



*The Royal Canadian College of Organists
Le Collège royal canadien des organistes*

KINGSTON CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Opus 90 – March 2013

Website: <http://www.rcco-kingston.org>



The 2010 organ in St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, which your editors visited shortly after its installation. This is still the newest instrument in an English cathedral – newest cathedral building too – and the second-highest organ loft in the UK!

Inside this issue

From the Editors <i>About influences – and about creating an impression</i> Fran Harkness & David Cameron	2
Orgelfest 2013: Why would I register for a convention?	4
Student Recital, 23 March 2013	4
Professional Support: Who needs it? Why bother? Rev. Dr. Dan Hanson	6
Notes on effective hymn playing Robert Hunter Bell	7
Eighty-three-year-old food for thought Waldo Selden Pratt, "The Problem of Music in the Church", <i>Northwestern University Bulletin</i> Dec. 8, 1930	8
Coming events	9

The Demands of Holy Week

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The demands of musical preparation, together with the fact that your editors are moving house early in April, have meant that this edition perforce appears in Holy Week. This in turn imposes impossible demands on church musicians in busy posts, like John Uttley and our Centre President Ian Bevell. So for this month their columns, Ian's *From the Chair* and John's *Utterly Uttley*, will not appear. Both will return with our next issue, in June.

From the Editors

About influences – and about creating an impression.

On a February Sunday Fran and I were at the morning service at St. George's Cathedral, and heard Michael Capon play the middle section of the Bach *Pièce d'orgue* or *Fantasia* in G (BWV 572). Fran had heard it the previous day too, at the funeral of Beth Staples, late widow of Canon Charles Staples and mother of organist Andrew Staples—people known to many of us. It set my mind upon some things we music historians take for granted, and often refer to casually without stopping to consider their implications; things to do with influences passed from composer to composer, or indeed from nation to nation and generation to generation.

You'll recall that the mediaeval organ generally consisted of a *Blockwerk*, an undifferentiated collection of flue pipes at various pitches, all of which sounded all the time. The gradual appearance of mechanisms which would "stop" the speech of selected ranks, and allow the instrument to present a variety of colours and volumes, was one of the technological marvels of the Renaissance. And as we know, that *Blockwerk* continued through the intervening years as the plenum, or the Principal chorus, which is still the backbone of any organ that aspires to completeness.

Then in the decades surrounding the year 1600, European organ-building separated into two main streams*. One was the North German *Werkprinzip* style, with distinct encased divisions (each complete in itself and played from its own keyboard) and a largely independent Pedal division based on the 16' (or even 32') pitch. The other was the French style: a *Grand orgue* based upon 16' Principal and Bourdon tone, with a Pedal division at 8' pitch, designed to play solo melodies against the manual divisions, and sometimes smaller divisions like *Récit* and *Echo* located in the main case. In both traditions the detached *Ruckpositiv* (French *Positif*) was normal, and in both traditions reeds became increasingly important, though it was the French who first developed the reed-dominated *Grand jeu*.

Fast forward to the height of the French Classical (sometimes called "Baroque") school, the school of Marchand, Clérambault, the Couperins, and their contemporaries. Among their organ masses and suites (of many short movements designed to be heard in dialogue with the choir), one of the invariable elements is the *Plein jeu*: usually sustained and harmonically fairly dense, and often with a plainsong melody singing through it from the *pédale*. Typical examples can be heard on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihrskB8JXo>

* I know there are Italian, and Hispanic, and English schools too, but they're peripheral to the development of the modern organ. The main elements we expect to find in complete organs were German and French.

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFaUeqYZDT8>, the latter on an instrument from 1734-6.

In March of 1700, aged fifteen, Bach enrolled in the *Michaelisschule* at Lüneburg, and there and at Celle (80 km. south of Lüneburg) the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg maintained musical establishments playing French music in the French style. There's much more information about this phase in his life at <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/tas3/luneburg.html>. We have all been taught that Bach absorbed and reworked influences not only from his German heritage, but also from abroad. As the fact-tracking NNDB website says, about the Lüneburg-Celle years:

In Celle the famous *Hofkapelle* brought the influence of French music to bear upon Bach's art, an influence which inspired nearly all his works in suite-form and to which his many autograph copies of Couperin's music bear testimony. Indeed, there is no branch of music, from Palestrina onwards, conceivably accessible in Bach's time, of which we do not find specimens carefully copied in his own handwriting.

Even in the hands of the greatest of the French, François Couperin “Le Grand”, the *plein jeu* remains a brief movement, often acting as an introduction to the more colourful and varied pieces that follow it. This isn't to suggest that it's inexpressive: the best *pleins jeux* are noble music, richly solemn and splendid but not flashy, music for the thoughtful moment which precedes something more energetic.

