



Lincoln Chapter American Guild of Organists



Volume 79, Number 2

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October, 2008

JIM'S JOTTINGS

BY DEAN, JAMES J. LYTTON, DEAN

By the time you read this, our four events that seemed to make up the "September Spectacular" will be over: Cameron Carpenter, a great choral workshop led by Jeremy Bankson, the wonderful recital given by Jeff Blersch in Seward, and of course, Todd Wilson. I am writing this before the Todd Wilson recital, but he is such a superb player that I am sure that the concert will be great. October looks a little pale in comparison, although not by much. The First Friday series at Saint Paul United Methodist opens with John Friesen, the alumni recital on the new Casavant takes place in Seward, and then there is the Organ Spectacular!



Jim Lytton

Some of you may remember 1996, when there was a gigantic organ recital where all participants played the Bach d minor Toccata and Fugue at the same time around the country. Organ Spectacular is not as specific, but chapters across the country and around the world (the AGO has chapters in Singapore, Korea, Australia and Europe) will be presenting recitals on that date, which is October 19. The Lincoln Chapter AGO will present a recital by our three "academic" musicians, Chris Marks, Jeff Blersch and Masako Bacon. This recommendation came from the International Year of the Organ (IYO) Task Force. The recital will be presented at Saint Paul United Methodist Church which is home to a wonderful pipe organ by a local builder, Bedient Organ Company. It is quite wonderful to use our local talent and to tie it in with an amazing local organ making it even more spectacular, in my opinion. I hope that you are planning to attend this program. Even better: bring along a friend or two who have never attended an organ recital! It would be great to see Saint Paul filled on October 19. Please do mark your calendar for this event.

So why is the national office and the Lincoln chapter making such a big deal about the IYO?

It's simple: our numbers are diminishing and we need to "grow our audiences." Lincoln is not doing badly, however. We had a good number of people who attended the faculty and student POE Advanced recitals in July. They were certainly

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OCTOBER AGO MEETING

ORGAN SPECTACULAR

October 19 – 7:30 PM

Saint Paul United Methodist Church
1144 M Street, Lincoln

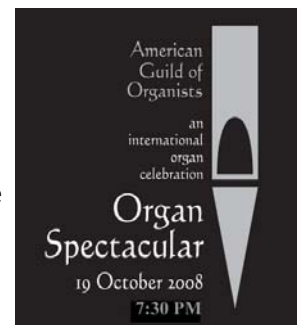
While we're hosting a galaxy of international organ artists in Lincoln during the International Year of the Organ (IYO), we're honored to feature three of our own hometown stars performing on Saint Paul's magnificent instrument crafted by our own Gene Bedient.

Dr. Christopher Marks, who so brilliantly organized the first-ever Pipe Organ Encounter Advanced this past July, has been acclaimed for his performances at national conventions of the Organ Historical Society and the '07 Region II convention in New York City. His most recent recordings include Discoveries made on the famous Holtkamp organ at Syracuse University and the first of a projected 3-volume set devoted to the organ music of Seth Bingham. Holding degrees from the University of Richmond, the University of Illinois and a DMA from the Eastman School of Music, Chris will perform the Concert Variations on "The Star Spangled Banner" by Dudley Buck and Sowerby's "Fast and Sinister" from the Symphony in G Major.

Masako Nakamura Bacon, AAGO, Associate Director of Music and Fine Arts at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Adjunct Professor of Organ at Nebraska Wesleyan University, and campus organist at Union College, will perform Bach's Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543, the Reger "Benedictus," and the Choral Improvisation sur le "Victimae Paschali" by Charles Tournemire, as reconstructed by Maurice Duruflé. Masako holds degrees from Kobe College in Japan, Concordia University in Wisconsin, and earned her DMA at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dr. Jeffrey Blersch, chair of the Department of Music at Concordia University in Seward, has a whole program at his fingertips, having just played the dedicatory recitals on Concordia's new Casavant organ. Having

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■ DEAN

Continued from Page 1

rewarded for their efforts (although the recital at Cornerstone UMHE Chapel may have given some of us a taste of the hereafter!). The playing by both groups of students was superb and the four faculty recitals were certainly great. A good number of people turned out to hear Cameron Carpenter in September. The recitals in Seward were also superb. Jeff Blersch put together a great program which included some hymn singing and he played very, very well. Hopefully we will have a good turn out for Todd Wilson.

Perhaps you have friends who read the Carpenter review in the *Lincoln Journal Star*, or friends in the Lutheran community who heard about the recitals in Seward. Now would be a good time to invite them to the October 19 Organ Spectacular!

If we can build on these recitals, we can help to ensure that the pipe organ has a good future in Lincoln. We already have over 60 pipe organs here, many more than in some communities that are much larger than Lincoln. We have a wonderful pipe organ builder in Lincoln who has contributed a number of fine instruments in this community. But if we rest on our laurels, we will be taking steps backward. Search your neighborhoods, find some folks who would like to attend these recitals, and publicize them in your churches. A number of my choir members like to attend these concerts.

