



PALO ALTO/PENINSULA CHAPTER AGO

Find us online at www.papenago.org and groups.yahoo.com/group/papenago

NEWSLETTER—MAY/JUNE 2010

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Chapter,

Hope you are well and enjoying this splendid weather. Ah, life in paradise... Duncan, my cat, is quite relieved that the rain is over and sends you his fondest greetings. A special welcome to Bruce Nickerson in San Carlos who has recently joined. He has a house organ which he has kindly offered to show us. We are looking forward to that.

Which reminds me, this is that time of year again to register and pay dues. The form is included in this issue, and I hope you will remember to fill this out and send it in promptly.

We had great success at our last event, our certification fair. One of our participants came all the way from Berkeley. We all had lots of fun filled with encouragement and inspiration from past awardees of the Service-Playing Exam, the CAGO, and the AAGO. Thank you to Bob for his loan of the projector, to Keith and Angela for being leaders, and especially to Libby Cod

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THREE SUMMER CONVENTIONS

It's not too late to register for the national AGO convention in July in Washington, DC. Several Palo Alto/Peninsula chapter members, including the Dean and the Secretary, will be attending. For information, please visit www.ago2010.org.

This year's Organ Historical Society Convention will be held in Pittsburgh, PA, from June 21-26, 2010. Online Registration and room reservations are available now at www.organsociety.org/2010. The convention features more than two dozen historic organs—from the 1838 Joseph Harvey to a rare 1970 Möller tracker, and everything in between—heard in fascinating architectural venues in Pittsburgh and colorful towns and neighborhoods literally from A to Z—Allison Park to Zelienople (plus Slippery Rock)!

Finally, the RCCO convention will be held July 18 to 22 in Vancouver, BC. For information and registration visit www.rcco2010.ca.

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from the San Jose chapter for leading a class. So now, I just have to remember to practice a little for the exam every day, and I shall be alright.

Our last event this year is our Anniversary Members' Recital. This year we are playing music written by people with birthdays or anniversaries in 2010. This includes Mendelssohn, Schumann, and S. S. Wesley. I hope you will join us for this on **Saturday, May 15th, at 3 p.m.** at First Congregational Church in Palo Alto. They have that wonderful new Letourneau, and they are always so generous with it. Angela has a list of people who wish to play. Contact her if you would like to be on the program. Our last members' recital was truly phenomenal. I'm sure this one will be, too.

Just to give you a hint of next year, we are planning to have another barbeque on Labor Day weekend, a wine-tasting trip to David Parson's place in Sebastopol in October where we can try out his Sahlin pipe organ, a workshop on hymn playing, possibly one on improvisation, and, of course, members' recitals. Let us know what you would like to have us do as a chapter. Your thoughts are always of the utmost importance to us.

On a domestic note, the other night I was awakened early in the morning by some angry bass notes on the piano. I thought maybe it was burglars trying to scare me. Soon I realized that it was my cat, Duncan, trying to wake me to feed him. Duncan has quite an appetite. He has thrown butter dishes on the floor to get at the contents, torn open a box with a pumpkin pie inside to eat the filling, and clamors vociferously for his three meals a day, though he doesn't always get all three.

This got me thinking about why we play music. Duncan plays the piano to be fed. Why do we do it? For me it allows me to be whole. It is a part of me, which nothing else can replace. I get attention from it, too, as does my cat. I am fed, too, socially, emotionally, and tangibly. There are times when I play for my benefit alone. There are times when there has been no other solace than that which comes from playing Bach. I have often pondered that Bach has saved my life several times.

Other people have described how important playing is to them. My first piano teacher, who is a close friend, told me about growing up and having the organ as her only respite from her family. At home her parents beat her, and her brothers molested her. As the daughter of a pastor of a non-denominational sect in Nevada, she was allowed to play the organ in the church. It was the only time she felt comfort, playing anything and everything for hours on end. It was music which provided a language for the indescribable acts and feelings in her life. Music

carried her through that period to where she is now. She now works as a senior analyst at Intel and lives peacefully just outside Sacramento.

It seems that music reaches a part of us which nothing else can. However, it is more than a teddy bear, though having a teddy bear can be a life-or-death matter. The electric guitarist, Pat Metheny, expressed most artfully why he plays music in a commencement speech. It is the process of making music, he said, the actual creation of music, which is more rewarding than anything that people can give you. It engages every part of you, both the heart and mind, and takes you to a higher realm in the mundane act of practicing.

"The thing for me, and the good news, is I realize that for whatever benefits I've gotten from being a musician in a material sense, or in the form of recognition, the fundamental reward that I still get the most satisfaction from, is the process of what being a musician is. It is that need and desire to want to go home and practice that's the coolest thing. The part where you start with nothing, have a musical idea or vision or aspiration, and through discipline and organization and preparation, and especially inspiration, you finally end up with the capacity to do something that you didn't and know you could do." www.berklee.edu/commencement/past/metheny.html So, happy graduation everyone, from one day to another of the humble art of making music, music which saves us and which takes us to another place, and feeds us, too.

