

THE BULLETIN

Newsletter for the Toronto Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists

November 2015

Phantoms of the Organ: Another Spooktacular Concert

Our beloved Metropolitan United Church was almost full again the night before Hallowe'en for the annual Phantoms of the Organ concert, and the mostly young roster of organists did not disappoint. [Editor's note: There were 321 people in attendance] We had two youngsters from Kitchener, Ontario, learning their craft under the attentive ear of Dr. Peter Nikiforuk. Joshua Ehlebracht, a grade 11 student, opened the evening with an intricate piece by H. Mulet, while later on his classmate, 15-year-old Alexander Richard Straus-Fausto, dazzled us with a recital from memory of the well-known Toccata from *Suite Gothique* by Boëllmann. The piece's demand for constant changes in the pedal notes didn't faze our young friend at all -- his feet danced all over the pedal board while his hands traced the melody and harmony.

Sarah Svendsen, a doctoral student at the University of Toronto's faculty of music deftly steered through a modern piece composed by Toronto's Eric Robertson. Called *Voices*, the piece provided a wide variety of simple, quiet and subtle tones and chords contrasting with full-throated manual combinations and resounding pedal notes.

You cannot have a Hallowe'en organ concert, of course, without Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*, and the formidable music academic John Tuttle was up to the task -- rendering that old standard from memory as freshly as if it were published last week.

As usual, the proceedings were conducted by Patricia Wright, Metropolitan's Minister of Music. Wearing colourful mini-lights on her gloved hands, she performed an old favourite -- transcribed for the organ -- the *Funeral March of a Marionette* by Charles Gounod. Those of a certain age were wryly reminded that a different version of this piece was used to introduce Alfred Hitchcock's weekly television program.

Other young artists gave us items by Langlais, Widor, and Gigout, while the phantom showed up with a contemporary piece -- the theme from the latest James Bond movie, just about to be released. Alas, the performance went off without the usual accompaniment of fog, as one of the phantom's adversaries apparently made off with the fog machine.

All the performers were in costume, and the last item, the finale from Louis Vierne's *Symphony VI*, was dazzlingly performed by the assistant organist at St. Basil's Roman Catholic Church, Rashaan Allwood, resplendent in dreadlocks and Jamaican Rasta knitted cap!

The folks at the Metropolitan and the Toronto Centre of the RCCO brought off another successful Spooktacular concert, hearteningly turning the spotlight on young performers keen on continuing a long tradition of preserving organ music by exposing it to ears new and old.

Congratulations to all the students and the teachers who participated in last Friday's concert:

Joshua Ehlebracht and Alexander Richard Straus-Fausto, students of Dr Peter Nikiforuk of Kitchener.
Stefani Bedin and Rashaan Allwood, students of Dr Kevin Komisaruk.
Sarah Svendsen and Saya Ojiri, students of Dr Patricia Wright
Manuel Piazza, student of Dr John Tuttle
Dr Patricia Wright and Dr John Tuttle, organ teachers in the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

Keeble McFarlane
Hazel Ogilvie

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Marcel Dupré's *Symphonie Passion*

This letter came about as the result of my beginning to study the *Symphonie Passion* by Marcel Dupré. My teacher, W. Lawrence Curry, suggested writing to M. Dupré to ask for background information.

I wrote to Lillian Murtagh, his American agent, on August 12, 1963, asking for his address in Paris, which she quickly answered. To my great surprise, this delightful, detailed letter arrived two weeks later.

Having grown up in the Philadelphia suburbs, it was most interesting to read of the *Symphonie's* origins as an improvisation on the Wanamaker organ, which was certainly large enough to showcase this wonderful work.

It seemed appropriate to preserve the letter for posterity!

Marcia Kavanagh

[The letter from Dupré is reproduced on page 3]



Marcel Dupré at the console of the Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia

40, BOULEVARD ANATOLE FRANCE

MEUDON 15.507

088.15.48

August 25, 1963

Dear Miss Sorber,

I have received your letter and have pleasure in giving you some information about my Symphonie-Passion.

In 1921, I made my first appearance in your country by giving, in exclusivity, a series of recitals for the Wanamaker organs both in New-York and in Philadelphia.

On December 8th 1921, at the end of my recital in Philadelphia, I improvised a Symphony in 4 movements with the thought of approaching Christmas, which I conceived as a musical delineation of the life of Christ. After the concert, it was suggested that I should write such a Symphony, which I did in the course of the following year. Of course, the music was not the same but the general plan was.

The first movement is meant to picture the anxiety and unrest of mankind awaiting the coming of the Saviour. You are plunged into this atmosphere through a series of chords, constantly changing harmonies and a restless rhythm in which 5-8 time predominates. A moment of quiet occurs when an old Gregorian theme "Christe Redemptor omnium" is heard, soon interrupted by the restless chords. Then the Gregorian theme breaks forth in major and the movement closes in a climax of triumphant hope.

In the second movement, the introduction gives us a picture of the Virgin watching over the cradle at night.

