

THE BULLETIN

Newsletter for the Toronto Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists

December/January 2016/2017

RCCO Toronto New Year's Dinner 2017

An Evening of French Food and Wine
with a DVD presentation on the esteemed French Organ Builder Cavaillé-Coll

Friday January 13th, 2017 6:30 pm
Grace Church on-the-Hill
300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto

*Join fellow members of RCCO Toronto for an evening celebrating the legendary
French organ builder, Aristide Cavaillé-Coll.*

*With French-themed food provided by Summerhill Market and a special video presentation,
this event is perfect for anyone who appreciates Cavaillé-Coll, his superb pipe organs,
and the music inspired by them.*

For more information and to RSVP, see the back page of this issue of the Bulletin.



THE ROYAL CANADIAN
COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

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A Triple Resurrection

Over the years, the Anglican Diocese of Toronto has found it necessary to close and de-consecrate some of its churches in the GTA.

St Margaret's Anglican Church, which was near the corner of Avenue Road & Eglinton, was closed in 2009 and the property sold to a developer. St Mark & Calvary Anglican Church at 21 Blackthorn Avenue, just north of St Clair Avenue, was closed in 2011 and the building and property were bought by Cornerstone Baptist Church.

However, St Stephens Anglican Church in Maple was closed in 2008 and was de-consecrated as an Anglican Church. The building was rented to a Pentecostal Congregation for several years.

Now for the resurrections...

The Anglican Diocese has appointed Rev Jeff Potter to take on the task of re-establishing the Anglican presence in Maple. The building was re-dedicated by Bishop Peter Fenty on October 30th and will start functioning again on November 27th.

The organ at St Stephen's, a 2 manual Kney & Bright pipe organ, was not used by the Pentecostal congregation and it had become home to a rodent community. They lived under the top of the console, underneath the bellows, and gnawed on some of the smaller pipes. The instrument had to be repaired, pipes had to be replaced, a new blower had to be installed and other work done to make it suitable for playing.

And the third, but not the least significant resurrection, is that of retired organist and longtime Toronto Centre member, Sandra Kirk. Sandra had been the organist at St Stephens for twenty-nine years, when she played for the final service on September 21, 2008. She had not played an organ for three years because of injuries from a fall; however, she was back on the organ bench for the re-dedication of the Church and will return to her post as organist at St Stephen's, Maple.

We wish Sandra Kirk and the Rev Jeff Potter, who will be ordained to the priesthood on November 20th, God's blessing in their new ministry.

- Hazel Ogilvie

ORGANIST WANTED

St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford, ON is seeking an organist to play for this season's Christmas Eve and Christmas

Sunday services as well as at least monthly in the new year. Applicants must be proficient organists with applicable credentials from RCM. Prospective applicants must share the same faith and beliefs as the church. If you are interested in the opportunity, please send resume to Leslie Powlesland at adminassistant@stjohnspresbyterian.ca

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Bulletin Information

The Editor of the *Bulletin* is Matthew Whitfield,
Organist & Director of Music at
St. John the Baptist, Norway Anglican Church.

The submission deadline for the February
issue of the *Bulletin* is:
Friday, February 3rd.

To make a submission, please email the editor at:
mwhitf3@gmail.com
Or contact him through his website:
www.orguenouveau.com

For more information and to see upcoming events,
please visit the RCCO Toronto website.

