



PIPELINE

VOLUME 20 NUMBER 6

APRIL, 2004

Program Committee Planning 2004-2005 AGO Year Program

The RRV AGO Program Committee is already working on an exciting lineup of events for this area next year. Many ideas have been discussed and as soon as this program has been finalized the membership will be informed. Please support your local chapter by attending as many of these programs as possible. Michael Olson is presently working on arrangements to have Felix Hell appear in Fargo. This is just one program possibility!

ORGAN CRAWL MAY 2, 2 p.m.

Notice the event in "Upcoming Events" for May 2, 2004. We will be meeting at Glyndon Lutheran in Glyndon, MN and then will proceed to the Christian Science church in Fargo. We hope that we get many of you participating in this event. It will be a chance to see instruments not usually seen or heard by most of us. Some are not even aware of the instrument in the Christian Science sanctuary.

BETHSEDA LUTHERAN CHURCH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Bethesda has listed job descriptions for 4 positions available at their church. These positions may be filled by the same person depending upon experience. The positions include ORGANIST, CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER, COORDINATOR OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP AND CHOIR ACCOMPANIST. Please contact the church at 218-236-1420 for information.

DIANE BISH AGAIN ON PPTV!

Diane Bish can be seen and heard on PPTV in our area on Sundays at 4 p.m. She is only on for 1/2 hour but it is certainly better than nothing! Unfortunately the program will sometimes conflict with our programs but that will be infrequent. It is important that PPTV receive feedback regarding our feelings about her show. Do remember to contact the local offices and express your delight!

AGO local Treasurer's report

With expenses and income being almost equal we presently have a balance of \$12,146 with \$10,335 being in a CD.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR POSITION!

The local Chapter is in need of a volunteer who will take on Editor responsibilities for next year!



Upcoming Events

AGO Organ tour and meeting
Meet at Glyndon Lutheran
May 2, 2004
2 p.m.

A LESSON IN ACOUSTICS By Lance E. Johnson

In 1954, organist Roy Stahl and Rev. Oscar Anderson were in negotiations with Walter Holtkamp of Cleveland to purchase a new pipe organ for Trinity in Moorhead.

Holtkamp was very adamant that the celotex ceiling tiles would have to go before he would install one of his organs. The tiles were removed and finished tongue and groove boards were substituted. The organ was installed in 1957 in a room with virtually no sound absorbing materials. The floors and chancel were all hard surface.

In about 1975 Ruth Berge called me and told me in a very frantic voice that the church was planning to run heavy shag carpet down the aisles and the en-

WORLD PREMIER OF COMMISSIONED ANTHEM

"Come and Sing, Sing Unto the Lord", by Susan M. Clambey was presented in concert on Feb. 8th at Grace United Methodist Church, Moorhead, MN. The SATB anthem with 3 octave hand bell choir and pipe organ had been commissioned by the church for celebration of their 125th anniversary.

Susan was invited to be the organist for premier of her anthem, which opened the Evening Candlelight Concert. Susan had been organist for 16 years and hand bell director for 10 years at Grace Church.

Other RRV AGO musicians involved in the event were Gaylord Fagerland, performing "Postlude on a Ground" by Herbert Murril; Michael Olso, performing "Jazz Influenced Voluntaries" by Joel Utterback; plus Michael accompanying Neil Mueller, trumpet, on Trois Prieres Sans Paroles, by Jean-Michel Damase; Peter Nygaard, performing the famous "Tocatta and Fugue in d minor" by Bach. Lance Johnson spoke about the history of the organ and the new renovation by Johnson Organ company.

Mark and Kay Forkner, organist and violinist currently at Grace Church, presented "Spring" from the Four Seasons by Vivaldi. Mark Forkner had made an arrangement for the concert.

(ACOUSTICS, CONT.)

The results for the organ and music general were appalling. The reverb time had been reduced by about 1.5 sec. Trinity was no longer a text book example of good acoustics.

A few years ago, Trinity had 2nd thoughts and the decision was made to put hard surface in the Chancel and run thin pile carpet in the aisles. Since the carpet adhesive was so difficult to remove in the chancel, a new tile had to be laid over it.

The result was dramatic as Trinity gained back much of what it lost in the 1975 "improvements." The frosting on the cake was when Peter Nygaard remarked that "he can use less organ now."

4/2004

PIPE ORGANS IN MIDST OF REVIVAL

By Scott Cantrell/ The Dallas, Texas Morning News

For centuries the pipe organ has been the closest mere mortals have gotten to hearing the voice of God. (Emphasis by editor!) It has stirred the faithful, comforted the sorrowful and inspired some of the noblest works of Western music. The florid woodwork and towering pipes create visual drama that defines many a church and concert hall.

