

Soli Deo Gloria

October
2007

Chiff Chat

Springfield, MA Chapter
American Guild of Organists



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN...

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope you are enjoying this last glimpse of summer as we move into the fall! Thank you to those of you who joined us for our Chapter opening event on Sunday, September 9, 2007. Ian Watson gave a wonderful recital on the Austin at South Church in Springfield. He played a rich program with music that is not often heard, including Bach's Prelude and "Fiddle" Fugue in D minor, the Concerto in G Major, BWV 592 by Johann Ernst/Bach, and Elfes by Joseph Bonnet. A big thank you to Jim Barnes and Martha Sinkiewicz for the nice reception that followed.

We are looking forward to our annual Columbus Day Weekend Organ Crawl in Albany, NY, with the Worcester and Albany Chapters. Last fall we had a successful crawl in New Haven exploring the organs of Yale and surrounding churches. This year's crawl is on Monday, October 8, 2007, and it's not too late to register! You can register on the Worcester Chapter website, www.worcesterago.org. It is \$60 for a full package including lunch and bus transportation from Holyoke.

I would like to bring your attention to a change in our next event. Due to unforeseen circumstances Robert Lind had to cancel his trip to the area, and thus his recital. In his place, organist Raymond Nagem will perform at the same time, date and location. Mr. Nagem is a double major in music and psychology at Yale, where he studies with Thomas Murray. He was the winner of the Boston Chapter RYCO/Quimby in 2007 and went on to win the first prize at the AGO Regional Convention in Providence. The recital is Friday, October 12, 2007, 8:00pm at St. Paul the Apostle in Springfield.

I wish you all the best as you begin your new season with your choirs.

Sincerely,

♪ Ron Trunzo

Leadership

Dean: Ronald Trunzo

Sub-Dean: Martha Sienkiewicz

Treasurer: Michael-Thomas Gilman

Secretary: Mary-Jeanne Tash

Chaplain: Rev. Fr. William H. Wallis

Executive Board (terms ending)

2008: James Barnes, Nicholas Russotto

2009: Don Hooton, John Karelekas

2010: Karen Banta, The Rev. Jerry True

Membership: Charles Page

Chiff Chat Editor: Nicholas Russotto

Webmaster: Allan Taylor

Pioneervalleyorganists.com: John Anderson

Regional Councilor: E. Lary Grossman, PhD

District Convener: Frank Corbin, DMA

News from the Springfield AGO...

Dear Members,

It is with great enthusiasm that I announce our annual Fall Organ Crawl. This year, we are again partnering up with Worcester and Hartford, in addition to a new partner in the Eastern New York chapter. We will be keeping our usual Columbus Day date (October 8th) as we travel to both Troy and Albany, New York. In each town we will be visiting some of the finest organs the area has to offer. From the grand English sounds of the Æolian-Skinner in Albany's All Saints Cathedral, to the versatile Kerner & Merchant in Troy's United Presbyterian Church, as well as lunch at a fantastic local restaurant, we will have a fulfilling day! I hope that many from our chapter can join us on this one-day excursion to see some fantastic instruments. You can register by printing out the form at <http://organweb.com/worcester/onlineorder/crawl.html>.

As those of you who have previously participated in our Crawl can attest, we always have plenty of time, and always have an excellent time, at each instrument. I look forward in seeing you on October 8th!

Also, a few notes on our Executive Board meetings. The board, at its most recent meeting, has decided that we will meet regularly on the last Sunday of every month. We hope that this regularity in scheduling will make the board more approachable. In addition, as we board members serve at the pleasure of our membership, we hope that you will contact one of us if you have any questions or comments about our chapter in general, or about specific policies or events. It is our fervent hope that we can make this one of the best seasons that the Springfield AGO has yet seen, and that we can grow an already vibrant chapter. Soli Deo Gloria!

Very Sincerely Yours,



Ian Watson at the Springfield/AGO Opening Event

The Care and Feeding of Your Substitute

Glenda Sutton, MM

Ok, so now you've decided to take that vacation, and you've found someone to substitute at the organ for you at church for Sunday. All's well, and you can pack and shove off for exotic vistas with no further worries...Not so fast, buddy. I don't know about you, but I'm not allowed to run off on leave from work without making arrangements for the tasks at hand and items due while I'm gone. And in my book, if I can't do that, neither can you if I'm to be your substitute. Furthermore, this ain't just a job; it is God's work. No matter what attention (or lack of attention) you give to it weekly, it IS worship, and deserves some preparation on your part to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible in your absence.

Let's go over some pointers, in no particular order.

Well, on second thought, since rules #1 and #3 for lawyers are 'get the money up front', let's start there. You need to make clear with the substitute exactly what is expected, and therefore what compensation is required. Some substitutes charge extra (and they should) for directing choirs, choir practice, dealing with soloists, or learning specific music for an occasion. For example: I subbed once for someone who sent me 7 choir anthems the day before choir practice, and expected me to be able to accompany the choir for the entire choir practice.

All I agreed to do was two church services on Sunday. I of course didn't receive any extra compensation for this last-minute forgotten detail. It won't happen again.

Secondly, leave the compensation on the organ or easily accessible to the organ substitute **AT THE TIME THE SERVICE IS RENDERED**. You don't want him/her to show up 45 minutes late for rehearsal or service; neither does he/she want to wait 30 days or more for a check to arrive, and have to call to ask about it. Next, you need to prepare a packet for the sub. The sub needs the following information:

- order of service with music listed
- list of hymns (copies would be nice, in case the sub does not have your particular hymnbook)
- copies of any other service or special music, including solos and choir anthems
- confirmation in writing of the times of the services and rehearsals, expectations, amount of compensation and where the check will be
- memory level where you keep your usual hymn registrations, and spare memory level where the sub could register any special music
- information on easy access to the church for practice, and church availability for same
- information on easy access to the church for practice, and church availability for same

This actually takes very little time on your part, and makes the sub's job of going into a strange church and providing support for worship easier, as well as more in keeping with the weekly expectations of the minister and congregation. This is not old-school litigation where you hide the ball and the other side has to search for everything. This is worship.

The sub shouldn't have to hunt down the incumbent, make formal request for production or schedule discovery depositions just to get this information. This packet should be provided to the sub in advance relative to the amount of music and degree of difficulty, but no later than a week before the service. Most church musicians and substitutes earn a living during the week doing other things, something I explain to the 'employer'.

I have limited time and access to practice, what with a 60-hour per week job, an invalid mother and retired husband, a home and 10 cats and 2 fish. The regular organist doesn't want me to draft a contract, because it would be impressive, and I would enforce it, not a pretty sight.

This Sunday I am doing my last job for a particular organist who chronically gets me the information and music the Wednesday before the Sunday in question, and generally I have to drive 45 miles to the church to pick it up and make my own arrangements. He always claims to have sent the music a week before.

I do not understand why he doesn't send the packet soon after arranging for me to play, and then checking to see if I received it. Neither do I comprehend how the U.S. Postal Service can find my home for all sorts of bills and solicitations and personal mail, but he doesn't make it. But I know it is because he doesn't really bother about it until the last minute. I received nothing from him confirming that I was still needed, and was too sick Wednesday night to drive down to see if I was still playing. He finally called, and my husband told him how to scan and e-mail the music and information.

I have an 11-page choir anthem to learn Saturday for a Sunday service. The music finally trickled sometime Thursday night. So although I enjoy the congregation, I just can't quit the day-time job to accommodate all the last-minute requirements of this gig, or the parishioners who want me at the drop of a hat to take a day off work and travel 70 miles to a strange church and organ for a memorial service.

When I was playing regularly, I always had to train the substitute, because there was no one available locally to do a small high church Anglican service. Therefore, I provided all the information and music 3-4 weeks in advance, and met with the organist to play through the service music, show her my usual registrations, and demonstrate how to register the organ and how to play the gradual. I also gave her keys and the church schedule so that she knew when she could practice, and didn't have to run around trying to get access.

As a sub I try to make the music as good as possible. I want my offering to reflect my best effort for God, and to mesh with the rest of the service if possible. Seldom is there a danger that the sub is going to be better than the regular organist, and if that is so, then shame on the regular organist. I could go on and on, but enough. I'm not mad any more, just sleepy from having to get up at 4:00. I have a meatloaf to bake and bills to pay. Tomorrow is another docket.

Glenda Sutton is a lawyer and organist who lives in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. This essay originally appeared on the *Pipechat* <http://www.pipechat.org> mailing list, and is reprinted with the kind permission of the author. -Ed.

On Passionate Music Making

Stephen H. Best

(Part II)

Let's talk about the teaching first. Just what do I do that others don't? If I were to guess, I'd say it's that I teach PASSION and not just music. I'm a firm believer that if it's not exciting, vibrant, heart-felt, then it's not worth playing, and certainly not worth listening to. I'm reminded of I Corinthians 13: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." I want to rewrite this verse for organists: "If I play all the right notes and rhythms, use all the ancient articulations and fingerings, but have not passion, I am but a pusher of keys." In short, I believe that passionate communication with an audience or a congregation is essential, that vitality in performance is absolutely imperative. At a master class by a renowned Russian pianist, I watched her transform ordinary performances into extraordinary ones: "Make some mistakes," she'd thunder! "Don't be so cautious. GET INVOLVED!" Her message was clear: music making involves a lot more than knowing the "right" techniques. I caught the eye of one of my students who had made the connection: this is precisely what she'd been hearing from me for months. I often use analogies with my students. One my favorites is comparing music to a painting: one can look at a painting from six inches away and marvel at the artist's technique or one can stand back, take it all in, and be dazzled by the whole of what the artist created. Both elements are important, but without the latter, one misses the point. So with music: one can concentrate so hard on achieving perfection in every last detail that the whole point is missed. Who cares if one uses trendy articulations or scholarly fingerings if the playing is insufferably dull? Do we want listeners to say "Oh, wasn't that an articulate performance? It was so intelligent!" or do we want them to jump to their feet in a genuine ovation, moved to an emotional high that leaves them enthused and eager for more? Of course, it's possible to have both, but more often than not, I've sensed that those who emphasize technique neglect passion, and in my opinion, no amount of technical accuracy and historical awareness will produce moving performance without similar attention to passion and emotion. I've started listening more closely to former students who have moved on to college organ study at some of America's most distinguished schools, keeping in mind the question my colleague posed. And you know, at times I think he may be right! I hear highly polished technique and great attention to historic performance practice, but I hear dry and unmoving performances. The passionate music-making that characterized high school days has disappeared! Isn't anyone teaching it any more? Where are the other voices in the wilderness who cry with me: "No, technique by itself is NOT enough!"

I haven't even touched on another cornerstone of my teaching: rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm! Yes, I insist on the use of a metronome! And I clap, and I shout, and I do a lot of shoulder tapping, and I've even been known to use a set of maracas at an organ lesson. Give me passionate playing coupled with strong rhythm, and I can forgive almost anything. But take those two elements away, and the playing becomes tedious. Boredom sets in, and the battle to sell the King of Instruments to the reluctant listener is lost.

Now let's turn to organ recitals. I've gotten to the point where I won't engage an artist unless I've heard a live performance or gotten a strong recommendation from someone whose judgments I really trust. It's that bad! Just what is the matter with organ recitals? Here are a few of the problems:

1. Misunderstanding an audience: I recently attended a program that was so far above the audience that I wondered if the artist had even thought of the people for whom he was playing. Let's face it: if one is going to play in Utica, NY, for an audience made up largely of people who don't have any particular affinity for organ music, then one had better make some effort toward understanding that audience's level of sophistication. A Utica audience is not the same as a Manhattan audience, nor is it the kind of audience one would get at a conservatory or an A.G.O. convention.
2. Poor programming for an instrument: Why, for example, would one choose a program for an unaltered 1940's Austin that contained not one single piece for which that venerable organ is well suited? Certainly there's a wealth of music that this massive instrument could do effectively, but it seemed that the artist I heard was thinking more of a modern historic copy than a stellar instrument of another era. Nothing fit the organ! The cause of organ music lost out again: at intermission, half of an already small audience left -- and this was an A.G.O. sponsored recital!
3. Failure to adjust to an unfamiliar instrument: This came to mind at a recital where a third of the audience moved to the rear of the church for the second half. Yes, the move did put them closer to the rear gallery trumpets, but at least it got them away from the deafening roar of full organ in the chancel. The performer was obviously accustomed to playing a very large instrument in a very large room. I wondered if he had any idea of the mistake he was making in handling an instrument unlike his own.

4. Daunting program notes, written and spoken: Artists who do this have forgotten the people they're talking to. Just how many of those present have the slightest idea what "inverted counterpoint at the 5th" or the "proper execution of ornaments in the 16th century" means? Sometimes even those of us who hold multiple degrees in music don't know what the artist is talking about -- let alone those who've never heard of middle C. Like the bunny who advertises batteries, these people just go on and on and on, unaware that a large percentage of the audience has been lost even before the music is heard.

5. Too much music that should be left unplayed for general audiences: One recitalist introduced several pieces as having been written by someone "who was, at his best, a third rate composer." Well, he proved his point. This was third rate music that was neither intellectually nor emotionally stimulating. In fact, it was downright tedious! On another program, I noticed a movement from a Widor symphony that wasn't familiar. As the piece droned on and on, I knew why I hadn't heard it before: it was Widor as his dullest! Organ music lost out again. Malaise was the clear winner.

6. Lack of passion and emotional involvement: The program looked good on paper. After all, how could one go wrong with Bach's "Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor" or the Vierne "Westminster Carillon"? And yet, this recital was among the most deadly I've ever attended. People actually fell asleep during the Vierne and lost interest in the Bach. Everything was accurate, and I'm sure Bach himself couldn't have been any more precise, but it was dull and absolutely devoid of spirit! The organist at the college where this program was played said it best: "Recitals like this really do untold damage to the cause of organ music."

Look where we've come back to: lack of passionate playing! Maybe there's a connection between the opening two questions after all. Students who play without passion will undoubtedly turn into practiced performers who play without passion. In either case, the cause of the King of Instruments will suffer. How sad!

It's easy to identify the problem, but it's harder to solve it.

Here are a few of my thoughts on remedies:

For teachers: learn to teach passionate organ playing! Find out how to make your students play with fire, with joy, with tears, with feelings. To the skeptics, I say, yes, this is something that can be taught. If you don't know how to do it, find someone who can show you! A brilliant student clarinetist from the Czech Republic has been dazzling audiences at the college where I teach with playing that is so expressive, so intense, so innately musical, that its effect is pure magic.

When I asked how he had learned to do it, he spoke of playing while dancing, playing while walking, "throwing" notes back and forth to his teacher. We organists can't dance as we play, but we can certainly work to bring our approach to the instrument in harmony with the emotion we're trying to project. I could give you some ideas on teaching passion, but don't wait for a future article. Get going on your own! Now!

For recitalists, my suggestions are a more specific:

1. Find out who you're playing for, and pick music accordingly.
2. Evaluate the organ and acoustical setting where you're playing and choose music that at least has a chance of working in that venue.
3. Play SOMETHING that qualifies as a war horse. After all, there's a reason those pieces are so well liked! Leave home the obscure composer whose music you explored in your doctoral dissertation. That's college lecture material, not music for general consumption.
4. Remember where your musical tastes were when you were a child, and realize that many in your audience have never progressed beyond that point.
5. If you're going to include an avant-garde work, pick a short one, and sandwich it between two pieces that everyone will actually like without having to "understand" them first.
6. Practice passion, excitement, drive, enthusiasm, emotion: these MUST be your goals if you expect to build and keep an audience.

I won't for a moment suggest that passionate playing will be always vital and effective: certainly passion can't make up for lack of practice, sloppy technique, or poor use of an instrument. But take the passion away, and a major part of the appeal of organ music is lost. I can only plead with all who read this article: learn the historical techniques, do the authentic fingerings, and play period instruments if you must. But don't think that these things alone will put you in the forefront of effective organ playing, build an audience, or assure the survival of the King of Instruments. Put not only your head into your music making, put your heart and soul into it as well!

Stephen Best is Minister of Music at First Presbyterian Church in Utica, NY. He is also Coordinator of Individual Performance Instruction and Adjunct Instructor at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, where he teaches organ and keyboard techniques. He is presently Dean of the Central New York Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Upcoming Events

October 2007

October 2, 2007 10:30 AM

The "Tuesday Morning Music Club" at Trinity United Methodist Church, Sumner Ave in Springfield, hosts the Pioneer Consort. \$10 Admission.

October 5, 2007 7:00 PM

Christina Koch, organist. St. Paul's Cathedral, Tremont Street, Boston. Works of Bach, Franck, Buxtehude, Rossi, Wagner. \$10 admission. Tickets: 617-482-5800 and at the door.

October 8, 2007 All Day.

Fall Organ Crawl with Worcester, Hartford, and Eastern New York Chapters to Albany and Troy New York.

October 11-16, 2007

(11th, 13th, 16th at 8:00 PM, 12th at 1:30 PM)

Simon Preston gives four performances of Francis Poulenc's Organ Concerto in g minor with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, James Levine conducting.

October 12, 2007 7:30 PM.

Paul Jacobs in recital on the Austin Organ at Trinity College Chapel, Hartford, CT.

October 12, 2007 8:00 PM

Raymond Nagem in recital on the three-manual Casavant at St. Paul the Apostle, