

THE BULLETIN

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

September 2016

Organ Crawl

Saturday, September 17, 9:30 AM-3:15 PM to Ancaster/Hamilton

We will visit two organs:

A new 2M Reuter at Maranatha Free Reformed Church

Located at 1114 Old Mohawk Rd Ancaster, L9G 3K9 for 10:30- noon.

Ron Krebs from the Reuter Organ Company of Lawrence, Kansas will be available. This is the only Reuter instrument in Canada.

The second instrument is at Christ the King RC Cathedral Basilica located at 714 King St W, Hamilton L8P 1C7. This is 4M-85R Steinmeyer from 1933 and is one of only three in North America. We will visit it from 1:30 –3:15 PM and Rob Corso, along with Bruce Cross, will be available to demo. Casavant installed a new console in April 2016. We will also visit/hear the carillon.

We will meet at St Ansgar Lutheran Church at 1495 Avenue Road at and we will depart at 9:30 sharp for the first visit to Ancaster.

There will be 2-7 passenger vans available for those needing transportation.

Those with vehicles who are able to provide transportation are most welcome to meet at St Ansgar as well.

There is no charge for this event. Lunch will not be provided; you are, however, welcome to visit one of the many restaurants nearby.

We will have a list and addresses available when we meet at St Ansgar.

If you cannot attend the full event, you are welcome to meet at any of the churches at the times given above.

Friends and guests are welcome.

Humongous Music Sale

Friday, September 23, 7-9:00 PM and Saturday, September 24, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Location: St Andrew's United Church, 117 Bloor St E.

Free parking available at St Andrew's lower level located off Hayden St.

Sale will include keyboard and choral music along with books, CDs, and LP records.

Wine and Cheese after 3:00 on Saturday for RCCO members.

Contact: dweind@hotmail.com or 416-789-1175 for pickup of music for the sale.

For more info on either event, contact David Weind dweind@hotmail.com or 416-789-1175



THE ROYAL CANADIAN
COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

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The President's Voice

In June I attended the American Guild of Organist's National Convention in Houston. I could not believe people when they told me it was a "small enrollment" year, with only 1200 organists attending. Can you imagine 1200 organists in one place? It's a rather scary thought, I know, but I assure you that a wonderful time was had by most.

A convention of this magnitude does not have the intimacy or sense of tight-knit community which I experienced at the RCCO convention in Winnipeg last summer, but there are certainly upsides to it. The concerts and workshops all week were of an amazing caliber, and the concluding concert was quite a highlight. Playing on its reputation as a NASA city (think "Houston, we have a problem"), the convention's concluding concert used the organ to tie the past and future of humanity together with all the galaxies of outer space. I had never experienced anything quite like it, and what an inspiration it was! The concert was held in a very large gothic-like church, and the dark church was aglow in blue theatrical lighting.

The evening began with a pre-recorded welcome to the concert from an astronaut at the International Space Station, and was followed by a most unusual programme of improvised and composed works for the organ and other forces. A well-loved Houston Soprano sang unaccompanied chants of Hildegard von Bingen interspersed with organ improvisation, which led straight into composed works such as the Poulenc Concerto for Organ and Orchestra featuring the Houston Symphony. All the while, incredible visuals of far away planets and galaxies and even photographs of planet Earth were projected on a large screen. The effect of this on one's emotions was mind-boggling. It made you feel so small in space, yet tied as a musician to this incredible legacy of music dating back far into the past and connecting through the present into the future.

One of my favourite things about it was that the music could go on for minutes before you remembered you were sitting in a church and listening to a pipe organ. This was definitely not Bach or Vierne! To hear organ music so imaginative and new served as a great reminder to think outside of the box and always to be creative! And a huge debt of thanks to organists Aaron David Miller and John Schwandt (who was here in Toronto in February and led us in an incredible Hymn Festival) for putting on such an amazing concert.

Closer to home, I am very excited about all the events scheduled for the 2016-2017 Toronto Centre RCCO season. You can find more about all these events on the Toronto page of the National RCCO website: <https://www.rcco.ca/toronto-on>

The move to put our centre events on the national RCCO website rather than maintaining our own website will serve us well. Our colleagues across the country will be able to see what we are doing more easily, and it will be less cumbersome for members in our centre to maintain and update a page on the national website rather than our own separate website. You might also enjoy reading what the other RCCO centres across Canada are doing this season as well!

I'd also like to encourage all of you to check out our once again active Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/RccoTO/>

and Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RccoTO/>

Coming up this month, we have two wonderful events: An organ crawl to two organs in the Ancaster area on Saturday September 17th, and then the used sheet music sale at St. Andrew's United Church on Friday September 23rd and Saturday September 24th. Both of these events will serve as wonderful ways for you to spend time socializing and networking with your musician colleagues, and I encourage you all to come out and spend time with us!

It was five years ago this month when I first became involved in the RCCO. I was brand new to Toronto, having just moved here to attend U of T, and I was browsing the organ music at the sheet music sale. New blood was spotted from across the room, and all of a sudden everyone wanted to talk to me and give me discounts on this piece and that, so they could close up the sale! I was warmly welcomed into the RCCO, and even put on the Toronto executive right away. I have found everyone in the Toronto Centre RCCO to be incredibly supportive and welcoming to newcomers such as myself, and I am now honoured to serve as your president!

- Stephen Frketic

Membership Matters

Keith Hodgson passed away on August 10, 2016 at the age of 92. He was a member of the Toronto Centre of the RCCO for many years.

Recitals & Concerts

Tuesday, September 13 1:00 pm
David Briggs, organist *St. James Cathedral*

Thursday, September 15 12:15 pm
Vlad Soloviev, pianist
Metropolitan United Church

Sunday, September 18 4:00 pm
Thomas Gonder, organist *St. James Cathedral*

Tuesday, September 20 1:00 pm
Matthew Whitfield, organist *St. James Cathedral*

Thursday, September 22 12:15 pm
Richard Spotts, organist
Metropolitan United Church

Sunday, September 25 4:00 pm
David Briggs, organist *St. James Cathedral*

Tuesday, September 27 1:00 pm
Richard Hansen, organist *St. James Cathedral*

Thursday, September 29 12:15 pm
Simon Walker, organist
Metropolitan United Church

Luminous Night Festival: Music of Ola Gjeilo
Saturday, October 15th, 2016. 7:30 pm

Sponsored by Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, as part of their artistic outreach, along with the assistance of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, the Orpheus Choir of Toronto, the Exultate Chamber Singers and the Resonance Choir, *Luminous Night Festival* will be a unique encounter with the evocative music of Ola Gjeilo and the composer himself.

A Personal Tribute to Alan Jackson

When I first came to Deer Park in 1965, I found there an organ from around 1912 which had been reworked a bit in 1945. Because of various problems it was obvious that this organ had to go. The tuner who had been working on it was not with Casavant so I got in touch with the Casavant representative who happened to be Alan Jackson.

What a treat this was. As a stop-gap, he revoiced the Principal chorus on the great and revoiced the flute chorus on the choir and the organ sounded totally different. Meanwhile, he helped me plan for a new tracker action organ which I hoped the church could buy.

Well, you know how that turned out. In the meantime, Alan and Isabel and Annegret and I became good friends. We travelled to Montreal together to see the Casavant factory and the finished instruments and got to know the Lagacés. Isabel was always hospitable and she often hosted receptions following organ concerts in the city. We always went to the upscale RCCO new year's dinner together at the Inn on the Park.

But times change. Receptions became simpler but the hospitality was always there. Alan had a team of tuners working for him and he was always ready to spring into action himself when a sudden temperamental strike on the part of a particular organ would mean that the church would be without an instrument for an important service. Alan always tuned our organ before a concert and no one could match the impeccable tuning he achieved.

In the meantime, Toronto hosted a few conventions. Alan was always willing to tune all the Casavant organs before the events in these conventions and he never charged the Toronto Centre. What generosity!

A devoted member of the RCCO, he served on the Toronto Executive for decades and contributed many creative ideas. One of his triumphs was the collaboration with James Bailey on the *Toronto Organ Book*.

He was also a pack-rat. He has saved every Toronto Centre Bulletin and these can be used as a resource for anyone studying the history of our college in Toronto. He also saved knowledge of old instruments in Toronto – ask him a question about any instrument and he might be able to document it in detail.

Perhaps his greatest attribution was his unfailing integrity. His quiet enthusiasm for a new instrument was never marred by wily efforts to coerce a church into buying another instrument. He was also distressed by the encroachment of the artificial organ into the house of worship. For him, the genuine creation rather than the imitation was the appropriate instrument to lead in the praise of God.

Alan, we have so much for which to thank you and your memory will live on in the Toronto Centre of the RCCO.

-William Wright

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The new internet stream www.orgelradio.eu was launched only a few months ago. This organ radio delivers 24/7 organ music. Every day of the week has its own theme, e.g. on Wednesday you can hear Dutch recordings, on Thursday it is only J.S.Bach, on Friday we broadcast worldwide recordings, etc. Every two weeks the content changes.



Before the end of the year orgelradio.eu would like to have reached 100.000 listeners with 1.000 listening hours a day. We strive to become a worldwide player in promoting organ music and organists.

PREPARING FOR RCCO EXAMINATIONS

Another year means new possibilities for learning skills at the organ. As a past examiner, and teacher, I have seen certain weaknesses occur again and again and these can be eliminated by a systematic practise technique.

Sight reading – on the whole this is well done. Probably most of us are faced with a certain amount of sight-reading each week and this produces positive results. However, it is important to:

- Look at the time signature. Take a few minutes to look at the smallest unit of measurement (sixteenths, eighths, or whatever) and mentally count 1 & 2 & 3 & or 1 2 3 4 2 2 3 4 3 2 3 4 etc. Then tap the main pulse mentally or on your knee.
- Look at the key signature. Three flats? Major or Minor?
- Look quickly at manual changes and registration changes. Swell to Great? Solo stop?
- Practise these steps over and over until they become routine.
- Use collections of relatively easy repertoire from 19th and 20th century as source material.

Once started, DO NOT REPEAT ANY NOTE WHICH SOUNDS INCORRECT. Simply move to the next beat and keep going.

Sometimes it is helpful to practise reading at your desk. Use a metronome and a file card. Move the card along regularly according to the beat and cover up each beat as soon as you have read it.

Score reading - There are many books of score reading, which are truly useful, but unfortunately, they seem to go out of print after a short while. However, go to the library and photocopy motets (which are on open score) from the Tudor period, or collections of German motets which are usually printed in open score or any unaccompanied four part writing you can find. Hide any piano reductions. String quartets are also a good source and Dover has many collections of these by Haydn, Mozart, etc.

Practise reading at your desk as in letter (g) above. Read the staves: Bass, Tenor, Alto, and Soprano in this order. Gradually improve your speed so the eye learns to scan the score in laser-like fashion. Do not read in a linear fashion, because this tends to let the eye gravitate to one staff (usually the top and sometimes bottom and top) and the middle staves are neglected.

Move to the piano and practise the same score again in broken chord fashion. Then try it once more playing the broken chords more rapidly or even as solid chords. Keep up the scanning!!

Hymn playing - Believe it or not, this is usually the weakest part of the tests. Sometimes I pity the congregations who have to sing!

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Organs of Toronto

Would you like to know more about any of the organs mentioned in this issue of the *Bulletin*?

If so, consider purchasing *Organs of Toronto*, a comprehensive guide to Toronto's pipe organs. The *Organs of Toronto* CD, an accompaniment to Alan Jackson & James Bailey's book *Organs of Toronto*, is a compilation of fourteen instruments contained within the book.

The book is available for **\$40**, and the CD for **\$10**.

Buy your copy through RCCO Toronto:

Email: dweind@hotmail.com

Bulletin Information

The Editor of the *Bulletin* is Matthew Whitfield,
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St. John the Baptist, Norway Anglican Church.

The submission deadline for the October
issue of the *Bulletin* is:

Monday, October 3rd.

To make a submission, please email the editor at:

mwhitfi3@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,

Top Ten Reasons for Being a Bass

- 10) You don't have to tighten your shorts to reach your note.
- 9) You don't have to worry about a woman stealing your job.
 - 8) Or a pre-adolescent boy.
 - 7) Action heroes are always Basses.
That is if they ever sang, they would sing Bass.
- 6) You get great memorable lyrics like bop, bop, bop, bop.
- 5) If the singing job doesn't work out, there's always broadcasting.
- 4) You never need to learn to read the treble clef.
 - 3) If you get a cold, so what?
- 2) For fun, you can sing at the bottom of your range and fool people into thinking there's an earthquake.
- 1) If you belch while you're singing, the audience just thinks it's part of the score.

PREPARING FOR RCCO EXAMINATIONS, CONTINUED

First know the hymn. Try singing it several times without any accompaniment to get a sense of comfortable tempo. Often hymns are played too slowly or too quickly, thus demonstrating that the candidate has not really given the hymn much thought.

If you play an introduction, try to end on the tonic chord in an arrangement, which gives the congregation a clue as to its beginning note.

This is a good chance to show off your ability to solo the melodic line.

Know exactly how many beats you will leave between the last chord of the introduction and the first chord of the first verse. Physically breathe as you lift your hands so that you become one with the congregation which also needs this time to breathe.

No hymn should be metronomic, and yet the rhythmic pulse must be rock solid. If you make a mistake in registration – too bad (!) – the hymn must go on in a rock-solid rhythm, perhaps with one hand playing while the other hand adjusts stops. (Thus it is a wise idea to have the hymns memorized for the examination!)

-William Wright

(TO BE CONTINUED...)