If the Organ Spectacular on October 19 is a great success, then we can comfortably move forward and know that the pipe organ is secure in Lincoln.

I hope to see you on October 19! ♪

E-LETTER

If you forgot to sign up for the "electronic version" of *Chiff Chat*, you may still do so simply by e-mailing mveak@neb.rr.com and you will be put on the list, instantly. This saves the chapter money for postage and having to print fewer copies of the newsletter each month.

"It's the green thing to do!" ♪



- Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.
- The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals. <smile>

■ SPECTACULAR

Continued from Page 1

made an unforgettable splash as organist-improviser at the opening Hymn Festival of our 2007 regional convention, Jeff earned his doctorate at the University of Michigan. Come and hear what works Jeff has selected from his quiver of masterworks.

A word about tickets – AGO members can gain entry to this recital simply by asking for their new Membership Book. Or, if you hold a season ticket for the Lincoln Organ Showcase, this can serve as your admission ticket as well.

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**Bedient Organ
Saint Paul**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BY SINDA DUX, HISTORIAN

- ★ In 1950 the Lincoln chapter formally asked the City of Lincoln to make space for a pipe organ in the new Municipal Auditorium (now Pershing Center) then being built. The architects wrote back saying, "The final working drawings of the auditorium project include organ chambers and space for the installation of a concert organ."
- ★ St. Paul Methodist Church was the site of a Claire Coci organ concert in April 1951. She played Bach, Mozart, Dupré, Vierne, Honegger and Sowerby, and she played **five** encores.
- ★ In April 1952 the Lincoln chapter voted to give \$5 to the organ competition winner to help pay expenses at the National Convention.
- ★ Thirty-four Lincoln choirs took part in the First Annual Choir Festival at St. Paul Methodist Church, sponsored by the Lincoln AGO chapter in 1952.
- ★ Miss Elinor Barber, on the faculty at Hastings College, spoke at a chapter meeting May 7, 1956 about studying with Dr. Albert Schweitzer, "the eminent doctor, philosopher, missionary, composer, and organist." She lived in his home. At the chapter meeting, Miss Barber "played Bach as taught her by Dr. Schweitzer."
- ★ The Lincoln AGO chapter voted in January 1958 to host the April 13-15, 1959 Regional Convention. Pre-registration would be \$10 and registration at the convention would be \$12 for all sessions, one lunch, and a master class.
- ★ Fifteen dollars was voted to be given from the chapter treasury to Roger Wischmeier, winner of the chapter and regional organ competitions, to attend the National AGO Convention in 1957. Chapter members also "took up a collection" to give to Roger. He received \$40 in all.
- ★ Two charter members, Mrs. Cornelia Gant Cole and Margaret McGregor, attended the 35th anniversary banquet of the Lincoln chapter December 7, 1964. Letters were read from 22 former members. ♪



FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT SERIES

October 3 – 12:10 PM
1144 M Street, Lincoln

FROM BACH TO BARBER

Sweet and poignant, gritty and edgy, composers of organ music have tried it all. Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* can move one to tears while Peter Schikeley's (of PDQ Bach fame) *Fantasia for Organ* will challenge one's complacency. You'll also enjoy Mendelssohn's *War March of Priests*, Bach's transcription of a Vivaldi Concerto and a piece by French composer, Jean Langlais, which features the feet in an aerobic workout.



John Friesen

John Friesen, Organist at Saint Paul, will be the performer. ♪

FREED PUBLISHED

Dr. Donald Freed, a Lincoln Chapter AGO member, teaching at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, has a new choral work published, *Change Alone is Unchanging*, for SATB unaccompanied. The text is by Heraclitus of Ephesus (9th c. BCE). It is published by Yelton Rhodes and is in their catalog, www.yrmusic.com ♪

APRIL FOOLS

A LITTLE EARLY

Well, the joke is on me. After putting in the last issue of *Chiff Chat*, an "archived" article about the Wanamaker Organ doubling in size, I learn that it was an April Fool's joke, unbeknownst to me. I guess the joke is on me. And, I could have used that space for a "real" joke!



Ed. Mike Veak ♪

AGO – AN LSO CORPORATE SPONSOR

As members of the AGO, you are eligible for a \$15 discount on single tickets to Lincoln Symphony Orchestra (LSO) performances throughout the year. Telephone the LSO office at 402.476.2211, or visit their Web site www.lincolnsymphony.com ♪

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE ORGAN has begun! We have had several great events already, and I hope you were able to take in some of the POE Advanced that was held here in Lincoln in July. Please give Chris Marks kudos when you see him. It was a great week! And many chapter members got involved as well, providing food, transportation, and chaperoning while students practiced. The concerts and master classes were also outstanding! It was a GREAT learning experience for students and chapter members as well. I think we deserve to pat ourselves on the back for this "first-time" event.

Cameron Carpenter started off our LOS series with a BANG! I hope you did not miss this concert. It gave me an entirely different perspective on the organ in the 21st century; at least a lot to think about, even if I don't concur with all the "theories" we heard that evening.

