

THE BULLETIN

November, 2010

RCCO Toronto Centre Newsletter

Volume 13 Issue 3



PROFESSOR THOMAS MURRAY COMES TO TORONTO

Reviews of Recital and Master class on pages 3 & 4

November 20 Event- Organ Skills Workshop

Full information on pages 9 & 10

The President's Voice

James Bailey

For this month's Bulletin cover, our skilled editor has chosen a delightful photograph taken the day of Thomas Murray's very successful master-class of October 2nd. This event has been reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter, but it has inspired me to speak of the Centre's interest in providing educational opportunities for our students and other members. While the organization's is one that will often bring a quizzical look on the face of the listener, the inclusion of the word "College" in our name can never let us forget that the education of organists is a principle "raison d'être" of the RCCO.



We are, fortunately, not the only proponent of a strong musical education as witnessed by the four skilled organ students who are presently enrolled at the Department of Music, University of Toronto. It was the University which, in fact, sponsored Mr. Murray's master-class. But, in all likelihood, these students had their first contact with the instrument through members of the RCCO, who have also likely provided the foundation of their understanding of the organ.

For a number of years the Centre has scheduled a "Phantoms of the Organ" concert on a weekend nearest Halloween. This year's production is also reviewed in this issue. All I want to underline here is that this event has provided an opportunity for many of these students to "pull out all the stops" (and on the instrument which possesses more stops than any other in Canada!). The proceeds of this event are directed toward covering the costs of RCCO membership for our full-time, undergraduate level, organ students.

It is our practice to include a master-class in every programme year. This year, we are co-sponsoring an Organix concert by Dr. Andreas Sieling in May, and we will be sponsoring an educational event using his expertise on the morning of Saturday, May 7th.

Quite a new thrust this year has been to try to offer our expertise in a situation being faced by more and more musicians. This is where someone who may have keyboard skills, but has not had any formal organ training, finds themselves pushed by their congregation or minister to help out on the organ. The church may not be able to find an organist within some tight time constraints, or they might not have the resources to hire a professional organist.

It is with this situation in mind that Gordon Mansell, with the assistance of Lydia Peteren, has organized an "Organ Day" programme which will take place in two venues: St. Thomas the Apostle, Marham from 9:30 to 11:30 and St. Andrew's, Port Credit from 2:00 until 4:00. A programme which includes orientation at the console, basic organ construction, some basic hymn-accompanying pointers, and easy repertoire is available to both those who want to sit at the console, as well as auditors. There is no cost for this event, and we are making the event available to non-members as well. If you, as a member, know of individuals who might benefit from such a programme, please be in touch with Gordon Mansell (gdmansell@sympatico.ca or (416) 571-3680).

THE BULLETIN is published by the Toronto Centre eight times a year. Send events listings, submissions, and editorial material to Tom Fitches, Editor, at St. Clement's Anglican Church 59 Briar Hill Ave., Toronto Ont., M4R 1H8
Or email: tfitches@stclements-church.org

Letters to the editor or to the president are encouraged
Web-site: www.rccotoronto.ca



Masterclass with Professor Thomas Murray

William Wright

Four University of Toronto students participated in this event on Saturday morning, October 2: Sarah Svendsen, third-year organ major, student of Patricia Wright; Rachel Mahon, Second-year organ major, student of John Tuttle; Stephen Boda, fourth-year organ major, student of John Tuttle and John Paul Farahat, fourth-year organ major, student of Kevin Komisaruk;

Mary McBean kindly provided an abundant spread of cookies and juice, which everyone enjoyed in the time before the Master Class.

Rachel began the class by playing Willan's *Aeterna Christi Munera*. Prof. Murray remarked on her good pulse and efficient pedalling. He said that legato playing needs marcato playing occasionally for clarity, and showed that one must adjust the texture so that you hear what you see on the page. He demonstrated that sometimes a chord held in the left hand could be moved to a softer manual so that the high pedal notes are not obscured.



John Paul played Messiaen's *Alleluias sereins (Ascension Suite)*. Professor Murray complimented him on his handling of the registration changes but advised thinking of the larger beat in the bar to keep the pulse going. He worked on a skilled use of the Swell Pedal and indicated that Messiaen's registration indications of two manuals with 8', 4', and 2' coupled to the Gt. 8'+2' would give a typically French out-of-tune iridescence. He indicated how one should always try to approximate Messiaen's registration demands, even if the actual stops are lacking on an organ.