What happens when Bach moves into a style like the *Plein jeu*? Fran Harkness writes:

When I listen to the Fantasia in g minor, I'm reminded of *Nimrod* from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. I hear a musical question that is almost answered, but not quite; and then another and then another: layer on layer of almost, but not quite fulfilled expectations that increase in intensity and seem to never end.

(You can hear what Fran means at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Lrv1oR1WU4>, beginning at 1'30”).

We could multiply such instances a thousand times for Bach, and most great composers are similar. As Isaac Newton said (paraphrasing Bernard of Chartres), “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”. So for Handel, with his Italianate arias and Purcellian choruses; so too for Beethoven, formed as he was by Haydn and Mozart; so also in our field for Stanford, formed by the influence of Brahms, and Holst and Vaughan Williams, formed by the teaching of Stanford. The chain of influences becomes complex, overlaid with variants, with reactions to our predecessors and contemporaries ranging between imitation and outright rejection. What does this mean for us as players and directors?

First of all, it means that study, and especially listening to good models, is never wasted. The advent of YouTube, with its seemingly endless supply of performances, has made this easy beyond belief. Of course YouTube has its awful performances, on execrable instruments; but it also has authentic performances masterfully played. From all of these we can learn, how our organs should sound in a given repertoire, and also what makes performances in a given style authoritative, and graceful (and sometimes what makes them leaden and boring).

It also reminds us that music is meant to be *expressive*. The neoBaroque fad of the 1960's and 70's quite

often led people astray about this. Mistaken ideas about “correct” performance, often based on misunderstandings of historical evidence which in turn was often incomplete, too frequently were allowed to trump the search for human feeling elegantly expressed. In a setting where it should support worship (see page 8), music without human feeling isn’t far short of a double blasphemy, against music as well as against the Divine!

Such were the thoughts Michael’s performance of BWV 572 prompted in your editors.

Orgelfest 2013, Ottawa

Registration for Ottawa's Orgelfest 2013, national convention of the RCCO, is now open. To register online: [Registration Form](#)

Why would I register for a convention? If you’ve never been to a national convention it’s hard to explain in a couple of sentences, because there’s such a wealth of good experiences. To begin with, a Who’s Who of prominent North American artists including Angela Hewitt, Christian Lane, winner of 2011 CIOC competition in Montreal and Ottawa organists Rachel Laurin and Thomas Annand. A complete list of artists is at

<http://www.rcco-ottawa.ca/orgelfest2013/artists.html>

Then there are the workshops: anthem readings (including one led by our own Mark Sirett), encounters with composers like Benjamin Britten (2013 is the centennial of his birth – Giles Bryant leads this), congregational song, maintaining vitality in RCCO Centres. For the whole vast programme of concerts, workshops, a boat trip on the Ottawa River, and much more, go to <http://www.rcco-ottawa.ca/orgelfest2013/schedule.html>.

Those of us who have attended many conventions wouldn’t miss this one – especially since it’s so close to us. Each year we renew old friendships, and discover new ones; learn new things about music, hear exciting performances: *Why would I register for a convention? Come to this one, and you won’t ask that question again!*

And note: in just three years, we in Kingston will host a smaller convention ourselves.

Come to Ottawa and find out what works, what doesn’t work so well, and how we could improve our offering to the national College and international friends.

Student Recital

Fran Harkness

On Saturday, March 23, a small audience heard the results of another year of study by students of the various organ teachers in Kingston. The students played on the Casavant (c.1920) at First Baptist Church, which was reworked in 1993 by Artisan Classic, with a new console, added digital stops and some additional pipework.

The program (listed below) was varied, ranging from early German composers (Fischer. Bach, Pachelbel) through the centuries to Boulanger, Duruflé, Dupré and Willan in works that



L to R, Nicholas Walters, Jenny Lee, Osbert Zalay, Eva Troje, Jacqueline Corcoran, Karen Campbell, Catherine Helferty, Andrew Fraser.

showed off the colours of the organ quite well. While I wasn't particularly excited about the reed chorus, I liked individual stops such as the oboe and the flutes.

We have a group of gifted young players in our community, coming from a wide range of backgrounds, and I was interested to learn that most of the players were university students studying engineering or some form of science. I was also impressed by the levels of performance that they had reached, some after only one or two years of study.... a tribute to the teachers! It must be noted as well that Andrew Fraser, one of the students, and a member of the Centre executive, now has the letters CRCCO after his name. Congratulations, Andrew!

