



PIPELINE

VOLUME 21 NUMBER 4

NOVEMBER, 2004

FELIX HELL RECITAL

A GREAT SUCCESS!

German teenage prodigy Felix Hell presented a dazzling technique with his concert at First Lutheran in Fargo on Sunday, October 24th, 2004. The concert almost didn't take place since on Saturday's practice during the Reger number, one of the power supplies blew out in the organ. With only one left, the resulting drop in power caused the combination pistons to become unreliable. Hooking a car battery up to the organ did the trick. (Thanks to Mike Johnson.)

Some highlights are in order. Anyone who was on the verge of falling asleep found themselves jolted awake as hell opened with the Bach Fantasy and Fugue in g minor with full Principal choruses with mixtures. Hell uses a very pronounced detached style throughout which many today would question. In the fifties and sixties, organ musicologists insisted that Bach played this way where you could insert a sheet of paper between the notes. This was especially true with the pedal passages where one would probably opt for this technique in a very reverberant room. The Fantasy was well phrased and the fugue literally danced.

Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D major, mostly reserved for first year organ majors, came out of the gate with ascending scales both in the hands and feet. This portion was played much faster than this reviewer has ever heard and slowing it down somewhat would have helped the passages to become more clear. This particular prelude is unusual for Bach as it abruptly ends and goes into a quieter Alle Breve as if he were to say, "I don't like the way this is turning out. I think I will try something different." The fugue featured an echo effect usually assigned to a Positiv with a lighter registration. Hell instead used the antiphonal division in the balcony, a technique not possible during Bach's time until electric chest actions came into being. During one difficult pedal passage, Hell slipped on a wrong note as he turned the page.

The Reger BACH shook dust out of the rafters but the Fargo tornado sirens were silent! Hell displayed body language ala Virgil Fox and you could tell he was having the time of his life. (this number was a special request of the reviewer.) The fugue was not written in the strict baroque style but resembled more of a passacaglia. I am happy to report that First Lutheran is still standing.

Following the intermission, Hell played Mozart's Fantasy in f minor sometimes called his "clock music." He refrained from opening it with a powerful registration as most artists do which lent a certain delicacy but unmistakably baroque in writing style. The piece then evolves into a Mozartian string quartet but then the composer takes it by the scruff of the neck and sets it back down in the 17th century again.

The Rheinberger Abendfriede (Evening Piece) was the surprise of the evening where Hell tried to make the organ sound theatrical with all the tremos going and using only eight-foot stops.

Three standing ovations is arguably a record for organists appearing in the FM area. Hell had reduced scores on his music rack but seldom looked up. His engaging personality without a hint of aloofness endeared him to the audience immediately.

His CD's were snapped up like hotcakes after the concert had ended. In all the 45 years of hearing concerts by this reviewer this one tops them all!!



Upcoming Events

Program on MIDI

November 7, 2004

Sunday at 4 p.m.

St. John Lutheran Church

Fargo, ND

Christmas Hymn Sing

December 5, 2004

Sunday at 7 p.m.

Gethsemane Cathedral

Fargo, ND

Pedals, Pipes and Pizza

January 9, 2005

Sunday at 4 p.m.

Dilworth Lutheran Church

Dilworth, MN

Hymn Festival

February 20, 2005

Sunday at 6:30 p.m.

Good Shepherd Lutheran

Moorhead, MN

(rehearsals 2/13, 2/20 @ 2 p.m.)

Meet with Grand Forks Chapter

April 10, 2005

2:30 p.m.

Organ crawl at Cathedral, First Presb.

Trinity and Our Saviour's.

Dinner to follow. More details

In later issues.

Potluck Supper and Chapter Meeting

May 15, 2005 at 5 p.m.

Lance and Judy's, 201 NE 3rd St.

Dilworth, MN

SPECIAL ANTHEM IN FERGUS FALLS

A special anthem will be presented at both the 8:30 and 11:00 services on Reformation Sunday, October 31, 2004 at First Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, Minnesota. The Senior choir (SATB), 3 octave Hand bell choir, and organist Keith Melberg will present "Come and Sing, Sing unto the Lord," a composition by Susan M. Clambey. (Susan was confirmed and married there, her parents are still members.)

NEW VOCAL CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Chapter member Dr. Mark Ring has founded a new professional vocal chamber ensemble, Voices of Concord. The group will be composed entirely of professional singers from our region, with most performances sung one voice per part, exploring the rich field of vocal chamber music.

The group's inaugural concert will be Sunday, November 7, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. in Concordia College's Christiansen Recital Hall. Music will include the Zigeunerlieder "Gypsy Songs" by Brahms, plus a selection of Quartets and Duets from favorite operas. Tickets are \$5 and are available at the door. For more information call 284-2434. Future performances include Haydn's Seven Last Words with vocal and string quartets on February 6, 2005

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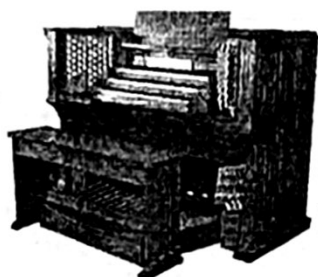
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Felix and Hans Hell, Carolyn Hensrud at Felix' recital at First Lutheran, Fargo, ND.