Sarah Svendsen then played Franck's *Chorale #3 in A minor*. He worked with her on subtle ritardanos and emphasised the harmonic tension in the concluding section of the piece. He showed how a good use of the Swell Box can increase the intensity of the melody, and stressed that one should always think of other ways of looking at this piece in order to keep it interesting.

Stephen Boda concluded the performances by playing Duruflé's *Toccata (Suite)*. Prof. Murray complimented him on his calm manner and the avoidance of any superfluous motions. He pointed out some registrational detail of the 16' pitch on the Great, but avoiding it on the Swell and Positif (Choir) so that there is not a pitch change when the hands move. He gave some helpful tips on how one might approach learning the difficult passages and concluded by saying that "this is a piece one can be grooming for the rest of one's life".

He congratulated all performers on their splendid playing which was both accurate and musical. Thanks to all four students and Prof. Murray for sharing their talents with the 22 members who attended this event.



Recital by Thomas Murray

Thomas Fitches

Approximately 130 people attended a superb organ recital by Thomas Murray at Metropolitan United Church. Having served 29 years on the faculty of music at Yale University, Murray has taught many of the leading performers of a younger generation.

The recital began quietly with an early piece of Camille Saint-Saens. The No. 1 in E major from his three *Rhapsodies on Breton Themes* is pianistic in nature and Murray's display of a wonderful variety of colours served to accentuate the shape of his arpeggio technique.

The colourful use of stops also highlighted Paul Hindemith's *Sonata No. II*. Murray had some fresh ideas for registering this piece, and not necessarily adhering to all of Hindemith's guided dynamic markings. The judicious use of expression pedals added a warmth not usually heard in this piece, and the rhythmic vitality in the first and third movements were never sacrificed during his beautifully crafted phrasing.

Symphony No. 2 in D major by Charles Marie Widor is one of four early symphonies under Opus 13. The composer refers to these as collections rather than symphonies (though they might, more properly be referred to as suites). Thomas Murray selected four movements from No. 2. *Praeludium circulare, Pastorale, Andante* and *Final*. Although these particular pieces do not convey the same sense of style and grandeur as Widor's later symphonies, Murray maintained delightful interest in his contrast of colours and sonorities.

Following intermission we heard Schumann's *Four Sketches opus 58*. Robert Schumann was so charmed by the pedal piano, he wrote three sets of pieces for it which can easily be adapted for the organ. One could hardly hope that these pieces would often be performed again in their original version on pedal piano, so it is good when organists consider them as part of their own repertoire. The sketches resemble such divergent works as those of Bach and Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*. In his program notes, Professor Murray describes them as 'charming cameos, foregoing the rigors of contrapuntal writing'. They were enjoyed as such.

The final piece on the program was *Glory and Peace* (2008) by the American composer Dan Locklair. A suite of seven reflections for organ, inspired by George Herbert's poem *King of Glory, King of Peace*, it was commissioned by the Association of Anglican Musicians and the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and was premiered by Thomas Murray in June 2009 at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. The movements are *Prelude, Pavane, Galliard, Aria, Scherzo, Trio* and *Finale*. Those familiar with Locklair's expansive and original style, knew what to expect. His music is quite imaginative, fresh, colourful and at the same time accessible. Thomas Murray performed these with exuberance and a good deal of fun.

The encore was *Nimrod* from the *Enigma Variations* the exquisite performance saw composer, organ, and performer combine to create the ultimate Romantic orchestral experience. Thank you for the music Thomas Murray!

**2010/11
BULLETIN**

**December-January
To be mailed
December 3
Submissions are due
Tuesday, November 30
tfitches@stclements-
church.org**

**Our December-January issue will feature
CHRISTMAS CD's**

**An invitation to Toronto centre members
Who wish to advertise their Christmas CD
(or maybe you have a favourite to mention)**

**Send your information
Title, Artists, & how one can obtain it to:**

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Freebie Recital Series

St. James Cathedral *Music at Midday* King and Church Sts. Tues. at 1:00 PM

November

- 2 Victoria Hathaway, *oboe*
- 9 Jonathan Oldengarm, *organ*
- 16 Simon Walker, *organ*
- 23 Bruce Kirkpatrick Hill, *organ*
- 30 Rich Spots, *organ*
- 31

