

PALO ALTO/PENINSULA CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

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NEWSLETTER—MAY/JUNE 2013

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Chapter Colleagues:

Although it has been only two months since our last newsletter, it seems like far longer! For me, Holy Week and Easter—coming so early in the year—still seem like a blur. Yet, although they felt even more hastily prepared than usual, my church's Paschal liturgies were still glorious, and I hope that the same can be said for those in your congregations.



For several of us, part of the reason for this year's extra sense of urgency was a wonderful event in the life of our chapter held the very day prior to Palm Sunday. The AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists was a magnificent success thanks in enormous part to the many volunteers who enabled it to take place. Among them were those who proctored 18 hours of practice sessions with me: Rani Fischer, Douglas Franks, Tim Getz, Jay Martin, Donald Mulliken, David Sheetz, and Keith Wannamaker, and our judges George Emblom, John Hirten, and Allison Luedecke. Above all, my gratitude goes to Valerie Sterk and Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church for hosting the competition. Valerie and her colleagues truly went out of their way to make competitors and organizers welcome. Thank you, Valerie!

It was a delight to hear four wonderful young organists play that day including chapter members Chinar Merjanian and Duane Soubirous, as well as Nahri Ahn and Albert Bellefeuille. All played exceptionally well, and the judges had a hard decision to make; however, in the end the second prize went to Nahri and the first prize to Chinar, who will compete in the regional competition at the upcoming convention in Bakersfield. I hope to see many of you there—if you haven't yet registered for the convention, you can do so at www.bakersfielddago2013.org



Chapter Quimby Competition winner Chinar Merjanian and runner-up Nahri Ahn


We still have several exciting chapter programs before the end of the season, including the presentation on Jewish music led by Rodney Gehrke, offered thanks to a generous grant from the San Francisco AGO Special Projects Fund. Please join us for that, along with our annual Stanford master class and the members' recital in June.

While the program year ends on June 30, our work as a chapter continues intensively in July with the Pipe Organ Encounter. As you may have read in *The American Organist*, we already have a full roster of students, but are always welcoming of volunteers and donations. For more information, please contact Rani Fischer, who—along with a great committee—has done a stellar job of planning what promises to be a fantastic week for these twenty young people.

In conclusion, I should note that this is my final newsletter column as dean. I could not be more pleased than to hand over the role to David Sheetz, who has done a wonderful job as subdean

these past years. In addition, my immeasurable thanks go to: Douglas Franks, who as secretary has revolutionized our minutes and kept everything in order; Jill Mueller, treasurer and registrar for so many years; Jay Martin, who keeps our website current and organized; Tim Getz, who does an extraordinary job of publishing this newsletter every two months; and members-at-large Keith Wannamaker, Sarah Wannamaker, and Donald Mulliken. I have found the quality and collegiality of our programs this past year to be exceptional, and I hope you feel the same way. Additionally, I want to place on record my appreciation of the amazing work that Leslie Wolf Robb does as our regional councillor; she has been a constant support to our work from so many miles away! My best wishes to you all, and especially to David and next year's board.

With appreciation for all that you do,
Matthew

For all the latest P APenAGO news, remember to ["Like"](#) us on Facebook! 

SIX WEEKS, THREE CHAPTER EVENTS!

MUSIC FOR THE SYNAGOGUE
Sunday, April 28, 4:00 p.m.
First Lutheran Church
600 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto

MASTER CLASS WITH ROBERT HUW MORGAN
Monday, May 13, 7:00 p.m.
Stanford Memorial Church

MEMBERS' RECITAL
Saturday, June 1, 3:00 p.m.
(NOTE CHANGE IN DATE!)
Messiah Lutheran Church
1835 Valota Road, Redwood City

April Chapter Program: Music for the Synagogue

Our April program will be held Sunday, April 28, 4:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church in Palo Alto. Rodney Gehrke, organist and choirmaster at San Francisco's Temple Emanu-El (and Palo Alto's All Saints' Episcopal Church), will be joined by Cantor Roslyn Barak and a professional quartet of singers in a presentation of music for a typical Sabbath

morning liturgy. Running commentary by Rodney and Cantor Barak will give attendees the liturgical and historical context for the music. The repertoire will show the vast range of styles heard in synagogues today with a bent toward the classic Reform style from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries for cantor, choir, and organ. This program is made possible, in part, by a grant from the San Francisco AGO Special Projects Fund.