Then we hear a haunting ~~serenade~~ song by the Virgin. Suddenly, a sustained note

announces the approach of the heavy-footed camels as they bear the wise men towards the stable. The well known Hymn "Adeste Fideles" is introduced in the pedals and then grows fainter and fainter. Two Alleluias are heard at the close as if played by the Angels. Throughout the piece, the feeling is ~~exotic~~ oriental both in melody and in harmonic color.

The "Crucifixion" depicts the March to Calvary. The broken rhythm of the theme pictures the excruciating pain of the ascent then comes the ~~Entrée~~ the sorrowing Women after the Entombment singing the ~~solemn~~ "Stabat Mater Dolorosa".

The "Resurrection" is built on the theme of an old Gregorian theme "Adoro Te devote" which appears first in the pedal and then in the upper voice with two inner voices developing the counter theme. This is a developing section in which the choral leads build up a powerful crescendo leading to the climax of the work. The Gregorian theme thunders forth in the pedals, the theme emerging in triumph when the soprano voice soars upward on the theme followed by a canon in the pedals. A short coda leads to the final fanfare ending in a blaze of glory.

I hope these notes may be of some help to you. You mention my very dear friend Charles Courboin. He certainly was one of those who urged me to write the Symphony.

Yours sincerely,
Dedicating it to him *Maurice Ravel*

Recitals & Concerts

Friday, November 6 7:30 pm

Music at Metropolitan and the Toronto RCCO present organist Stefan Engels in recital

Engels is a well-known German recitalist who now is head of the organ department at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He will play works by Bach, Alain, and Karg-Elert

Metropolitan United Church

Tickets \$20/\$10 Ages 18 and under

Saturday, November 7 10:00 am

Stefan Engels student Masterclass

Metropolitan United Church

Free admission, all are welcome

Sunday November 8th 4:00 pm

Durufé *Requiem* in Honour of Remembrance Day

Sung by the choirs of Christ Church Deer Park, Grace Church on-the-Hill, and Timothy Eaton Memorial Church.

Elaine Choi, Matthew Otto, and Stephen Frketic, Conductors
Stephen Boda, Organ.

Grace Church on-the-Hill

300 Lonsdale Rd

Wednesday, November 11 12:30 pm

Angus Sinclair, organist; Paulo Sanvidotti, trumpet

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

Thursday, November 12 12:15 pm

Sarah Svendsen, organist *Metropolitan United Church*

Wednesday, November 18 12:30 pm

John Paul Farahat, organist

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

Thursday, November 19 12:15 pm

Peter Nikiforuk, organist *Metropolitan United Church*

Wednesday, November 25 12:30 pm

Rashaan Allwood, organist

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

Thursday, November 26 12:15 pm

Ian Grundy, organist *Metropolitan United Church*

Thursday, December 3 12:15 pm

Stephen Boda, organist *Metropolitan United Church*

Friday December 4 7:30 pm

St. Clare Catholic Church Christmas Concert

Performers include the Choirs of St Clare's Church, band members from the Columbus Centre, and guest soloists.

Donations to the Project of Hope for 100 refugee families

St Clare's Catholic Church

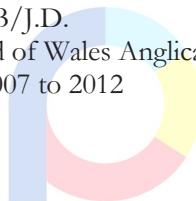
1118 St Clair Avenue West

Membership Matters

Joash Fang has reinstated his membership in the RCCO as a Regular member of the Toronto Centre

Degrees: B.A., LL.B/J.D.

Positions: St. David of Wales Anglican Church, Vancouver from 2007 to 2012



THE ROYAL CANADIAN
COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

A service of celebration of the life of Don Bell, a former member of the RCCO Toronto Centre, will be held at Knox United Church, Agincourt, on Sunday, November 8, 2015 at 3 p.m.

All are welcome. If anyone is interested in taking part in the musical programme, or for any other information, please contact Liz Lundy at [416 293 9835](tel:4162939835).

Organs of Toronto

Would you like to know more about any of the organs mentioned in this issue of the *Bulletin*?

If so, consider purchasing *Organs of Toronto*, a comprehensive guide to Toronto's pipe organs. The *Organs of Toronto* CD, an accompaniment to Alan Jackson & James Bailey's book *Organs of Toronto*, is a compilation of fourteen instruments contained within the book.

The book is available for **\$40**, and the CD for **\$10**.

Buy your copy at:
Opus II music store, Kitchener
Remenyi House of Music, Toronto
Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto.

Bulletin Information

The Editor of the *Bulletin* is Matthew Whitfield,
Organist & Director of Music at
St. John the Baptist, Norway Anglican Church.

The submission deadline for the December
issue of the *Bulletin* is:

Friday, December 4th.

To make a submission, please email the editor at:
mwhitfi3@gmail.com

For more information and to see upcoming events,
please visit the RCCO Toronto website,
www.rccotoronto.ca

Barwell Scholarship 2016

The Barwell Scholarship is offered by the Toronto Centre of the RCCO to piano students of Grade 8 (RCM) or higher level who have a serious interest in studying the organ. To submit an application, fill out the form provided on pages 9-10 of the October 2015 *Bulletin* and submit to:

Melvin James Hurst
RCCO Barwell Scholarship Program
c/o Humbercrest United Church
16 Baby Point Road
Toronto, ON M6S 2E9
Phone: (416) 239-8530/Email: melvinhurst@gmail.com