



PIPELINE

American Organist Guild—Red River Valley Chapter

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The Contemporary Service (Part III of III)

So what is the contemporary service? First of all, the music. Now let's say that you would like to compose music for this type of service. The best way to help you would be to list the criteria that music publishers use:

1. Keep the melody unstructured. Try not to use more than 5 notes.
2. Avoid skips of more than 5 notes.
3. Do not use complicated rhythms like sixteenth notes and dotted rhythms.
4. Use only three chords, tonic subdominate and dominate. (I, IV and V)
5. Think of small children and what they can sing.
6. Do not under any circumstances use key changes or accidentals.
7. Repeat short phrases; say eight or ten times so the worshipers can learn it by note.
8. Do not write out the score in four parts as people will not be able to read it, and it will only remind people of hymns.
9. To get ideas for your melodies, listen to radio formats such as folk, country western and bluegrass.

For your words, here are some tips:

1. Emphasize pronouns like I, me, we, and us.
2. Avoid negative references during lent such as, "Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross" Think positive and be guided by the popular TV program "Hour of Power" where lent stands for Let's Eliminate Negative Thoughts.
3. Keep your message always upbeat and feeling good
4. Repeat word phrases as much as possible. Here is an excellent

example from Lloyd Larson's cantata "Shadow of the Cross":

How beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful (repeat phrase)

5. Keep such references as Almighty God, King, Jesus Christ, or Lord to a minimum so as not to over emphasize.
6. Here is another good example called "Meet us Lord" by Dan Marks.

Meet us here

Meet us here

Meet us here, Lord

Meet us here, Lord

We are few but!! We are strong when you surround us!!

Meet us here

Meet us here

Meet us here, Lord

Meet us here, Lord

As we gather in your name

Meet us here

(Repeat)

Do not let the bible verse from Matthew 18:20 confuse you which reads, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." The Lord will not come to your church on Sunday morning unless you invite him!

If the service is held in a room other than the sanctuary, do not get carried away with displaying religious symbols. If a cross is used, it should be very small so as to not distract from the band.

Remember above all. If you cannot entertain, your audience will not come back.

(continued on page 2)

MYTHS: Reasons Why People Don't Join AGO

MYTH: AGO is just for institutions. **TRUTH:** No, AGO is for individuals.

MYTH: AGO is just for organists who have pipe organs.

TRUTH: AGO is just as helpful for organists who play on electric instruments as it is for pipe organists.

MYTH: AGO is just for organists working in a large church.

TRUTH: AGO has many articles and workshops geared specifically to the small church.

(Credit: Martha Sobaje)

Organist Guild Lunch Club

- ~First Friday of the month at Noon
- ~Fargo downtown Fryin' Pan Restaurant
- ~Everyone is welcome!

Chapter Officers

- Dean: Lance Johnson
- Sub-Dean: Vicky Wms Sieben
- Secretary: Bill Tweten
- Treasurer: Marty Baumgartner

Board Members at Large

- 2006: Michael Olson, Robyn Vinje
- 2007: Brad Steen, Dawn Pappenfuss
- 2008: Sue Clambey, Sally Harmon

(The Contemporary Service, continued from page 1)

Here are some suggestions for your praise band:

1. Use only self taught guitar players.
2. If your keyboard has automatic rhythm, use it! The rock and roll and country rhythms work best as it will remind your audience how much fun they had at the Saturday night dance.
3. Don't forget to have your song leaders SMILE. This will help everyone feel good.
4. If the service is held in a room other than the sanctuary, do not get carried away with displaying religious symbols. If a cross is used, it should be very small so as to not distract from the band.
5. Remember above all. If you cannot entertain, your audience will not come back.

Now let's explore what kind of people you can attract to this service:

1. Those who didn't finish high school or did not attend school after high school graduation.

2. Those who came from a school with a poor music education.
3. Those who did not take part in high school music programs.
4. Young married couples. Most of these people left church after being confirmed and now that they are raising families want to get back into the swing of things again.
5. People who hold local popular radio stations music in their highest regard, and do not have any use for public radio.
6. Those who never heard traditional church music growing up.

In conclusion, if you can transfer your church into more of say a theatre atmosphere, you will draw the most people. This includes the popular sing along with words on screens.

The next issue of the Pipeline will be an epilogue. Stay tuned....

~Lance E. Johnson, Dean

Board Meeting Notes

Thursday, March, 2006: The Board met at Boulger Funeral Home. Members present were: Lance Johnson, Vicki Sieben, Michael Olson, Marty Baumgartner, Robyn Vinje, Sue Clambey, and Bill Tweten.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Vicki moved to accept the minutes as printed and Michael seconded.

The first item of business was to gather information from calling lists given out at the last board meeting. Vicki will continue to compile the information as the phone lists are returned to her. This very comprehensive list will take time and we ask members to continue to work in calling and gathering information. This is certainly a work in progress but will be such a valuable tool for the chapter.

