



The Coupler

eNewsletter

American Guild of Organists
Washington, DC Chapter

www.dicago.org

September 2009

The Dean's Letter

Our Washington, DC Chapter is full of busy, highly educated, motivated members. In addition to the preparations for our Centenary year National Convention, we also have openings for an Education Chair to facilitate AGO Exams, a Professional Concerns coordinator and committee assistance for our Registrar and Programs. Please volunteer your help. tgcowan@aim.com

We still hear so many concerns about the economy, but New York Avenue Presbyterian is a bright spot in the organ world, with their new III/58 Schlueter pipe organ. Another bright spot is St. John's Lafayette Square, the location of our September 15th DC/AGO Installation (See below). Our very capable members Ben Hutto and Michael Lodico are working with Sub-Dean Aline Otten to provide a stimulating program, which will highlight St. John's new Lively-Fulcher organ.

Join in this opportunity to visit the "Church of the Presidents," participate in the reading of a new anthem, and enjoy the reception following this program at one of our Chapter's premiere historic locations.

Tom Cowan, Dean

**OPENING MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 6:45 PM
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, LAFAYETTE SQUARE**

St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square, will be the setting for the opening meeting of the District of Columbia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists on Tuesday evening, September 15. The 7:30 PM meeting will begin with a liturgy of Readings and Organ Music, based on the Sarum Prayer "God be in my head," featuring the new three-manual Lively-Fulcher Organ.

The 45-minute liturgy will include Installation of 2009-10 Officers as well as a sampling of styles of organ repertoire played by Benjamin Hutto, Director of Music at St. John's, and Michael Lodico, Associate Organist and Choir Director. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will follow in the parlors of the Parish House, hosted by Aline Otten, Sub-Dean.

St. John's Church, on the corner of 16th and H Streets NW (202-347-8766) is easily accessible by Metro from either the McPherson Square Station (just around the corner) or Farragut North (three blocks' walk). **Street parking is available beginning at 6:30 PM.**

The 48-rank Lively-Fulcher Organ (with Gallery Division prepared) was completed in the spring of 2009 as the final phase of an extensive renovation of this National Register church, including removal of nave carpeting, restoration of historic colors, and other structural, aesthetic and acoustical improvements. With cantilevered Great Division and two enclosed divisions, the organ has received praise from professional musicians and parishioners for its value and beauty in leading congregational song, accompanying choirs, and performing the range of organ repertoire.

St. John's, known as The Church of the Presidents, has been a place of worship for every President of the United States since its construction during James Madison's administration. Most recently, St. John's hosted the Inauguration Day Prayer Service for President Obama this past January, and he and his family also worshiped at St. John's on Easter Day.

St. John's and its clergy and musicians extend a warm welcome to the DC AGO for September 15, and we look forward to hosting the opening service and meeting.

Ben Hutto

Tom Cowan tells us that our Region III Councillor, Jane Errera, will be in attendance and that she is looking forward to meeting us.



Music at Midday National City Christian Church

For the past 25 years, National City Christian Church, at Thomas Circle, has offered their “Music at Midday” noon-time recital series each week. After a short, economically-induced “vacation”, the FREE recital series returns on **FRIDAYS, starting on September 11, 2009**, with a new pipe-organ-only focus, a burst of renewed energy, and a fun and interactive approach which will open your eyes to the amazing world of the pipe organ. Come experience the “Magical, Musical, Mystical Machine”!



National City Christian Church

The recital series will allow you to hear the majesty of the church’s 7,000-pipe, five-keyboard Möller organ in 30-minute recitals of some of the most thrilling, sublime, audience-friendly, and entertaining music written by the great musical geniuses for the “King of Instruments” performed by Washington DC’s finest concert organists. Hands-on displays of organ pipes, colorful photographs of the inner workings of the organ, interesting information on pipe organ history, and a post-recital demonstration of how the organist operates the five keyboards, pedal board, and over 300 controls will provide an up-close-and-personal look at this complex and fascinating musical machine. Come on over and bring your pipe-organ-loving friends!

Be sure to join us on FRIDAYS from 12:15-1:00pm and end your work week with the exciting and floor-shaking sounds generated by National City Christian Church’s “Magical, Mystical, Musical Machine” - one of Washington D.C.'s largest, finest and most powerful pipe organs!

Complete information on performers, repertoire, and the NCCC organ can be found at www.nationalcitycc.org.

Charles Miller



Notice Informing Membership of Case in Progress

On August 17, 2009, an AGO Member filed a formal complaint against the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for wrongful termination of employment. The Guild is investigating the matter according to the AGO's Procedures for Dealing with Complaints about Termination. No determination has been made at this time.

