestchester.org.

Thank you!

John Cecconi
Lois Simmonds
The Trompette Editors

*Here is the LATEST issue of the
Westchester Chapter AGO Newsletter.....*

Inside:

**Alice's musings; Concert Schedule; The
Influence of the Wanamaker Organ; "AGO
Annual fund ...and a lot more!**

*Mark your calendar now and you won't miss an
important date!*

Westchester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
The Trompette
John Cecconi &
Lois Simmonds, Editors