Recitals & Concerts

December 2016 Recitals at St. James Cathedral, Toronto

Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 4:00 pm:	David Briggs
Tuesday, December 6, 2016 at 1:00 pm:	David Briggs
Sunday, December 11, 2016 at 4:00 pm:	Ian Sadler
Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 1:00 pm:	Thomas Fitches
Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 4:00 pm:	David Briggs
Sunday, December 18, 2016 at 4:00 pm:	David Briggs
Tuesday, December 20, 2016 at 1:00 pm:	David Briggs
Sunday, December 25, 2016 at 4:00 pm:	No Recital
Tuesday, December 27, 2016 at 1:00 pm:	No Recital

January 2017 Recitals at St. James Cathedral, Toronto

Sunday, January 1, 2017 at 4:00 pm:	No Recital
Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at 1:00 pm:	Imre Oláh
Sunday, January 8, 2017 at 4:00 pm:	Ian Sadler
Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at 1:00 pm:	TBA
Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 4:00 pm:	David Briggs
Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at 1:00 pm:	David Briggs
Sunday, January 22, 2017 at 4:00 pm:	David Briggs
Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 1:00 pm:	David Briggs
Sunday, January 29, 2017 at 4:00 pm:	Ian Sadler
Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 1:00 pm:	Ian Sadler

Sunday January 29th 3.00 pm

Christopher Dawes, organ

"A New Song We are Raising"

Luther's Reformation and the Instrument of Song.

Music by Bach, Sweelinck, Mendelssohn, Reger, Karg-Elert, and Eric Robertson.

St. Paul's Bloor Street 227, Bloor Street East, Toronto

[\(416\) 961 8116](tel:4169618116)

Admission free

*****Please note that due to construction at Metropolitan United, the Noon at Met performance this Thursday (December 15th), which features Tom Fitches, will be the last until further notice. Please check The Wholenote and metunited.org for updates as the renovations progress.*****

PHANTOMS OF THE ORGAN—ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

For the past dozen or so years, Toronto's Metropolitan United Church has had a popular date on its musical outreach program -- the Hallowe'en organ recital known as Phantoms of the Organ. And as usual, there was a healthy turnout on October 28 to showcase the work of young organists affiliated with the church's musical program in one way or another.

The celebrated French organist, prolific composer and music professor, Charles-Marie Widor, who reigned at the St. Sulpice church in Paris for 63 years, both opened and closed the program. His pieces are energetic and challenging, but Manuel Piazza, a second-year student at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music had no problem with the lively finale of Widor's sixth symphony. Funny, isn't it -- opening a program with a finale!

The work of three Canadian composers followed. The Petite Suite by Gerald Bales was ably performed by the diminutive Saya Ojiri, a third-year student under the program's organizer and presenter, Dr. Patricia Wright, who is Metropolitan's minister of music and teacher at the U of T. Saya is also assistant organist at Metropolitan.

Next was a fourth-year student at the U of T, also assistant organist at the All Saints' Roman Catholic Church in Etobicoke, Stefani Bedin. She performed a room-filling piece with lots of pedal work -- a chaconne from the Third Suite by another Canadian, Raymond Daveluy. The third Canadian contribution was a scherzo from Rachel Laurin's First Symphony. Sarah Svendsen, a second-year doctoral student and organist of the Collier Street United Church in Barrie provided a well-received reading of the piece with its middle-range filigrees and intricate pedal work.

And what's an Organ Spooktacular without Bach's famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor? It was presented in all its growling glory by Thomas Fitches, Music Director Emeritus at St. Clement's Church. In her introduction, Patricia Wright said she 'dragged him out of retirement' but he didn't seem too reluctant to tackle the very familiar work.

Another veteran, John Tuttle, who teaches organ at the U of T, presented us with a delicate little item, Alles was du bist (we know it better as All the Things You Are) and another spectacular, the toccata from Léon Boëllmann's Suite Gothique. It showed off to good effect the pedal section of the splendid Casavant organ, Canada's largest.

Patricia Wright then brought us a delicate transcription of Tchaikovsky's Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies, and then the phantom took over, invisibly presenting a little item in support of the Toronto Blue Jays!

The recital ended with a very energetic offering from the youngest player of the evening -- Joshua Ehlebracht, a Grade 12 international baccalaureate student at Cameron Heights Collegiate in Kitchener. His six years of study with Dr. Peter Nikiforuk certainly paid off, as he was certainly up to the physical demands of the allegro from Widor's sixth symphony.