Attending the recital was a very pleasant way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

Thanks must be given to Bev Koski and Jill Mingo for organizing the event, Nora Vincent and Joan Egnatoff for organizing the food, and First Baptist clergy and administration for their permission to use the organ for the recital and practice times.

Thanks as well to the teachers who nurture the students through the early pains of learning.

Programme

Jacqueline Corcoran	<i>Liebster Jesu wir sind hier</i> <i>Pastorale</i>	J.S. Bach (1685-1750) J.S. Bach
Eva Troje	<i>Fugue in C Major</i> <i>Prélude Modal</i>	Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) Jean Langlais (1907-1991)
Nicholas Walters	<i>Prelude on Iste Confessor</i> <i>Choral Varié sur Veni Creator Spiritus</i> <i>Andante religioso - Poco meno lento - Allegro</i>	Healey Willan (1880-1968) Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)
Jenny Lee	<i>Prelude in e minor</i>	Gerald Bales (1919-2002)
Karen Campbell	<i>Prélude</i> <i>Prelude and Fugue</i>	Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746)
Osbert Zalay	<i>Adagio et Choral Varié sur le thème du</i> <i>Veni Creator, Op.4</i>	Maurice Duruflé

Andrew Fraser Pastorale, Op. 19 from Six Pieces

Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

Catherine Helferty *How Fair and Pleasant Art Thou*
Prelude and Fugue in F major

Marcel Dupre (1886-1971)
 Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

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PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT WHO NEEDS IT? WHY BOTHER?

Rev. Dr. Da n Ha n s e n



The position of professional support in the Ottawa Centre of the RCCO, as it is now being practiced, is an opportunity to talk with someone about your music position. It is a time to explore your options as a worship music leader. It is not counselling or therapy, or unionized, legal advice, or even mediation; it is a simple but powerful opportunity to take a look at what the possibilities are for you in terms of your music leadership in your congregation. In the past, it may have been understood as having to do mostly with problems, including contract negotiations, or challenging situations regarding one's role and function – position descriptions, often leading to termination or resignation. But, now, it is viewed as a learning opportunity, an aspect of the life of the Ottawa Centre life that aims to help expand your sense of music leadership, and thus that of your faith community. It is a way of empowering you, in order that you might offer stronger worship music leadership where you serve, including growing yourself. It focuses on you, and your potential. So, why wait until problems arise? Why wait until it is too late, and your situation has deteriorated? And why carry needlessly any burdens about your position and the congregation you serve? Be intentional about how you work and minister, being more self-reflective and growth-oriented, and explore the options available. Give your centre professional support person a call, and talk confidentially about your position – what is going on for you, the joys and challenges of your situation, and how new life might take place, both for you and your church.

One of the editors of this Newsletter, David Cameron, serves also as the Professional Support person for the Kingston Centre, and he cordially invites Centre members to meet and discuss work and music, problems and opportunities. Call him at 613-549-7125, or email at charles.david.cameron@gmail.com.

Notes on Effective Hymn-Playing (unintentional pun)* Robert Hunter Bell

One encounters different styles of hymn-playing. There is the Strict Tempo Type who lets neither the music nor the singer breathe. There is the Do Not Drag Type who will jump in a fraction of a beat early after a long note. I confess to having been guilty of both of these sins of commission during my fifty plus years of hymn-playing. My best years were those where I practised the hymns each week, singing or whispering the words of every verse to myself. That way, I knew how much time was needed for a breath, and when I reached the last verse, the tune was pretty well memorized so I could watch the words on Sunday.

You are as much leader as accompanist of the hymns. To help the choir and congregation to breathe together and thus start the next phrase together, just take your hands off the keys while you breathe. In a large reverberant space it will be a longer break than in a smaller and dryer acoustic setting. Always take that break out of the last note of the phrase but be flexible enough to allow extra time, if needed, to maintain unity. Never rush ahead of your singers.

Give a break of consistent length between verses, but not too long a gap, just enough to take a comfortable breath before continuing to sing. By now you will have realized that it is necessary to count any note longer than one beat as well as the gap between verses, and *do* leave a gap for the intake of breath.

Ritards are not appropriate at the end of the play over, nor at the end of any verse but the last one. The gap between the play over and first verse should be the same as between verses. Consistency is a virtue.

Accompanying and leading the hymn-singing is the most important part of your job as an organist. A congregation and choir that are comfortable with your hymn-playing will be your allies. Play with the Spirit and the Understanding.

December 2012

* But take note: the pun has been retained deliberately, and now repeated, by the editors.

EIGHTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is particular utility for the church musician, as for every minister, in attempting some analysis of the scope of worship, not by forms or topics, but by the spiritual attitudes struggling after expression. A thoughtful study of recorded prayers and the richest hymns will reveal at least five leading attitudes of the worshipping heart. These are the attitude of humility and penitence, that of self-declaration or profession of the several stages and varieties of faith, love, hope and zeal, that of supplication for one's self and for others, that of thankful acknowledgement of what God gives or does, and that of adoration for the qualities of His being that disclose themselves to human sight. Not all of these are equally present in individual experience, nor are they equally easy to put into fitting words or form. Yet all are called for in well-rounded services. In actual specimens they are usually mingled in many different orders and proportions. No statement of them can be wholly satisfactory, since the experience of worship is not only the highest function of the human spirit, but one of the most complex. The important thing for every leader of Public Worship, whether minister or musician, is to recognize something of the breadth and depth of the subject. Their high efficiency as leaders depends upon fullness and frequency of thought about it, supported by every path that leads up into God's presence and companionship.

Thought about the nature of worship should not lose itself in abstractions. The church musician needs to connect whatever his mind and heart may be able to grasp of the idea of devotional expression in general with those particular fields of action and separate functions that belong to him. These fall into three divisions, according as the accent falls on the organ*, the choir or the congregation, *but the three are much less distinct than is sometimes supposed* (Ed. italics).

Waldo Selden Pratt, Mus.Doc., "The Problem of Music in the Church", *Northwestern University Bulletin IV*, Vol. XXXI No. 15, Dec. 8, 1930.

* Ed. note: For the twenty-first century, perhaps "the organ and any other instruments that may be in use".

Coming Events

The
Melos
Choir & Chamber Orchestra

SUNDAY, MAY 5, at 3:30 pm in St. George's Cathedral
THE TUDORS

with **DYLAN HAYDEN**, tenor, a Consort of Viols,
and **Aurora Dokken**, harpsichord & organ

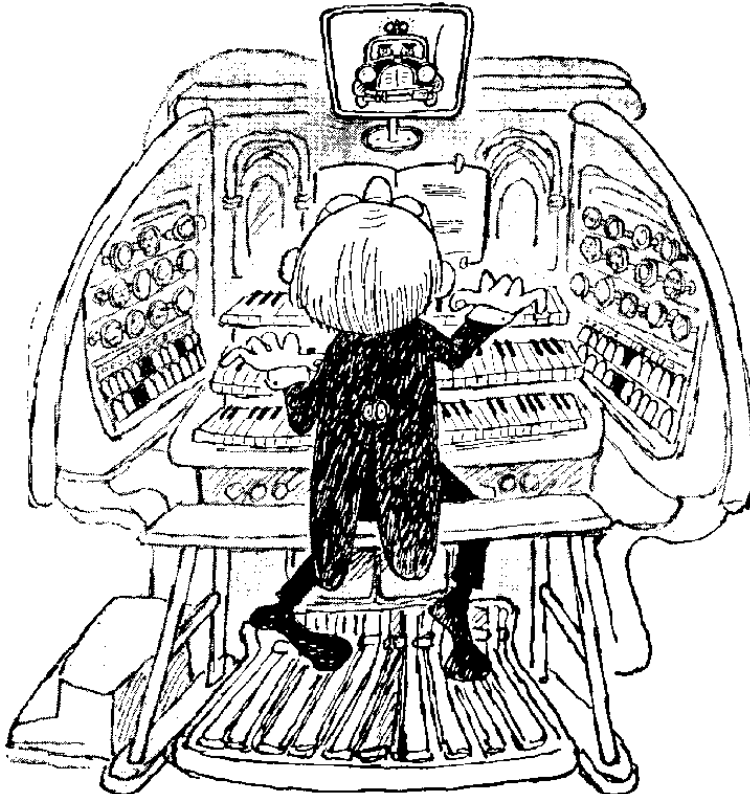
Noting the 350th anniversaries of the births of composers John Dowland, John Milton the Elder, and Giles Farnaby. Byrd, Mass for Four Voices; Gibbons, The Cries of London and This is the Record of John.



Summer Concert Series at St. George's

The St. George's Cathedral Summer Concert Series begins on Thursday June 13 from 12:15pm to 12:50pm with the Cantabile Women's Chorus performing under the direction of Mark Sirett. The series will continue every Thursday through August 29. Admission is free, with a voluntary offering collected. Join us for a mid-day musical interlude!