Hope to see you next weekend.

Yours,

RANI FISCHER

SUBSTITUTE LIST CHANGE

Al Campbell is no longer available as a substitute organist after taking a position at St. Thomas', Sunnyvale.

MADER ORGAN PLAYING COMPETITION

Application forms are now available for participation in the 2010 National Organ-playing Competition sponsored by the Ruth and Clarence Mader Memorial Scholarship Fund. Finalists will compete for prizes of \$6,000, \$4,000, and \$2,000 plus transportation and lodging.

The competition is organized in two phases: a recorded (CD) preliminary competition from which three finalists will be selected, and a final event presented as a concert open to the public. The competition is open to all residents of the United States who will be under the age of 35 on November 6, 2010. Repertoire (30 to 45 minutes playing time) must include one required work: "October Interlude" by Clarence Mader.

Application forms and CD recordings are due by August 1, and finalists will be selected and notified by September 1. The final competition will be held on November 6, 2010, at the Claremont United Church of Christ, Congregational, in Claremont, California. The organ is a three-manual, 77-rank instrument built in 1998 by Glatter-Götz/Rosales.

Application forms and additional information may be obtained from Dr. Frances Nobert, 5023 Tierra Antigua Drive, Whittier, CA 90601; e-mail address: fnobert99organ@aol.com.

The Ruth and Clarence Mader Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1971 to honor the memory of two outstanding Southern California artists. In addition to sponsoring organ-playing competitions, the Fund has engaged in various projects related to the pipe organ, including commissioning organ compositions and funding organ-related research.

ANDREW BIRLING: A REVIEW

Andrew Birling, Dean of the San José AGO Chapter gave an organ recital on Sunday, March 28th, 2010 at the Campbell United Methodist Church in Campbell CA.

This church is a good sized church with a wood ceiling which provided very good acoustics and was about 2/3 filled. The printed program provided an informational paragraph about each piece, very much in line with the AGO's mission of education.

The program included German, Italian, English, and French composers, ranging from the 17th through the 20th century. Pieces included Prelude and Fugue in D Major, BWV 532 by J.S. Bach, Rhosymedre by Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Suite du deuxieme ton [versets to play alternating with the Magnificat Canticle] by Jean-Adam Guilain [Freinsberg], three settings of Herzlich Tut Mich Verlangen by Jean Langlais, Johannes Brahms and César Franck, and the Chorale No. 3 in A Minor by César Franck.

It was a pleasant surprise to find that an organ piece intended to be played between the verses of the chant Kyrie [at a Latin Mass] was performed as intended: Versi sopra il Kyrie by Giovanni Salvatore was performed with soprano Elin Bolt singing the chant Kyrie verses in between the organ versets. Very nice to hear the music in its intended context!

An unusual part of this recital was the inclusion of 'congregational' singing of two well known hymns. Each hymn was accompanied by the special introduction and last verse accompaniments provided in the new Augsburg Press's Supporting Resource series, titled Introductions and Alternate Accompaniments for Organ.

My Song is Love Unknown was sung by the audience after Mr. Birling performed RVW's Hymn-tune Prelude on the same tune, and O Sacred Head Now Wounded was sung after the three settings on the tune by Langlais, Bach and Brahms.

I really enjoyed the unique presentation of the music in this recital which was followed by a delectable reception.

MARY FRANCES JOHNSON

EVENTS CALENDAR

SATURDAY MAY 15: CHAPTER EVENT!

3:00 p.m. "Birthday" Members' Recital (*see Dean's letter above for details*). First Congregational Church, 1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto.

SUNDAY MAY 30

7:00 p.m. James Welch with soprano Rebecca Maggi. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Road, Palo Alto.

FRIDAY JUNE 11

8:00 p.m. Robert Huw Morgan (Bach series). Stanford Memorial Church.

SUNDAY JUNE 27

5:00 p.m. Evensong presented by the Organ Scholars and Choir of Hertford College, Oxford. Christ Church Episcopal, 815 Portola Road, Portola Valley.

FOR ADDITIONAL CALENDAR LISTINGS *please see the San Francisco Chapter's Bay Area Concert Calendar at the following site: <<http://tinyurl.com/yzcqdf>>.*

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR AGO MEMBERSHIP!

If you get the newsletter via email, you should have received the membership registration form as a separate attachment.

If you get the newsletter via US mail, you should find the membership registration form enclosed as a paper insert.

Please return the form with your membership dues to Jill Mueller at the address provided.

If you have questions, please email her at [<sjillmueller@comcast.net>](mailto:sjillmueller@comcast.net).

THANK YOU!

CHRIST CHURCH

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