One thing about playing the organ—it certainly provides physical, as well as mental exercise, as you must use all your limbs to coax the music out of the most complicated and intricate musical instrument human beings have ever made. The tradition continues at the Metropolitan, which plans to take the organ out of service next year for some much-needed repair work, chiefly to the leather pouches which act as gatekeepers to 7840 of its more than 8300 pipes. The church has a fund-raising drive to help in this effort and welcomes contributions.

—Keeble McFarlane, retired CBC journalist and annual *Phantoms* attendee

“A REMEMBRANCE DAY ORGAN CONCERT” with DAVID BRIGGS

I've just looked back at my calendar for the month of November, and below is a list of performances that I attended or viewed:

November 1	The Notre Dame Tradition (David Briggs, Organist)
November 5	Elijah (Toronto Mendelssohn Choir)
November 8	Mahler Symphony No. 3 (David Briggs with Christina Stelmacovich)
November 9	Donald Trump elected President of the United States (an ongoing performance of life imitating SNL)
November 11	A Remembrance Day Organ Concert (David Briggs)
November 15	French Horn Master Class with D. Fergus McWilliam and Horn Flash Mob with Sarah Wills
November 15	Bach's Influences (David Briggs)
November 16	Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

And that's only half of the month. Part of our purpose of moving back to Toronto was to have greater access and availability of time to attend musical events. After living in Ajax for thirty-one years (Ajax is not difficult to get to – point your car towards Montreal and drive 25 miles from the centre of T.O.) it required unknown quantities of time to commute. We missed connecting with “live music”, and I missed the educational benefits of listening to performance from the stage.

So having attended three concerts previous to the Briggs November 11 Concert, and with much of that music still running through my head (we won't count the POTUS event), allow me to reminisce and consider the performance by David Briggs at the Remembrance Day Concert.

I usually attend a concert and look forward to the following:

- A performer who manages to successfully communicate with the audience;
- Technical preparation and ability that, for the most part, does not interfere with the design of the music being presented;
- A presentation of musical line and timing that gives me the impression that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts;
- An opportunity to hear some quality music that is not generally part of the main-stream;

I know there are other things that I would consider, but these four were the first that came to mind.

There are always two performers at an organ concert: i) the artist/performer (the “animator”); and ii) the instrument itself (the inanimate object). Both artist and instrument have their own personalities, with their own strengths, capabilities and even possible weaknesses. It can be a challenge for both to “match wits”. The goal is to not allow the meeting of these two to become a contest, but rather a mutual discovery.

Let's deal with the obvious. David Briggs is a superb performer, technician, artist, creator – the list is long (as is the list of his accomplishment – check out his web site: <http://www.david-briggs.org/>). The Casavant organ at Lawrence Park Community Church is a mid-size three-manual instrument that is placed at centre-front of a room with a very dry acoustic (almost like a recording studio). Originally its placement was in a room that was almost twice as long and covered with many hard surfaces, and thus can at times sound as if it is looking for more volume (cubic meters) to fill. So, how did these two really get along?

The programme consisted of pieces that were either dedicated to “The Fallen”, to “heroism”, to “strength and resilience”, or to the memories of persons and thoughts of the war-time eras. Here are my quick impressions:

Prelude and Fugue in E flat (J.S. Bach)

Oddly, I heard a performance of this same work almost two weeks later. In both performances I found the technique admirable, but also in both, I missed the sense of grandeur that can come with a slightly slower tempo for the prelude and a slightly quicker tempo for the opening of the Fugue; I missed the implied definitions of the Trinity in this work by the use of registration that to my mind was aggressive and sometimes relentless.

Adagietto [Symphony No. 5] (Gustav Mahler)

Briggs shines in his transcription of Mahler's symphonies, showing himself to be a master of dynamic changes using a combination of manual stop changes, pistons and crescendo pedal. He shows how he is constantly listening and interpreting to achieve types of orchestral colours and the variations of sound within the acoustic of the room.