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2143 performances in theatre, dance, music and broadcasts serving 799,500 people

219,194 tickets valued at \$3,828,985 sold, many events free

Arts organizations purchased \$6,430,420 in goods and services

People employed in the arts total \$8,086,546 in payroll

There are currently 44 member organizations of which AGO is one!

PRO MUSICA'S THIRD SEASON 2004-2005

A series bringing together local, national and international performers to benefit
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First Presbyterian Church, 5555 South Washington Street
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December 2, 2004 Donilyn Bergman, Violinist

January 27, 2005 Grand Cities Children's Choirs

March 3, 2005 Howard and Frances Karp, Pianists

May 5, 2005 Andrew Unsworth, organist

Tickets available at the door, \$15 adult/\$5 Student/\$30 Family special
Season ticket \$75 Adult/\$25 Student

A NOTE OF THANKS

It is wonderful to live in a community of musician friends that encourage each other. And to live in a musical community where we can continue to be inspired by those around us, and by the special events brought in to lift our eyes and our spirits. Thanks to the many AGO friends who took time to come to my concert on October 3rd at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. You have formed a wonderful support group over many years. Judy Sanders was my tremendous accompanist. A special thank you to Lance Johnson, for the wonderful write up about my original compositions printed in the Pipeline. My Benefit Concert raised \$595 for Habitat for Humanity besides providing me an opportunity to share my compositions. Thanks to the many committee members over the years who have brought guest organists from all over the world to play and inspire us. The Fabulous Felix Feature Event was another inspiration. I'm going to keep practicing the "Carillon" which Felix played as his encore. Submitted by Susan Clambey.

BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE WORLD HUNGER APPEAL

Sunday, November 14, 2004 at 2 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 402 South Court Street in Fergus Falls, MN. Original compositions of Susan Clambey will be featured. The concert is similar to an October 3rd even in Moorhead.

ADVERTISING BILLING INFORMATION

After several years of inactivity regarding advertising rates in the Pipeline the RRV AGO would like to ask the support of advertisers by posting the following rates for ads in the Pipeline.

1/2 page \$100

1/4 page \$50

Business card \$15

Thank you for your support!

PRINCIPALS OF GOOD MELODY

Part I

By Lance E. Johnson

Last year my theatre organ class at the Center for the Arts in Fergus Falls began to look at melody to improve their improvising as they are learning to score silent films. It is noteworthy that a recent AGO convention had a seminar on this very topic.

My students then were assigned a melody of their own in which they were given a certain mood to describe the action on the screen. In the next few newsletters I will list the ten Principals of good melody and describe each. These principals apply to any writing whether it pertains to hymnody, choral writing or even popular music.

More and more musicians should explore writing their own material. They will find a certain degree of satisfaction in their new creations. There is no rule saying that as a church organist you have to play by a written score at all times. I can well remember being assigned compositions to write for organ while I was studying for my bachelor's degree under Dr. Roger Hannay at Concordia (Hannay went on to become a prolific choral composer whose works are well known with choir directors.) If you don't feel up to writing a complete work, you may try to write a hymn setting or arrange a popular hymn tune for your choir. In an academic setting we were required to write in a certain style first and then in a contemporary manner. In my own case, I felt I did better with the former than the latter.

If you are looking for these principals in today's popular music or praise bands, you will probably not find them. This is because this type of music is devoid of melody, rhythm and structure. It is unusual to find this music with more than four or five notes in the entire melodic line. Rhythms are limited to mostly quarter notes and a few eighth notes. The use of accidentals and modulations were foreign to pop composers as most don't know what these are anyway.

In my own Dilworth Lutheran Church, we had a substitute organist who was a Hollywood screen writer. She improvised all preludes and unfortunately it was very bad as she did not structure her music. Something like this should never be left to chance but instead requires good preparation.

In our annual convention of the American Institute of Organ Builders, many times an artist will ask for a theme from the audience to improvise upon. These artists are well trained and can improvise to an astonishing degree. One particular improvisation took place at the Cleveland convention on a large three manual Walter Holtkamp, Sr. organ played by Dr. Karel Paukert. Following his presentation, the organ builders jumped to their feet in a standing ovation with vigorous applause.

PRINCIPAL NO. 1

The melody must evoke listener interest. In music Appreciation 101, you learned that music is defined as a meaningful succession of tones. A composer may think that he or she has just thought up a terrific melody only to find that no one likes it. We have all heard about a certain composer who wakes up in the middle of the night with a wonderful melody in their head only to completely forget it before it's time to arise. Another test is if you have written something out, take another look at it in a week and see if you still like it. A sad state of affairs exists with some publishing firms that will publish music no matter how bad it is. This allows poor music to escape and be thrust upon us. Pastor Paul Hanson, formerly of Trinity Lutheran in Moorhead, once opened his sermon by asking, "Name a popular song from ten years ago to save your life!" His sermon centered around the theme of that which endures. He mentioned the great musical composers of centuries past whose melodies are still sung every Sunday. (continued in this issue.)