Silicon Valley Symphony features AGO members in May performances

For the grand finale of its 2012-2013 season, the Silicon Valley Symphony is proud to feature the pipe organ, King of Instruments. We begin with the world premiere performance of "An American Experience: Reflections on a Theme" by organist and composer Lothar Bander mann. The piece was originally written for organ and is presented for the first time ever as an orchestral composition. "Enigma Variations" is Edward Elgar's best-known large-scale composition, for both the music itself and the enigmas behind it. Elgar dedicated the piece to "my friends pictured within," each of the 14 variations being an affectionate portrayal of one of his circle of close acquaintances. The piece includes a part for pipe organ. Finally, Margaret Martin Kvamme is organ soloist in the Organ Symphony of Camille Saint-Saëns. Arguably the artistic zenith of his career, this symphony bursts forth with the glorious sound of pipe organ combined with piano and orchestra, a thrill like no other in all of classical music.

Maestro Michael Paul Gibson will conduct two performances of our 'Organ'ic Composition concert, first in Palo Alto at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church on Friday evening, May 17 at 7:30 p.m.; then in Menlo Park at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church on Saturday, May 18, also at 7:30 p.m. Ticket donation is \$20 general and \$15 for seniors and students; children age 12 and younger are free with an adult. Tickets are available online. Please visit our website: www.siliconvalleysymphony.net

Royal Treatment at Christ Church by Douglas Franks

British organist Richard Pinel, Acting Director of Music at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, presided over Easter services attended by Queen Elizabeth not too many weeks ago. His April 12 organ recital in the humbler surroundings of Christ Church, Portola Valley displayed the same organ mastery Her Majesty must have enjoyed.

Mr. Pinel's flawless playing, excellent choice of repertoire, and skillful employment of the organ's tonal resources brought Christ Church's Visser-Rowland Opus 97 brilliantly to life and pleased his audience mightily.

The organist's poise and congenial manner—and blue-toed socks unencumbered by organ shoes!—won his audience over immediately and set the tone for an evening of interesting and immaculately rendered organ music. His spoken commentary added insight and amused as well.

The first half of the program consisted entirely of Buxtehude and J. S. Bach, both well suited to Christ Church's Visser-Rowland. Mr. Pinel opened with Buxtehude's energetic Prelude in D Minor (BuxWV 140) and instantly impressed us with his prodigious keyboard and pedal technique and command of registration. Following that, his lively performance of Bach's Trio Sonata in G Major sparkled both in terms of technical fluency and tone color. As he pointed out to us before playing the Bach, each hand and the feet in a trio sonata are like separate instruments. He was a one-man chamber ensemble par excellence!

Bach's serene chorale aria *Schmücke dich, o meine Seele* came next, with its velvety accompaniment and evocative ornamented chorale melody. It is always fascinating to hear another organist's approach to ornamentation in so familiar a piece. I shall remember Mr. Pinel's interpretation next time I have occasion to play *Schmücke dich*.

The virtuosic Toccata in F Major by Bach brought the first half of the program to a breathtaking conclusion. One had to marvel at the note-perfect pedal work and rock-solid melding of fingers and feet in this full-tilt masterwork. The unrelenting harmonic shifts were handled with absolute confidence, precision, and driving rhythmic constancy.

The second half of the recital started off with Gabriel Pierné's *Trois Pièces*. These three contrasting movements by this lesser-known French composer (who studied with Franck and was Franck's successor at St. Clotilde in Paris) were in their turn lush and pleasingly pianistic. To hear more of Mr. Pinel's deft keyboard technique, especially in the fast first and third movements, was a delight.

Up next was Robert Schumann's Etude in A-Flat. Written for pedal piano, the etude was an opportunity to highlight the organ's tonal warmth

as the organist lovingly delivered this songful canon. Before launching into British composer Robert Walker's Prelude and Fugue on A-Flat, Mr. Pinel explained that this selection was from a cycle of organ preludes and fugues in all keys Walker was currently working on, and that he had previously premiered the piece in the UK. The prelude featured "perpetual-motion" repetitions of a quick cross-rhythmic motif. Its mesmerizing effect was not unlike that heard in Ad Wammes' iconic "*Miroir*."