But in the last few decades the church pipe organ has sometimes struggled for breath. As they wrestle with how to house and feed the poor, not to mention how to deal with contemporary Christian music, some churchgoers question spending big sums on an instrument they consider elitist, if not downright irrelevant.

Yet three Dallas-area churches have just inaugurated huge new pipe organs, instruments with multiple pedals and "manuals," or keyboards, and thousands of pipes ranging from pencil-size to 32 feet high. Still handmade in ways little changed since the 18th century—apart from the use of power tools—they cost between \$750,000 and \$1,300,000.

Two are outside the central city: Preston Hollow Presbyterian and Plano's St. Andrew United Methodist. The third is a downtown Dallas institution, First United Methodist.

Diversity is a growing mantra for American church music; pop idioms sometimes brush shoulders with Bach fugues and Mendelssohn anthems. But if classical music no longer had hegemony in churches, it's far from finished.

"I don't think traditional classical church music is doomed at all," says the Rev. Blair R. Monie, Preston Hollow Presbyterian's senior pastor. "The older I get, the more I believe in the pendulum effect. I can remember in the 1960's, with rock Masses and folk Masses, we thought traditional worship was dead. Well, here we are again."

"This church has always had a strong music program in a classical tradition, but it's not limited to that. We do music other than that written by dead white men. But we also believe it's part of our mission to praise God through the great works of the ages. The pipe organ is the perfect instrument for us in the long run, the backbone of our music program."

There are good reasons for the enduring presence of pipe organs. On no other instrument can one person produce such a wide range of sounds—and so effectively support the singing of large choirs.

Electronic organs and synthesizers have become more sophisticated, but next to the "live" sound of wind moving through thousands of pipes, even the best digital electronics sound synthetic. They don't encourage singing nearly as well as wind and pipes.

"I don't remember who first said it," Says Tim Effler, organist and associate music director at First Methodist, "but an electronic organ is a good imitation of a great sound. It's not an investment; it's an appliance that you replace in 10 years or so."

For all the prophecies of doom, building pipe organs remains a stable, if modest industry. Practitioners range from tiny two-person shops to large corporations.

"The industry is not the size it was in the 1920's," says Minnesota organ builder Charles Hendrickson, who's also president of the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America. "But many firms continue to build sizable and important instruments both here and abroad. In fact, the size of organs has continued to increase."

Excitement created by the big C. B. Fisk organ in Dallas' Meyerson Symphony Center has sparked an explosion of pipe organs outside of churches.

"As new concert halls are planned, pipe organs are going into them," says Michael Barone, host of the nationally syndicated radio program *Pipe Dreams*. At the least, they're being proposed as an essential part of the fabric of a performing arts auditorium."

Shifting tastes in tone

No musical instrument is as complicated as the organ, with its multiple keyboards, stops, stop-changing and volume-adjusting mechanisms. And none has evolved such different personalities in different countries and periods. Tastes in organ sounds change more slowly than hemlines, but no less dramatically.

German organs in Bach's time, the first half of the 18th century, were based on full-throated sounds that accompanied lusty congregational singing, but they also played flamboyant solo works. French organs of the period were brassier and tangier, but they were purely solo instruments; Catholic worship at that time had no congregational singing.

Early in the 20th century, organs in Germany, England and America got thicker-toned by the decade. But after WWII came a growing reaction against those "black smoke" sounds; as baroque music gained favor, organs got brighter and perkier.

Unfortunately the "neo-baroque" organ, which peaked in the early 1970's, misrepresented the real sounds of 18th-century instruments. The thin, shrill assaults of too many American organs from the '60's to the '80's challenged more than supported the singing of congregations and choirs. And they made a mockery of the major organ literature.

Then there is the problem of acoustics. Virtually all the great organ and choral repertory was conceived of great stone churches with long reverberation times. But 20th-century U.S. churches were increasingly modeled on parlors, with carpet sucking up sound. Absorptive tile was installed on ceilings, supposedly to clarify the spoken word. The result was "dead" sound that desiccated organ music, discouraged congregational singing and required elaborate amplification to hear the sermon.

In recent decades, there's been a heartening trend toward making churches more "live" again. All three of the local churches in Dallas with large instruments brought in acoustical consultants who pushed for more reflective surfaces.