Although Guild Members may provide substitute or interim services, no Member may seek or accept regular or permanent employment with the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception while these Procedures are pending. See the AGO's website for the current status of this case.



Twelve Acoustic "Myths"

Neil Thompson Shade

I have been an acoustic consultant, with a particular emphasis in worship house and performance space acoustics, for over 25 years. A number of misunderstandings about room acoustics and sound systems have been brought up during consultations with building committees, music directors, organ manufacturers, and architects. Let's examine these myths and put the record straight.

Room Finish Materials

Seal the brick. The belief is brick, being somewhat porous, absorbs sound. Unpainted brick absorbs approximately 5 percent of the sound for frequencies one octave and above middle 'C'. Below middle 'C', there is virtually no sound absorption. In contrast, typical acoustic ceiling tile absorbs about 65 percent of the incident sound. Brick, and other heavy masonry surfaces, help reinforce low-frequency sound, which is important for the development of adequate loudness from the organ.

Seal the wood ceiling. The belief is a wood ceiling absorbs sound and sealing will increase sound reflectivity. Wood is generally not porous but is applied in relatively thin layers, which absorbs low-frequency sound, below middle 'C'. Sealing will not decrease low-frequency sound absorption; the solution is to thicken the surface or to stiffen the supporting structure to raise the material's fundamental resonance frequency.

Floor surfaces must be stone. The belief is stone, being physically hard, reflects sound more efficiently than other floor materials (except carpet). However, virtually any physically hard surface (wood, tile, or vinyl tile) has comparable sound reflectivity properties across the musical spectrum. Raised wooden platforms, common for chancel platforms or choirs risers, will absorb low-frequency sound due to typically thin construction and the airspace below.

Wood is good. The belief is there is something ‘magical’ about wood and its contribution to acoustics. After all, stringed instruments and many concert halls are of wood construction. As described above, wood in its normal application as part of a wall or ceiling, will absorb low-frequency sound. Wood, when thick or properly stiffened, can be an aesthetically and acoustically favorable material.

Removing carpet solves all acoustic problems. The belief is carpet, being sound absorptive, decreases room acoustic response, which is correct. Carpet absorbs mid-to-high frequency sound above middle ‘C’, the voice region. Carpet should not be used in locations where sound originates: choir lofts, chancel platforms, and under pews or seats. However, little detriment occurs when used in aisles. Carpet should be thin and not have a separate underlayment pad to minimize sound absorption. Other materials in the room could be more absorptive than the carpet, such as pew cushions, acoustic plasters, or acoustic ceiling tile.

Sound Systems

More loudspeakers are better. The belief is more loudspeakers improve listening conditions. This is certainly true if the existing loudspeakers do not cover the location where congregants and others are seated. Speech intelligibility is maximized by using the fewest number of loudspeakers consistent with sound coverage requirements.

Loudspeaker placement is not critical. The belief is that amplifying the source will improve listening conditions. While somewhat true, our ears and eyes provide a coordinated subconscious evaluation whereby the most natural response results when the visual and audible cues arrive from the same direction. Loudspeakers need to be placed near the sound source.

Loudspeakers do not have to be large. After all, some manufacturers tout the ‘room filling’ ability of their small loudspeaker products. Larger loudspeakers are necessary to direct low-frequency sound, which by nature radiates spherically, to keep it from reflecting off room surfaces. Generally, the more reverberant the room, the larger the loudspeaker must be to maintain speech intelligibility.

More microphones are better. The belief is more microphones will pick-up the celebrant or choir better. Like loudspeakers, fewer properly positioned microphones provide the best sound quality.

Music Program

More reverberance is best. Generally is this correct for traditional liturgical music. However, reverberance decreases speech intelligibility and may not be the best for ‘contemporary’ worship services. Corrective measures to increase room reverberance often require upgrading the sound system to preserve speech intelligibility. Practical experience suggests reverberation in excess of 3.0 seconds can create acoustic problems.

Organ placement is not critical; the builder can compensate for location. It has been said the room is the most important stop for an organ. Placing the organ so that it is raised and speaks down the length of the room is critical. Yes, a builder can compensate for less than ideal conditions by adding or modifying pipe ranks and increasing wind pressure to create greater loudness, but costs increase and tonal quality can be compromised.

Amplify the choir so they can be heard. Sound amplification can increase the loudness of the choir, but rearranging the choristers so they face the congregation can increase loudness by 25 percent. Choir lofts and locations behind a reredos often lack useful sound reflecting surfaces to direct choir sound out to the congregation. This is particularly acute with steeply pitched or arched ceilings. Purpose-designed sound reflectors can dramatically increase perceived choral sound quality.

So there we are. While the above may not answer all of the questions that results during a building design or renovation, I am of the opinion that it covers about 80 percent of the common design issues that I have encountered. Please feel free to contact the author with your comments.