Jeremy Bankson presented a choral reading session in September also. I was not able to attend, but I hear wonderful things about the music chosen and how it was presented. Thanks Jeremy!

Next on the agenda was the wonderful two-day spectacular in Seward, as Jeffrey Bleresch debuted the new Casavant Frères Opus 3868. What a great and diverse program he presented! Thanks Jeffrey!

And that is only the beginning of this exciting year! I hope you didn't miss Todd Wilson on September 21st at Nebraska Wesleyan University. We have so many offerings in this Year of the Organ, that if you are like me, you won't be able to take them all in. But I do hope you will attend as many as possible. It will encourage you and enrich your own talents.

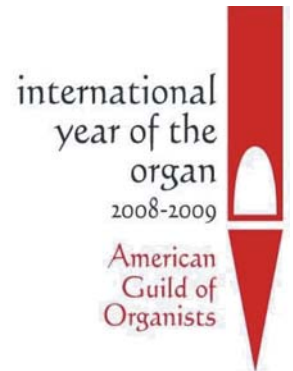
The Organ Spectacular is scheduled for October 19th, 7:30 PM, at Saint Paul United Methodist Church. Christopher Marks, Jeffrey Bleresch and Masako Nakamura Bacon (AAGO) will be the featured artists. All three performers are members of the Lincoln Chapter AGO, so that makes the event more spectacular! Please come and support our chapter and our members by your attendance at this concert. Wouldn't it be great if we could turn in the highest attendance for the Organ Spectaculars that are taking place all over the country on that day!

Check out all the concerts listed for the coming year on our chapter Web site at www.agolincoln.com.

Bottom line – GET INVOLVED!

Pam

Pam Penner, Chair
International Year of the Organ Committee
Lincoln Chapter AGO ♪



Autumn

– CALENDAR OF EVENTS –

OCTOBER

- 3 12:10 PM **FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT SERIES** – John Friesen, Organist – Saint Paul United Methodist Church – 1144 M Street, Lincoln
- 5 2:00 PM **ALUMNI ORGAN RECITAL** – Concordia University Music Center Recital Hall – 800 North Columbia, Seward
- 11 8:00 AM **WORKSHOP** for Musicians, Pastors and Laymen "Marriage Matters: Weddings, Wars and Winning Ways" –
to Clinicians: Dr. Jeffrey Blersch, Organist; Dr. Michael Eschelbach, Theologian – Registration fee: \$45 –
3:45 PM [registration forms available from Dietze Music, 1208 "O" Street, Lincoln]
- October 11/12 events held at Zion Church – 1305 Broadway, Imperial (Mountain Daylight Time)**
- 12 3:00 PM **HYMN FESTIVAL** – Jeffrey Blersch, Organist – Reception following
- 19 5:00 PM **HASTINGS ORGAN SERIES** – Andrew Henderson, Organist – First Presbyterian Church – 621 North Lincoln Avenue, Hastings
- 19 7:30 PM **OCTOBER AGO MEETING** – Organ Spectacular – Masako Nakamura Bacon (AAGO), Jeffrey Blersch, Christopher Marks, Organists – Saint Paul United Methodist Church – 1144 M Street, Lincoln



A program of music for the king of instruments – Sundays at 8:30 p.m. – KZUM 89.3 FM

FROM THE DISTRICT CONVENER

This year is the International Year of the Organ! How exciting – lots of concerts, programs and events involving the organ have been planned for the entire year – July 2008 through June 2009. It is great to take part by attending, listening, and supporting your chapter, but I think each of us has an obligation to our chapter and ourselves to get involved as much as possible, so that this year makes an impact on our country, our states, our cities, our churches and ourselves!

How, you may ask, is all of this to be accomplished? Well, attendance at concerts and meetings is a given. But, you, as an organist, must challenge yourself to:

- ▶ learn something new – something challenging you to stretch a little,
- ▶ improve on some skill (pedals, early fingering, sight reading, transposition),
- ▶ increase practice time, or the wise use of the time you do have to practice ☺,
- ▶ consider taking some lessons – we have chapter members who are currently teaching,
- ▶ find someone who will become an accountability partner,
- ▶ get really brave and plan to do a recital at your church – alone, or with someone else, and,
- ▶ work on an AGO certification (see suggestion 2 above and talk with John Ross, a Lincoln AGO chapter member, or anyone else who has a certification or is working on one presently).

Do you have any other suggestions about how to get the most out of this year? Please share them with me and I will share them with our chapters. If this sounds like a lot of work – more than you want to tackle – consider doing just one of these suggestions this year, and see if the satisfaction you get will spur you on to try more! It would be great if the Nebraska chapters accomplish the most out of all the AGO chapters in this International Year of the Organ!

If you let me know what you are doing, I will make a report to our chapters and to the national headquarters at the end of the year. Let's get to work!

Pam Penner
District Convener ♪



Nebraska
District Convener

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