June 13	Cantabile Women's Chorus	July 25	Deborah Schuurmans (Piano)
June 20	Sharon Pond (Organ)	August 1	HMCS Ontario Ship's Band
June 27	Ed Reifel & Greg Campbell (Percussion & Viola)	August 8	Irish Roots (Folk Group)
July 4	Mark Leslie Wilkinson (Baritone)	August 15	Toronto Guitar Duo (Chad Yacobucci & Adam Batstone)
July 11	Toute Ensemble (Flute Duo)	August 22	Cheryl Bruce (Clarinet)
July 18	Finnie Jesson (Soprano)	August 29	Kingston Viol Consort



The late Gerard Hoffnung seems to have caught an organist who didn't understand the last three words of *Allegro ma non troppo* . . . Note the fashionable toes-only pedal technique.

Some Kingstonians plan to drive down to hear this top-notch young Canadian musician, now teaching as head of the organ program at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music in Houston, Texas.

Perhaps we'll have dinner together beforehand. Call David or Fran at 613-549-7125 if you'd like to be part of this.

The St. Francis Xavier organ is newly enlarged and located in an acoustically friendly church by the same architect as St. Mary's Cathedral in Kingston.



"...one of the most outstanding young organists on the scene today. His unassuming manner and his sure and relaxed technique hide a fiery yet totally musical approach to organ playing."

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"His program and performances here are certainly heroic, tailor made for this instrument, exploiting its seemingly limitless tonal resources." (recording review)

The American Organist

"... an outstanding performance by the young artist." (recording review)

American Record Guide

KEN COWAN

Concert Organist

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7.00 P.M.

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CONCERT REVIEWS

Los Angeles, CA

2004 American Guild of Organists
national convention.

"Cowan's performance was stunning. [His] playing displayed understanding of the composer's intentions and allowed one to hear the beauty of the various families of color on this glorious instrument. There was passion and fire in this virtuosic performance"

- *The American Organist*

Cleveland, OH

2009 Organ Historical Society Convention

"All in all, this evening was one of the most memorable organ performances we've heard in years..."

- *ClevelandClassical.com*

Buffalo, NY

2004 Organ Historical Society Convention

"His unassuming demeanor complements the dual nature of his playing – a combination of technical virtuosity and great musical understanding and sensitivity."

- *The Diapason*

Portland, ME

"Mr. Cowan's technical mastery, expressivity, musicality, and sheer brilliance thrilled the convention audience."

- *The American Organist*

Hamilton, ON

"...an absolutely stunning recital by Ken Cowan."

- *Organ Canada*

"... let me assure you that we who heard this recital came away convinced of a glorious future for organ playing."

- *The American Organist*



KEN COWAN
Concert Organist

RECORDING REVIEWS

"Ken Cowan is one of the most brilliant young organists on the scene today. His program and performances here are certainly heroic, tailor made for this instrument, exploiting its seemingly limitless tonal resources. His "orchestrations" of Wagner's Overture from Die Meistersinger rival the original; the final pages are spellbinding in Cowan's brilliance of execution."

- *The American Organist*

"...I have never heard [Willan's *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue*] performed with more virtuosity, nor with a more apt use of colour...there is much to return to in this disc..."

- *Organists' Review*

"Cowan has that innate skill to turn the organ into an orchestra. Highly recommended"

- *The Organ*

"...awe inspiring technique...the phrasing and registrations are superbly evocative."

- *Organ Alternatives*

"Mr. Cowan's performance has all the bravura and drama of the best orchestral recordings."

- *Organ Alternatives*

RECORDINGS: RAVEN Recordings, and JAV Recordings

Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.
www.concertorganists.com

Supply Organists

Mark Sirett is available to play for church services. He can be reached at 542-6506 or 542-9616 ext. 24 or msirett@cantabile.kingston.net

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Coming in June: *Orgelfest 2013 Preview*, a look at Convention events coming in August, only two hours from Kingston!

The Newsletter

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Advertisements

Commercial advertisements will be accepted as follows: the normal size will be business card (one eighth of a page) at \$15 for a single issue and \$50 for a year (four issues). If space allows, we will accept an occasional half-page advertisement at \$30 for one issue. Please send your requests to the Editor, enclosing a cheque for the appropriate amount made payable to *RCCO Kingston Centre*. *Positions Vacant, Jobs Wanted* and *Supply Organists* notices will continue to be published free of charge.

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Deadline for all submissions to the June Newsletter: April 30, 2013

LINKS

RCCO National Website <http://www.rcco.ca/> Pipechat <http://www.pipechat.org/>

PIPORG-L <https://www.google.com/webhp?hl=en&tab=mw#hl=en&sclient=psy-ab&q=piporg-l>

Canadian International Organ Competition <http://www.ciocm.org>

ORGELFEST 2013 (Ottawa Convention): http://www.rcco-ottawa.ca/orgelfest2013/index_en.html