Neil Thompson Shade (nts@akustx.com) is President and Principal Consultant, Acoustical Design Collaborative Ltd



From the Web

(Not an endorsement; for informational purposes only)

From a blog by Rev. Msgr. Charles Pope, Pastor, Holy Comforter – St. Cyprian RC Church

<http://blog.adw.org/2009/08/the-inner-life-of-the-pipe-organ-king-of-instruments/>




CALENDAR


September 11 at 2:15 – National City Christian Church, (see above), For additional information, see Complete information on performers, repertoire, and the NCCC organ can be found at www.nationalcitycc.org or call Charles Miller, Minister of Music and Organist, at 202-797-0103 or e-mail him at cmiller@nationalcitycc.org.

September 15 at 6:45 PM – DCAGO Opening Meeting (installation of officers, organ demo, religious ceremony), (see above), St. John’s Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square NW, DC.

September 28 at 8:00 PM – Organ Recital: Isabelle Demers, Capitol Hill United Methodist, 421 Seward Square SE, DC. (see below)



MUSICAL MONDAYS
CONCERT SERIES | CAPITOL HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Hear master organists and instrumentalists play a wide range of music, including Haydn’s Seven Last Words of Christ with string quartet. Live video will allow the audience to enjoy the astounding console work of these organists.

Sept. 28, 2009 | January 4, 2010 | March 29, 2010
VISIT WWW.CHUMC.NET FOR THE COMPLETE SCHEDULE.

MASTERS ON A Masterpiece

This free Musical Mondays Concert Series returns to Capitol Hill this fall featuring renowned virtuosi playing Capitol Hill United Methodist Church’s newly restored pipe organ – a 1939 Whitelegg-designed masterpiece that ranks again as one of the most exquisite instruments in the city.

Concerts begin at 8 p. m. and are free and open to the public. A donation to help defray the costs of the series would be appreciated. Contact the church at 202.546.1000 for more details.

421 Seward Square S.E. (5th St. near Pennsylvania Ave.) Washington, DC 20003 | Rev. Alisa Lasater, Pastor | Jon Kalbfleisch, Director of Music

September 26 at 7:00 PM – Organ Recital: Charles Miller, Minister of Music at National City Christian Church, DC. He has presented concerts extensively throughout the United States to include, locally, the Kennedy Center, Washington National Cathedral and the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Miller has also performed in York Minster and St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, England. No Tickets are required. A free-will will be collected to benefit the community’s needy. Westmoreland’s organ is a 3-manual, 50 rank, Aeolian-Skinner which was installed in 1957. Following the concert will be a reception and an opening of an art exhibit by local artist, Jan Rowland. Westmoreland Congregational United Church, 1 Westmoreland Circle (Massachusetts and Western Avenues), Bethesda, Maryland.

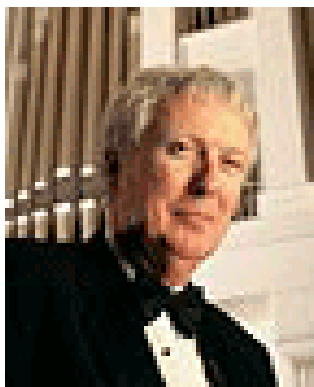
September 27 at 5:15 PM – Organ Recital: Scott Dettra, Washington National Cathedral



Scott Dettra

October 3 at 7:30 PM - Concert: Music for Organ and Brass, featuring Donald Sinclair Sutherland, organist, and Brass Roots Quintet. Music by John Cook, J. S. Bach, David Chesky, Richard Strauss, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, David Ashley White, Malcom Arnold, Nicolas de Grigny, and Eugène Gigout. Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, 6601 Bradley Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20817, www.bradleyhillchurch.org, For more information, please contact Kyle Babin, Director of Music, at 301-365-2850, ext. 503. Concert is sponsored by Friends of Music at Bradley Hills and is free of charge. A free-will offering will be collected. Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church has ample parking and is handicap accessible.

Donald Sinclair Sutherland serves as Coordinator of the organ department at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University. Known as a skilled artist, choral conductor, scholar, pianist, and harpsichordist, he has received several recognitions, such as the “Excellence in Teaching Award” by the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association and the “Distinguished Alumni Award” from Syracuse University. Mr. Sutherland received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from Syracuse University, where he later taught. In 1971, he became Director of Music at Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, where he served until 1999. Mr. Sutherland has performed throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe and has adjudicated several international organ competitions. In 2007, he was appointed Director of Music Emeritus at Bradley Hills.