MELODY continued

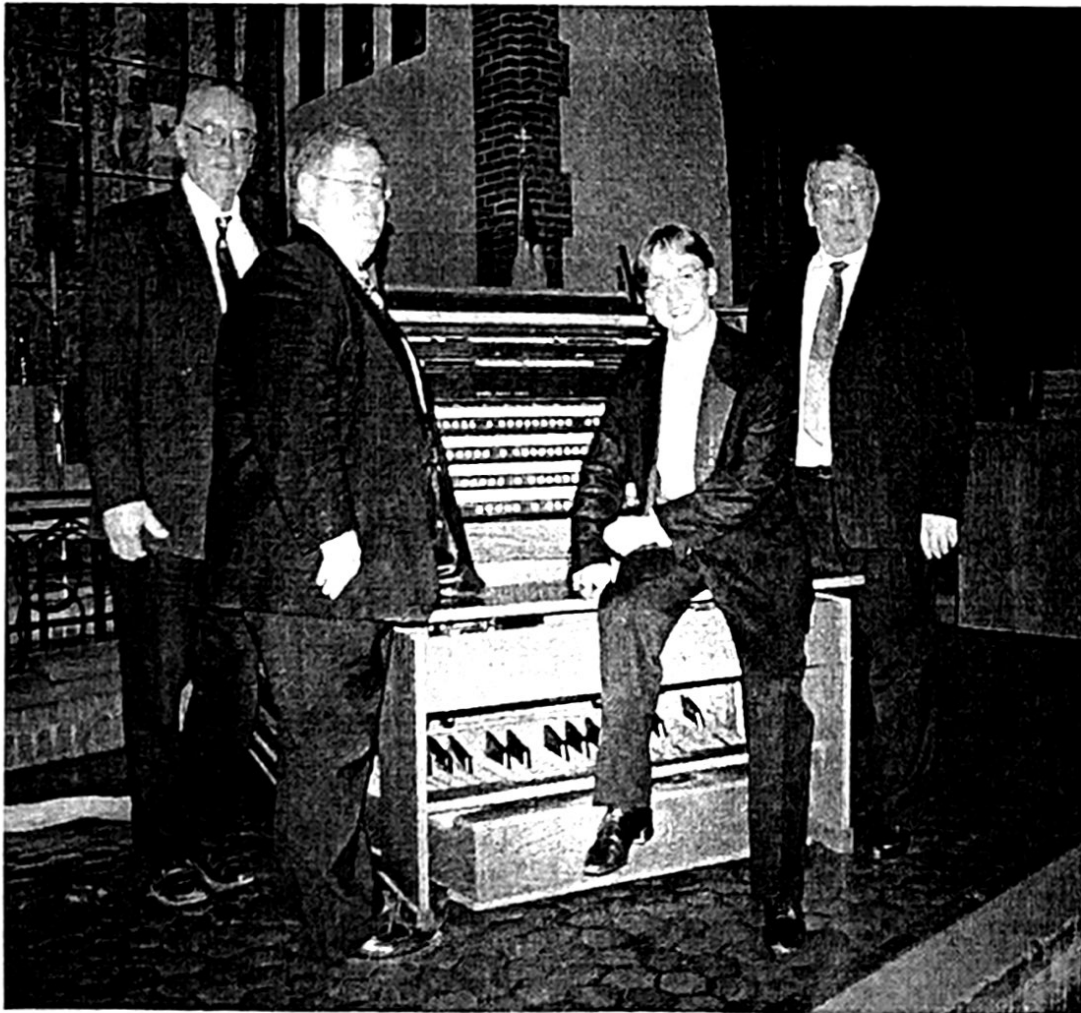
PRINCIPAL NO. 2

The melody must contain momentum. This means that it wants to keep moving forward and as you listen to it, you want it to continue on to a resolution or cadence. There should be an expectation and anticipation for more to come. Nothing illustrates this better than the great hymns of our church.

A good melody should be as difficult to stop as a moving freight train. (this series will continue in future Pipelines.)

ADVERTISERS ARE AKSED TO REVIEW THE RATES FOR DISPLAY ADS IN THIS ISSUE AND IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE FOR THE YEAR 2005, PLEASE SEND YOUR CHECK NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1, 2004 TO RED RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER, AGO, BOX 2223, FARGO, ND 58103-2223. WE WILL ASSUME THAT IF WE DO NOT HEAR YOU NO LONGER WISH TO ADVERTISE.

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Lance Johnson, Michael Olson, Felix and Hans Hell at the Hell recital at First Lutheran Church.

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