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

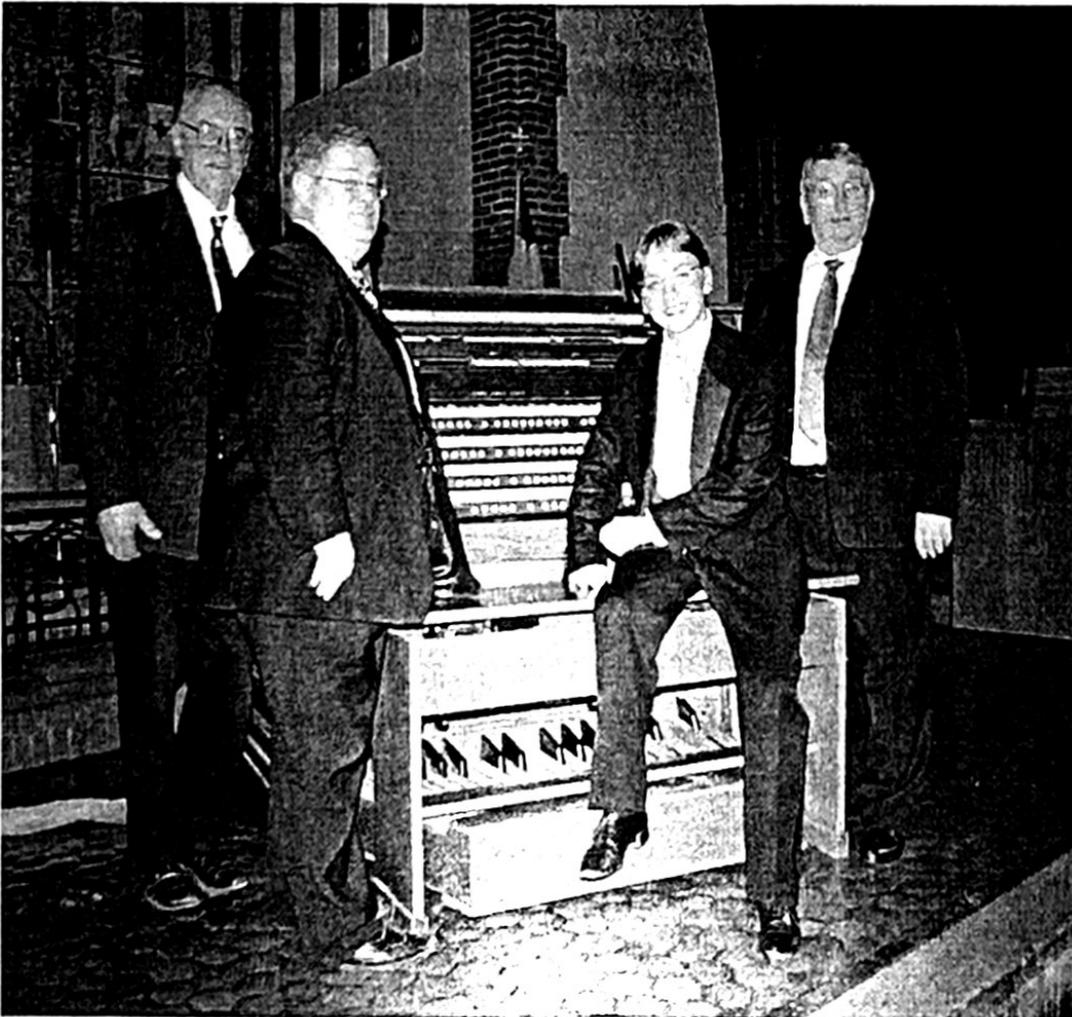
PRINCIPAL NO. 2

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.

REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN HEAR FINE ORGAN MUSIC EVERY WEDNESDAY NOON FROM 12:45-1:15 AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH IN FARGO. MICHAEL OLSON HAS FRESH NEW SELECTIONS EACH WEEK. COME AND SUPPORT YOUR FELLOW ORGANISTS AND TAKE A BREAK!



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

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD MELODY

(Continued)

By Lance E. Johnson

#3 The melody should carry with it an interesting rhythm. Very few hymns throughout the ages have been founded on primarily quarter notes. In other words, most songs fall flat without notes other than quarters. Hymns can be made much more ear-catching with eighth notes and dotted rhythms. Try singing Joy to the World sometime in quarters. Organists many times do not take note values seriously and the hymn suffers as a result. The playing of rhythms in strict fashion adds sparkle.

#4 Use multiple notes This may sound strange until you realize that most music written today is restricted to five or six notes whether it be pop or praise music. Many of our best hymns utilize as many as ten stretching out the range of pitches as much as an octave and a third. Examples; Open Now the Gates of Heaven, or In the Cross of Christ I Glory.