Metropolitan United Church *Noon at Met* 56 Queen St. E

Thurs. 12:15-12:45PM

November

- 4 No concert
- 11 Patricia Wright, *organ*
- 18 Michael Bloss, *organ*; and guest trumpeter
- 25 Senan Whelan, *organ*

December

- 2 Sarah Svendsen, *organ*
- 9 James Bailey, *organ*
- 16 David Rosevear, *organ*

Christ Church Deer Park

Lunchtime Chamber Music

1570 Yonge St. at Heath Thurs. 12:10 pm

November

- 4 Lorelie Kirkpatrick, *mezzo-soprano*
Lark Popov, *piano*
- 11 San Agustin Duo
Emma Banfield, *violin*
Diana Dumlavwalla, *piano*
- 18 U of T connection - performer TBA
- 25 Lisa McLellan, *cello*
Christina Faye, *piano*

Twilight Recital Series

Sundays 4:00pm

St. James Cathedral, King & Church St.

November

- 7, 14, 21, 28 Andrew Adair, *organ*

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The Organ of Lorris

By William Wright

Situated about 130 km south of Paris is a small town called Lorris. It received its charter in 1134 and thus has a long history. Driving over narrow country roads, we happened on this charming town with its 12th century huge market hall with ancient timbers and thatched roof and its 12th century church (constructed in 1111)

This grey stone Romanesque church is charming in itself, but what had attracted my wife and me to it was its possession of a 16th century Italian organ. Counted as one of the most ancient organ façades in France (together with those of Strasbourg, Solliès-Ville and Perpignan), its style seems to date it around 1501. The case is heavily carved and supported on the south wall by a pentagonal swallow's nest. Six of the panels have medallions with the head of an elegant woman, typical of the Renaissance art.

However, the first document concerning the instrument itself dates from the mid-fifteenth century. Documents show that the organ was rebuilt in 1681 with particular attention being paid to the bellows, stop action, and a new keyboard whose touch should not be noisy. The mid-nineteenth century saw other repairs, but the organ continued to serve until the end of the 19th century.

At that time, a dramatic situation developed, according to local lore. A "wicked" organist could not endure that another organist would play for the Christmas mass. He severed many pipes with a slash of his knife, rendering the organ unplayable. Records show that he was shortly thereafter fired for "sins of employment".

Curiously, this damage actually preserved the organ from tampering in order to make its character more "symphonic". The abbot, Michel Chausson describes discovering the instrument in 1948 while taking an inventory of the organs of Loiret. In 1970 the task of restoring this sadly decayed instrument was given to the organ builder Jean Georges Koenig. All the restoration was done in his workshop. The inauguration of the instrument took place in 1975 with the participation of Marie-Claire Alain and Michel Chapuis.

The organ has one manual with these stops: Montre 8, Bourdon 9, Prestant 4, Nazard 2 2/3, Doublette 2, Tierce 13/5, Fourniture III, Cymbale II, Trompette 8, Voix Humaine 8, Dessus de Cornet V.

The beauty of it can hardly be described. As we entered the church on Sunday morning, the organist was playing a hymn on the Montre 8. I said to Patricia, "That is truly a vocal sound". The organist used simple registrations but all were effective in leading the congregation. Her postlude at the end employed a Plein Jeu which was gentle and not overpowering. Everything seemed to harmonise so well, that one could not prefer one combination over the other. After the service, we met with the organist and she took us up the winding stair to the loft. She was short of time, so couldn't stay to let us play it, but we picked up a CD of André Isoir playing on it. This became one of our memorable experiences of the summer of 2010!



Upcoming Toronto Centre Events

Saturday, November 20 ORGAN SKILLS WORKSHOPS led by Lydia Pedersen & facilitated by Gordon Mansell see pg.9 & 10

Friday, January 14, 2011 New Years Banquet, Guest speaker Eric Friesen

Saturday, February 19 Professional Support Workshops see *October issue of The Bulletin for a questionnaire*.

Saturday, March 19 Choral Workshops

Friday, May 6 7:30 pm Andreas Sieling Concert at Church of the Holy Trinity (ORGANIX)

Saturday, May 7 Andreas Sieling Masterclass

Membership Matters

New email address for Tom Shilcock: tshilcock@bell.net
Postal address now is 902 - 5220 LAKESHORE ROAD
BURLINGTON ON L7L 1C6

Apology

In the October issue of THE BULLETIN the name of David Weind who wrote the article on the AGO convention was misspelled. The editor regrets the error.

News

Patrick Wedd will be giving an Organ Recital at Christ Church Cathedral Montreal on Friday, Nov. 12 at 7:30 pm. The evening will celebrate Patrick's 50 active years in church music, and will be followed by a reception. Admission is by donation, with proceeds going to the Montreal Centre of the RCCO. Congratulations Patrick!

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James Bailey: jbach@sympatico.ca

More Musical terms explained:

Chords - things organists play with one finger.

Discords—things that organists play with two fingers.

Suspended Chords—useful for lynching the vocalist.

Time signatures—things for drummers to ignore.

Melody—an ancient, now almost extinct art in song writing

Klavierstuck—a term used by German furniture movers attempting to get a piano through a narrow doorway.

Music stand—an intricate device used to hold music. Comes in two sizes, too high or too low - always broken!

Concert Hall—a place where large audiences gather for the sole purpose of removing paper wrapping from candy and gum.

Agogic—playing high enough on an oboe to make the eyes bulge.

Cadenza - slapping noise on office furniture

Fandango— grabbing the pull chain on the ceiling fan.

Prima volta - jump start with a battery.

Refrain - proper technique for playing bagpipes.

Smorzando -with melted chocolate and marshmallows.

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Concerts and Events

November

Friday, November 5, 7:30 pm Organ Recital with Dr. Andrew Henderson, Director of Music & Organist at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, performing at Trinity United Church (461 Park Ave. at Main St.), Newmarket On. Tickets \$20 (adults) and \$10 (students) available from church office 905-895-4851 or at the door. Reception following concert!

Friday, November 5, 8:00 pm Fridays @ 8 presents Aaron Tan in Recital. The First Prize Winner in the RCCO National Organ Playing Competition will perform the music of Bach, Mozart & Elgar. Lawrence Park Community Church, 2180 Bayview Ave.

Admission: \$25/\$20 info. 416-489-1551.

Friday, November 5, 7:30 pm RCCO Hamilton centre is hosting a wine, cheese and jazz fund raising event for the upcoming Hamilton Organ Festival this summer St. James Anglican Church, 137 Melville st, Dunadas On. Tickets \$20 Silent Auction. contact Marilyn Repchuck at 905-648-0230

Saturday, November 13, 7:30 pm Bells Spectacular! Metropolitan United Church 56 Queen St. E. The Bronze Foundation Handbell Choir, conducted by JC Coolen, with Metropolitan musical groups. Admission: \$20
www.metunited.org 416-363-0331 ext.51

Saturday, November 13, 7:30 pm The Oratory, Holy Family Church, 1372 King St. West. Music of J.S. Bach & Vincent Lubeck. Philip Fournier, Organist

Sunday, November 14, 3:00 pm Sundays At Three presents folksinger & Song writer Joanna Chapman-Smith in concert St. Clement's Anglican Church 59 Briar Hill Ave.,

Sunday, November 14 at 3:00 pm Diane Bish will perform the inaugural concert of the new Allen organ at St. Patrick's Catholic Church Mississauga On. Info: 416-769-5224

Saturday, November 20 Organ Skills Workshop— Two venues Morning and afternoon sessions. see pg. 9 & 10 for details.

Sunday, November 21, 3:00 pm "Made in Canada" Quartet Sharon Wei (viola; Judy Kang, Stradivarius violin; Rachel Mercer, Stradivarius cello; Angela Park, piano.

Royal York Road united Church 851 Royal York Road. Admission: \$20 suggested donation Tel: 416-231-9401 Music by Faure, Brahms, Mozart and Ravel.

Sunday, November 21, 4:30 pm The Victoria College Choir Fall Concert featuring Saint-Saens Christmas Oratorio. Victoria College Chapel Free Admission.

Sunday, December 5 7:00 pm Carols United Sing favourite carols with the Metropolitan Silver Band and Patricia Wright, organist. Donations toward Metropolitan's Community Services ministry. Metropolitan United Church 56 Queen St. E.

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Organ Skills Workshop



Organ at St. Thomas The Apostle Church



The Toronto Centre of the RCCO is presenting a 2-hour workshop for organ skills development.