Next item of business—the upcoming Tim Olsen organ recital at 4:00 on Sunday, April 2 Lance reviewed the advertising. Lyle Nelson will set up a large screen in the front of Trinity's sanctuary so we can all get a front row seat and watch Tim play. Mary Tangen will be organizing the lunch afterwards at the church. Marty has advanced ticket sales at Boulger Funeral Home for those interested in getting tickets early. Marty will also be doing the

program. Donations came in at over \$500 for the recital.

An Organist workshop is slated for April 1, 10:00AM-12:00PM where Tim Olsen will present the topic "Registration and Hymn Playing." The workshop costs are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Lance will ask Gerry Parker to video tape the workshop. Trinity Lutheran in Moorhead is the site for the workshop.

Next year's tentative programs were discussed—wedding music, funeral music, Christmas Hymn-Sing, artist concert, "How to Practice" workshop, piano/organ duets, and the spring potluck. Also discussed was a music exchange to be held in conjunction with another program next year. The board will continue to tailor our program for next year.

The last topic discussed was the ballot for next year's RRVAGO board members. Many board members agreed to stay on in new capacities and more will be firmed up at the next board meeting—which will be April 20 at noon at Boulger Funeral Home. Meeting adjourned.

~Bill Tweten, Secretary

Pipeline Profile

Michael Olson, Board Member, ND Convenor



Michael Olson was born on January 26, 1957 to Frank and Beverley Olson in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from Harry A. Burke High School in Omaha on June 2, 1975. He accompanied the adult choir for his home church, Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha, during junior high and high school. When Michael was in eighth grade, the adult choir director asked if he might like to accompany the choir on the organ – the

anthem being “The Lone, Wild Bird” by David Johnson. That began Michael’s career as an organist! Beginning in ninth grade, and continuing throughout high school, he served as organist at Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn, Nebraska (a bedroom community of Omaha) for their 8:00 service, and then came back to Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha and accompanied the adult choir for the 10:30 service. Michael’s father, Frank, was the chauffeur for about 1½ years until Michael was able to drive himself.

Michael attended Concordia College in Moorhead, graduating on May 6, 1975 with a Bachelor of Music degree in Public School Music with an organ specialization. His organ teacher, and the organ teacher of many Cobbers, was Ruth Berge. Michael studied piano and harpsichord with John Metz.

Some have already heard “the story” about Michael’s visit to Concordia. On Palm Sunday 1975, Michael and his parents began the trek from Omaha to Moorhead. It started raining in Sioux City, it started sleeting in Sioux Falls, and then it began snowing quite heavily. By the time they arrived in Brookings, it was time to hunker down for the night—the night becoming, in reality, two days. The Holiday Inn in Brookings never looked so good! Michael’s mother helped clean rooms to pass the time, Michael’s father sat and watched a lot of TV. Luckily for Michael, he brought along homework—a research paper for his Shakespeare class which was due after Easter vacation. Once they finally got to Concordia College on the Wednesday afternoon before Easter, most of the students had already departed for a long weekend. Michael and his parents sat and talked with Roy Stahl, the Ear Training “king,” for a couple of hours—and Michael was all set to attend Concordia right then and there!

Since Bill Tweten didn’t share “the tennis saga” in his bio last month, Michael wants to inform everyone that the two of them were in tennis class together—an “interesting sight,” to be sure. Almost every time Michael watches a tennis match on TV, he is reminded of the great times he and Bill had in tennis class!

Michael attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX and received his Master of Music degree in Organ Performance on May 17, 1981. At that time, he had no idea what significance May 17 would hold in his future life! Michael studied organ with Robert Anderson and harpsichord with Larry Palmer.

Out of grad school, Michael’s first job was that of Director of Music and Youth Assistant at Trinity Lutheran Church, an LCA congrega-

tion in those days, in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin (about 35 miles southeast of Madison). Michael spent quite a bit of time in “Mad City” with newly-acquired friends. Michael worked with choral groups, handbells (for the very first time), played the organ, worked with the youth, made hospital visits (which is still not his real “cup of tea” to this day), and worked on some ecumenical musical outreach in the community. Some of you know, or have heard the name of, Michael Burkhardt. Michael Olson found out years later that Michael Burkhardt’s cousin was the pastor at the Congregational Church in Fort Atkinson—another small world story!

One evening in the winter of 1985, Michael received a call from Peter Nygaard, who had recently left the organist position at First Lutheran to play at Trinity Lutheran in Moorhead—news about which Michael did not know. He was a bit surprised to hear from Peter, and assumed that Ruth Berge had died. Such was not the case, but Peter was inquiring if Michael was interested in applying for the position at First Lutheran. He decided that he was interested, and here comes another “story” that some of you already know.