The recital closer was Charles Stanford's *Fantasia and Toccata in D Minor*. Mr. Pinel couldn't have chosen a better piece to make us believe that he had transformed Christ Church's Visser-Rowland into a Henry Willis or magically transported us to a spacious English church or chapel to fully enjoy this orchestrally-inspired organ work by one of England's most beloved turn-of-the-century composers. It was a grand piece brimming over with Stanford's dramatic harmonic gestures and characteristic registrational crescendos and decrescendos expertly set up and executed by the organist using a row of toe studs.

After a standing ovation for the recitalist, we were treated to an encore, an extended variation on a theme by Mozart by a contemporary Hungarian composer. The variation bloomed into a jazz-styled "theatre-organ" arrangement of the theme. As he had all evening, Mr. Pinel allowed himself and his audience to have a bit of fun even during a "serious" classical music concert.

Christ Church parishioners got to hear Richard Pinel's virtuosity a second time when he accompanied their choir the following Sunday morning in a performance of several Benjamin Britten choral works to celebrate Britten's centenary. How fortunate we all were that this superb musician took some time off from St. George's Chapel to share his exquisite organ playing with us commoners!

Concert/Event Listings

Sunday, April 28, 4:00 p.m.
PALO ALTO/PENINSULA CHAPTER EVENT
Music for the Synagogue
First Lutheran Church, Palo Alto

Wednesday, May 1, 8:00 p.m.
Pavel Kohout, organ
Stanford Memorial Church

Sunday, May 5, 4:00 p.m.
Rodney Gehrke, organ
“Music Old and New for a New/Old Tuning System”
St. Bede’s Episcopal Church, Menlo Park

Thursday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.
31st Annual Lutheran/Episcopal Ascension Day
Eucharist, Stanford Memorial Church

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Torvend, preaching
The Rev. Mark Holmerud, presiding

A combined choir of local ELCA and Episcopal Church congregations will sing, directed by Katherine McKee and chapter members David Sheetz and Matthew Burt. Chapter member Tim Getz will serve as organist. All are welcome!

Monday, May 13, 7:00 p.m.
PALO ALTO/PENINSULA CHAPTER EVENT
Master Class with Robert Huw Morgan
Stanford Memorial Church

Friday, May 17, 7:30 p.m.
Silicon Valley Symphony with
Margaret Kvamme, organ
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Palo Alto

Saturday, May 18, 5:00 p.m.
Choral Evensong
Henry Balfour Gardiner, Evening Hymn
Kenneth Leighton, Preces and Responses
Charles Hubert Hastings Parry,
Evening Service in D (The “Great”)
arr. John Scott, How can I keep from singing?
Gerald Finzi, Lo, the full final sacrifice
Organ Voluntaries:
Edward Bairstow, Evening Song
Maurice Duruflé, Final sur le thème du “Veni Creator”
Dr. Susan Jane Matthews, Director of Music
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Burlingame

Saturday, May 18, 7:30 p.m.
Silicon Valley Symphony with
Margaret Kvamme, organ
Trinity Episcopal Church, Menlo Park

Sunday, May 19, 4:00 p.m.
Angela Kraft Cross, organ
Campbell United Methodist Church

Monday, May 20
SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER EVENT
Annual meeting and dinner, followed by a
presentation on the music of Richard Purvis
with James Welch
St. Cecilia’s Catholic Church, San Francisco

Wednesday, May 29, 8:00 p.m.
“Music from Old Vienna”
Anthony Martin, violin; John Dornenburg, viola da
gamba; Robert Huw Morgan, organ
Stanford Memorial Church side chapel

Saturday, June 1, 3:00 p.m.
NOTE CHANGE IN DATE
PALO ALTO/PENINSULA CHAPTER EVENT
Members’ Recital
Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City

Sunday, June 9, 4:00 p.m.
Reunion Concert with former and present First
Lutheran Church organists
Gwen Adams, Andrew Chislett, Paul Ellison, Joseph
Hanson, Donald Knuth, Margaret Kvamme, Jin Kyung
Lim, Andrew Nelson, Keith Wannamaker, and
Sarah Wannamaker
First Lutheran Church, Palo Alto

Friday, June 14, 8:00 p.m.
Robert Huw Morgan, organ
Stanford Memorial Church

Saturday, June 22, 4:00 p.m.
Carson Cooman, organ
Christ Church, Portola Valley

Monday, June 24-Wednesday, June 26
AGO Region IX Convention
Bakersfield

Our concert calendar features performances by our chapter members, events occurring in our immediate area, and chapter-sponsored events of the Palo Alto/Peninsula, San Jose, and San Francisco chapters. For additional calendar listings please see the San Francisco Chapter’s Bay Area concert calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/yzcqfdf>, as well as the Stanford University concert calendar at <http://music.stanford.edu/Events/calendar.html>.