Te Deum (Hymne d'actions de graces) (Jean Langlais)

We're now in French composition territory. You get the feeling this is where David wants to be.

Le Jardin Suspendu (Jehan Alain)

In style, the piece is a meditation with suspended triadic elements over melodic and counter-melodic voices. It was one piece that I observed the audience was intent on just listening.

Pièce Héroïque (Cesar Franck)

This struck me as a most successful performance, where the registration, balance, phrasing and rhythmic sense made the piece hang together in a manner that I haven't heard in recent times. David pointed out that his interpretation had been based on studying the work while having access to Franck's instrument.

Marche Héroïque (Sir Herbert Brewer)

Sounding a bit like Elgar, for me it took me back to the sound tracks of English war films that used to be on television. The piece suddenly ends...

Dambuster's March (Eric Coates)

A fun piece – was it used in the movie? – While hearing David play this, I immediately thought how appropriate and fun it would be to hear it performed on a theatre organ. Sure enough, I was able to discover a theatre organ performance on YouTube.

Improvisations on Texts for Remembrance (David Briggs)

Now I did read the program correctly – the “text” was being used as the basis for the improvisation, not necessarily the tunes (which were subtly infused at times, while more obvious at other times). Laura Lane (long-time choir member at LPCC) read the text of: “I'll Be Seeing You”, followed by an introspective improvisation using mostly flute stops. The improv that followed the reading “We'll Meet Again” seemed to indicate a strong sense of hope and positive affirmation. Following the reading of “The White Cliffs of Dover”, David managed to display imagery that included elements of Debussy's *La Mer*, musical reference to “bluebirds”, along with hints of the music of Jean Langlais.

There is no question that Briggs' technical prowess allows the benefit of total confidence in his own ability to find avenues and ideas of musical expression, having thoughts and ideas that are mostly conceived in a grand scale. That grand scale sometimes exceeded the capabilities of the performance instrument, and that sometimes left the audience mystified. But when both worked together, there was some very fine music.

-Ron Jordan

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Friday January 13th, 2017 6:30 pm
Grace Church on-the-Hill
300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto M4V 1X4

There are two ways to RSVP for this event: Online or by Mail.

RSVP Online

RSVP online using the form here:

<http://www.123contactform.com/form-2353452/Event-Registration-Form>:

RCCO Toronto president Stephen Frketic will accept online payments by Interac e-transfer. He will then write a single cheque to the RCCO with all the monies collected.

Instructions for paying online:

Log in to your bank account and select "Interac e-transfer". It will then ask you for a name and email address to send the money to: **Stephen Frketic, sfrketic@yahoo.com**. It will also ask you to create a question and password for him to collect the monies. Please make the password **RCCO**. Note: banks charge you a small fee for this service, similar to the cost of a stamp + printing + envelope. However, the RCCO will receive your entire \$50, rather than \$50 minus a credit-card processing fee or online service charge, etc.

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## RSVP by Mail

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

# of Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$50 each) Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Dietary Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner will be French-themed and catered by Summerhill Market.  
There will be a selection of wines, cheeses, and crudités to start, and a soup and dessert will be served with dinner.  
Each entrée will be served with Scalloped Potatoes and French Green Beans.*

Please select your entrée:

\_\_\_\_\_ Beef Bourguignon (*Slow cooked sirloin simmered in red wine with fresh mushrooms and pearl onions.*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Coq au vin (*Chicken braised in red wine with bacon, mushrooms and pearl onions.*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Quiche aux Légumes (*Vegetarian Quiche with grilled vegetables.*)

You may mail this form with a cheque made out to "RCCO Toronto" to:

RCCO Dinner 2017  
c/o 306-555 Yonge St  
Toronto, ON  
M4Y 3A6