When Michael flew up to Fargo from Madison, it took most of the day to arrive. Flying on good old Republic Airlines, he flew from Madison to Minneapolis, but the weather was too bad and the plane turned around and went back to Madison. They tried to fly later from Madison and flew to Rochester. Eventually, they got to Minneapolis and, finally, to Madison. After finally arriving here and having some time to practice on the Austin pipe organ, Michael had an audition and interview with the search committee.

Michael began his employment at First Lutheran on Wednesday, May 8, 1985. What a day to begin one’s employment in church music than on a Wednesday! He accompanied the high school choir, the adult choir, and went out to Mexican Village with some of the Cathedral Choir members after rehearsal. David Ferreira, the Cathedral Choir director at the church, had resigned that morning and showed me a copy of the letter at Mexican Village that evening. I didn’t know David that well, but I was a bit surprised. (He came back to the church a couple of years later.) However, in my position in Fort Atkinson, the associate pastor resigned about a week after I’d started.

What is it about me, winter weather, and staff resignations?

Michael is employed at First Lutheran as Minister of Music. He also has an active studio of piano and organ students. He accompanies high school and college students in the Fargo-Moorhead area. He has given organ recitals in North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Michigan. Along with Peter Nygaard and Judy Sanders, he teaches organ workshops to adults each summer, as well as helps teach an organ camp for junior high and high school students each summer, under the auspices of Concordia College.

Michael’s favorite color is orange, his favorite number is seven, his favorite composer is Bach, and his favorite hymn is Praise to the Lord, the Almighty. Oh, yes; his favorite Christmas carol is O Come, All Ye Faithful!

Knorr to Present Workshop

AGO member Sue Knorr will present a workshop on service playing.

This event will be held on Saturday, April 22 beginning at 10:00AM at Zion Lutheran Church on Franklin Lake.

Ms. Knorr is a graduate of Concordia College and has gained a reputation for her superb service

playing and workshops.

The workshop will start with the fundamentals and those who have never studied the organ formally will benefit. A question and answer period will follow.

The church is located just off Hwy 59 and a couple miles North of Hwy 34 between Pelican Rapids and Detroit

Lakes. Take highway 59 to a sign that reads "Franklin Lake Road" and turn east for ¼ mile. Participants are asked to bring their own sack lunch.

This event is being sponsored by Johnson Organ Company, Inc. of Fargo and is free of charge.

RRV AGO Board Meetings

RRV AGO board meetings are now scheduled for the 3^d Thursday of each month at Noon.

If you have any business for the board, please contact the Dean or

any board member by the 2nd Thursday for your business to be included on the current month's agenda.

It's Time to Share Your Stories

The search is on! RRV AGO is looking for *Hot Topics* and *Funny Stories*. We are requesting *your* questions and *your* stories...

Serious *Hot Topics* that have come up in conversation lately: How often is it ok to repeat music? Share some of your favorite music. Where do you buy music? Where do you get the book bindings cut and spiral bound or 3-ring set-up? How much money is that? How much time do you prepare for a one hour service? Do you sight read music during services?

Stories we want to hear: What is the strangest wedding request you've had? What is the strangest funeral request you've had? Best weddings? Worst weddings? Have you ever fallen off the organ bench? Have you ever gotten the giggles? What happened?

OK, those are some examples—now it's your turn! Email your *Hot Topics* and *Story Lines* to rrvago@hotmail.com. Selected responses will be published (space permitting) We look forward to your stories!

Hot Topic—Crazy Wedding Stories:

One wedding I played for I was told one soloist would be singing The Lord's Prayer and the other soloist would be singing The Wedding Song. The singer of the first song had not sung it for quite a long time he admitted but did very well when we rehearsed it and in the ceremony. The second soloist could not make it to practice at the rehearsal but I was told sang all the time. The day of the wedding he showed up shortly before I was planning to start playing so I had to go through the song with him. During the ceremony he had a hard time coming in at the right time so I just kept playing until he decided to jump in and continue the song. Doesn't always make a difference whether you sing frequently or just once in awhile. (Lucille Kinsley)

If you are interested in getting the *Pipeline* delivered right to your email box, please send a message to rrvago@hotmail.com and include the email address that the newsletter should be sent to. For those without email, we will continue to mail the newsletter as we have in the past.

We encourage feedback as well as submission of articles for publication. Please send your articles by the 15th of each month to rrvago@hotmail.com. We reserve the right to accept, reject, edit or modify any submission.

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Serving When the Need is Greatest

Upcoming Events

April 2, 2006

Tim Olson Concert ~ 4:00PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Moorhead, MN

May 7, 2006

Family Potluck Dinner

Marty & Sheila Baumgartner res. ~ 4:00PM

2709 - 39th Ave SW, Fargo, ND



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