OFFICERS

**Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter AGO
July 2012-June 2013**

Matthew Burt, Dean
David Sheetz, Subdean
Douglas Franks, Secretary
Jill Mueller, Treasurer and Registrar

Members-at-Large:
Jay Martin, Webmaster & Keith Wannamaker
(Class of 2013)
Jeffrey Abbott & Tim Getz, Newsletter Editor
(Class of 2014)
Donald Mulliken & Sarah Wannamaker
(Class of 2015)

Position Available

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Los Gatos
238 East Main Street, Los Gatos, CA 95030

Sunday service 10:00 a.m., Wednesday service 8:00 p.m. Provide prelude and postlude, three hymns. Offertory and solo accompaniment on Sundays. 2 manual Austin pipe organ. Grand piano also used occasionally. \$180 per Sunday, \$130 per Wednesday. See www.christiansciencelosgatos.org (event page) for more information or contact church clerk at lgclerk238@earthlink.net or 408-354-3844.

POE at Stanford, July 21-27 **by Rani Fischer**

Our chapter's Pipe Organ Encounter is gaining momentum in the final months of planning. Our students are almost finalized as we await scholarship decisions. The schedule is tight, but hopefully not too tight, with morning workshops, lessons and practice, field trips, a demonstration of a church service, and several recitals. The highlights include trips to San Francisco, Santa Cruz, including Boomeria, and the Schoenstein firm in Benicia. You are all invited to the recitals, which will occur daily. We will post details at www.papenago.org.

Financially, things have come together also, as tuition, scholarships, private donations and corporate donations are coming in. We even received a gift from Google! Thank you to everybody who has given, and especially to Catha Hall, our funding coordinator, for her hours of dedication. Still, we could use your help to give us a little wiggle room financially. A form is provided in this newsletter for your convenience.

As far as logistics, we still need a few people to drive and chaperone at lessons. We could use some bakers for snacks and two birthday cakes, too. Also, a couple more van drivers would be nice so that the same people don't have to drive those big vans all the time.

Thanks to those of you who have contributed, or will contribute, your time and resources. This takes a whole community!

The PAPenAGO newsletter is published bimonthly in September, November, January, March, May, and July. Submissions (concert listings, job announcements, articles, etc.) are welcome and are due the 10th of the month preceding publication. They may be sent to editor Tim Getz at tim@gracepa.org.

Organists and Technology

by Lea Schmidt-Rogers, Coordinator for Professional Development, AGO Region IX

The electronic music world is moving fast. Years ago the Westwind Quintet began reading music from cumbersome music stands with page turning pedals. Only a few weeks ago, San Diego pianist Bryan Verhoye performed from an iPad with a Bluetooth pedal, effortlessly. Uploading to an iPad is as easy as transferring a PDF file. My favorite program for this is unrealBook. E-files are now accepted at many contests, provided they have a copyright on them. Copyrighting your own music is as simple as adding your name, a copyright sign and the date at the bottom of your Finale sheet that you notate yourself. It's exciting. The e-world allows you to put your compositions online or on YouTube faster, perhaps to a directed audience of your choice, than a publishing company.

Some of us are tossed into this new world; some of us embrace it. Institutions that we hold dear are lost, music stores disappearing. We buy music online and download onto performance devices. If the soloist doesn't have time to physically get you the music for Sunday, he can send it to you via email. Soon orchestras will probably perform from iPads and the "other" violinist can turn the page with her foot. There will be a lot of happy stand partners!

I have noticed that most organists, used to handling unwieldy instruments, tons of stops, pistons, out-of-tune pipes, pedals, and multiple keyboards, take the electronic world in stride. Has the iPad and Android world come up with a page-turning pedal for us organists yet? What do you know about this? Sharing sessions at the chapter, regional, and national level can help us bring each other up to speed. Let's get together with our devices and see who has the best theory, notation, or invoice program, or the best metronome. It's an exciting world!

Donation to POE at Stanford 2013

Your Name _____

Your Address _____

In memory/honor of _____

Amount _____

Please make checks out to "PAPenAGO POE 2013" and mail to Rani Fischer, 665 Endicott Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.
All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.