Donald Sutherland

Brass Roots Quintet was founded in 2007 and is comprised of Peabody Conservatory undergraduate students. Coached primarily by trumpeter Joe Burgstaller of the Canadian Brass, the group has distinguished itself as one of the foremost chamber groups in the Baltimore area. With an extensive collection of repertoire ranging from Baroque to Tango to traditional Dixieland Jazz, the quintet prides itself on a unified musical interpretation and sound. Brass Roots has received praise from world-renowned faculty of the Peabody Institute, as well as high acclaim from audiences throughout the East Coast.



Brass Roots Quintet



POSITIONS AVAILABLE

MARYLAND

MUSIC DIRECTOR (Originally listed 07/11/09)

Trinity Lutheran Church (Congregation size: 300), 11200 Old Georgetown Rd., North Bethesda, MD 20852; Phone: 301-881-7275; fax: 301-881-9057; website: www.trinityelca.org

Direct 1 adult choir (15-20 members); avg. hrs/week: 10, 11/28 pipe organ, rebuilt in 2000; Yamaha piano, 12 yrs old, Salary commensurate with experience and in accordance with AGO guidelines, 4 weeks' paid vacation and 2 weeks' continuing education, negotiable with salary.

"We are seeking a quarter-time Director to lead the choir and support/expand the music ministries of the congregation (an organist/pianist position has recently been filled), which

appreciates and supports quality music in worship. The Director reports to and works closely with the Pastors and also works with the Worship & Music Committee. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in music and one year's choral conducting experience are required. Keyboard skills are desirable."

A detailed position announcement and job description have been posted on the above-indicated website. Contact Nancy Nielsen at TNiel4@verizon.net.



CHOIR DIRECTOR (Originally listed 7/31/09)

Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 6513 Queens Chapel Road, University Park, MD 20782, 301-927-0477; www.riverdalepresbyterian.org. Salary: \$13-15,000 depending on education and experience; quarter/one-third time position, approximately 10-15 hours per week, September through June. Under direct supervision of head-of-staff (Pastor). Large music library; music allowance available; sick leave and 2 weeks' paid vacation. Formation of a youth choir is desirable; Director also serves on the Music-at- Riverdale Committee to plan concert series. "Rehearsals must be challenging, but pleasurable". Submit resumes to rivpres@msn.com.



NORTHERN VIRGINIA

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC (Originally listed 8/30/09) – Avail. November 1, 2009 (negotiable)

Emmaus UCC (Congregation size: 288); www.emmausucc.org, 900 Maple Ave. East, Vienna, VA 22180, Organist/Director for one adult choir (15 members): Support children's choir as necessary (currently directed by a volunteer). Avg. hours/week: 10-15; salary \$15-18k depending upon education & experience. Rodgers 1990 2-manual organ; Yamaha piano. Vacation & other benefits negotiable

"Emmaus UCC seeks to be a place where people come to be comforted, challenged & empowered by our liberal, progressive & spiritual tradition. We seek a director of music as a shared position with our current associate director, who leads the first Sunday of the month. Emmaus holds services at 10:30 Sundays with an avg. attendance of 75-100.

Responsibilities: provide appropriate worship service music on Sundays & for special services; lead Sunday a.m. choir rehearsals; coordinate music selection with Senior Minister; arrange for instrument maintenance; maintain music library; provide budget input. Salary is augmented by wedding/funeral fees. The congregation appreciates musical excellence and a diversity of styles, and is open to expanding the music programs."

Contact: Jennifer Chamberlain, Music Committee Chair, 703-929-4224 or music4emmaus@yahoo.com



MUSIC ASSISTANT (Originally listed 8/31/09) Available: Sept. 24, 2009)

Immanuel Church On-the-Hill (Congregation size: 837), 3606 Seminary Rd., Alexandria, VA 22304; II/11 pipe organ; piano; Annual salary: \$10k; no benefits.



NOTE: If you would like to advertise personal for fee services in *The Coupler*, send your information to the Editor and send \$10 to the DC AGO treasurer. Your ad will run for two consecutive issues. Direct any questions to the Editor rsaladini@gmail.com.



**American Guild of Organists
Washington, DC Chapter
Officers and Committees, 2009-2010**

Dean:	Thomas Cowan
Sub-Dean:	Aline Otten
Treasurer:	Arthur H. Roach
Secretary:	Patricia Henry
Registrar:	Alvin D. (Ted) Gustin
Historian:	Carol Guglielm
Auditor:	Jay R. Rader
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Class of 2011	Michael E. Lodico
Class of 2012	Nicholas Russotto
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Placement:	Donald Frazier
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Scholarships:	Diane L. Heath

Deadline for the October 2009 issue of *The Coupler* is September 28, 2009. Send your information to rsaladini@gmail.com. Be sure to include "For *The Coupler*" or a similar statement in your email message. Note that both current and recent issues of *The Coupler* are archived at www.dcago.org. Ed.