It is a FREE “boot camp” for new and not-so-new music people charged with providing organ hymn accompaniment. Participants have a choice of attending either the morning in Markham or an afternoon session in Port Credit.

These sessions facilitated by **Gordon Mansell** and led by **Lydia Pedersen** are designed to give hands-on instruction and will focus on providing solutions for pianists pressed into playing the organ. Participants are encouraged to bring lots of questions, and one hymn or short voluntary to play or to use as an example (optional).

The locations for each seminar are:

Morning Session: 9:30 – 11:30

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church
14 Highgate Drive
(Birchmount north of Steeles Ave.)
Markham, Ontario, L3R 3R6
<http://www.saintthomastheapostle.ca/>

Organ: Two-Manual, 45 stop Allen
Heritage HII-45 installed 2010.

Afternoon Session: 2:00 – 4:00

St. Andrew’s Memorial Presbyterian Church
24 Stavebank Road North
Port Credit, Ontario, L5G 2T5
<http://www.standrewsportcredit.ca/>

Organ: Two-Manual, 22 stop, Casavant Frères,
Opus 3864, installed 2008.

To Register: email Gordon Mansell at gdmansell@sympatico.ca
or telephone (416) 571-3680

These sessions are designed to give hands-on instruction and will focus on providing solutions to the following scenarios.

- The organist is suddenly unavailable, and someone points out that you play the piano – before you know it, you’re sitting at the organ console, with a service or Mass coming up shortly. Where to start?
- You’ve played a keyboard for a while, but your church is getting a new organ. What skills can you transfer, and what new things do you need to know?
- You’re comfortable on the organ but getting bored by your routine hymn playing. A few hints on spicing up accompaniments would be appreciated.
- You wish you knew where to find easy but good repertoire; just playing hymns is getting tiresome.
- You’re a pianist and fascinated by the organ, but have never had the courage to ask to try one. Here’s your chance!
- You’re not a pianist but are intrigued by this grandest of instruments, how it works, what all those buttons do, etc. Come find out!

If you recognize yourself in the above list, this workshop is for you. The RCCO is not only for highly trained and experienced organists, but for average players who serve their church faithfully each week with a wide range of skills. This 2 hour hands-on workshop will take its direction from the needs and questions of those attending. It may cover some or all of the following:

- orientation to the console, and basic organ construction.
- registration: what stops to use and when.
- playing technique: how is the organ different from the piano?
- pedals: are they absolutely essential? How to start.
- easy repertoire for beginners (easy doesn’t have to mean dull!)
- hymn accompanying: small hints to make a big difference.

Workshop leader **LYDIA PEDERSEN** (B.Mus., M.Ed.) fell in love with organs at age 8, played her first service at 14 (when the regular organist was sick), and has been serving churches ever since, for over 45 years. She is looking forward to sharing her love of the instrument and some practical ideas and resources.

Workshop facilitator **GORDON MANSELL** (M.Mus., - organ performance) also fell in love with the organ from a very young age and started his professional career as a church organist at the age of 12. Forty-two years later, he continues to do what he absolutely loves doing. Gordon is Music Director and Organist at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Toronto.

To Register: email Gordon Mansell at gdmansell@sympatico.ca
or telephone (416) 571-3680



Organ at St. Andrew’s Memorial Presbyterian Church



Organ at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

Annual Spook Festival another success!

Fred Graham

A large and appreciative audience, many in Halloween garb, gathered at Metropolitan United Church Friday October 29 to encounter chills and thrills from the monsters and the mighty organ! The space was appropriately decked in cobwebs and organ-black colours, and eerie sounds permeated the atmosphere as we entered.

Host organist Patricia Wright (wickedly costumed) welcomed the visitors, and introduced the artists one by one. Appearing in Bugs Bunny attire the first soloist (*aka* John Tuttle) performed Petr Eben's *Molto ostinato* with panache, haunting registrations and mystery. A fine beginning for such an evening! The instrument displayed its myriad of colours as Michael Bloss performed two pieces by Vierne: *Fantômes*, and the *Scherzo* from the Fifth Symphony. Artistry of the first order to scare the goblins. Thomas Fitches appeared in full costume to perform Pierre Cholley's *Rhumba sur les Grands Jeux*. The Latino rhythms and suggestive registrations worked very well to highlight the repertoire, and to enhance the theme of the evening.



As a fund-raising event for student support, it was suitable to hear students play, and this happened with the next two presenters and the final presenter. Matthew Coons performed the *Toccatà and Fugue in d minor*, (J. S. Bach) – mandatory for such an evening! – with verve and noticeable mastery of the piece and the instrument. A second Bach offering was heard in Rachel Mahon's presentation of the *Prelude and Fugue in a minor*, also played with suitable drive and full use of the sonorities of this great instrument.

Patricia Wright's presentations were captivating and imaginative: *Danse Arabe* from the Nutcracker Suite, as arranged by Rollin Smith, followed by *Boléro de Concert* by Lefèvre-Wély. One could imagine the spirits and sprites dancing away the dark hours! *Lullaby* and *Good Night* by PDQ Bach was the surprise number that followed, for grand organ and two tin whistles. This reviewer found it completely charming and well-positioned in the program to offer a sparkle of high-pitched "bat squeaks!" This innovation was demurely played by the exquisitely costumed Rachel Mahon and Sarah Svendsen on whistles, with Patricia Wright at the keyboard. Brava, all!

A monolog by a visiting ghoul (*aka* John Joseph Mastandrea, representing local clergy) deepened the mysterious tones of the evening, which ended with a fast and furious rendition of the *Toccatà* from the Suite Gothique by Boellmann. Great music, great performers, great smiles. No tricks, only treats! Congratulations to all who brought the audience such pleasure.



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Oberammagerau is a long name for a small town in southern Germany, just south of Munich.

In 1633 Oberammeragau was gripped by a deadly plague that killed almost half of the town's population. In a final desperate act of faith, the village elders pledged that if their community was spared, they would re-enact the Passion of Christ every ten years, for all eternity. This decade's production ran from May to October, five days a week.

The play was in two parts lasting five and a half hours. Starting at 2:30 p.m. it ran thru 5p.m., then there was a 3-hour break. The second half started at 8p.m. and ended at 11p.m.

Beginning with the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey, the play followed all the events of the Passion of Jesus to His Crucifixion and Resurrection. Interspersed with these events were living images of Old Testament scenes e.g. Daniel in the Lion's Den; Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac; the Mocking of Job and several others.

The scenes of the Passion were very graphic and I was quite relieved that the curtains were drawn immediately after Judas pulled the noose around his neck. Jesus and the two thieves were actually put up on crosses and their hands and feet were fastened with metal bracelets, that were screwed into the wood. There was also a supporting belt around their waist. Ladders were used to take them down from the crosses. I had not really been aware of how important Caiphas had been in the events leading up to Jesus' arrest and trial. Although every detail was observed with the events of the Crucifixion, the scene of the Resurrection was brief, even somewhat hurried. This was unfortunate as the Resurrection is a major factor in Christianity.

Performing in the Passion Play is a tradition with some families who live in Oberammergau. We spoke to a tailor, who with his wife and grandchildren, were included in this year's cast. I'm sure the cast also included professional actors. Besides the human actors a donkey (mentioned earlier), a horse, two camels and several sheep took their turn on stage. The play was in German, but we were provided with a textbook with the English translation. Excellent singing was provided by a choir of 48 people including soloists. They were accompanied by an equally excellent orchestra.

Our tour group was fortunate enough to be able to stay at the Hotel Alte Post in the town. We were able to walk to the theatre for the performance and to walk back to the hotel for supper during the 3-hour intermission. There were about 4500 people in the theatre for the performance and our seats were in the front section. This was an asset as far as hearing and seeing was concerned, but because the stage was open except for a small canopy, we were exposed to the elements. It was September 30 and the temperature was about 10-12 degrees C. However, we had been warned to be suitably dressed and we heeded the warning. Visits to the facilities had been strongly discouraged by our tour leader, as they would prove disruptive.

It was an exciting experience to be in Oberammergau, the hustle and bustle of people from all over the world, speaking different languages, shopping for Christmas decorations and wooden carvings, the town's specialties. We were constantly dodging the big tour buses which were bringing even more people. Right in the middle of the town was a farm with a huge barn and animals. I don't remember seeing a school, but prior to the play I attended a short service at a Lutheran Church. It was a small building, about half the size of St Mark & Calvary, my current Church, yet they have a great sounding 2-manual pipe organ in the gallery. I find it strange that so many churches in Ontario cannot afford to have a pipe organ, while even the smallest Church in Europe can afford one.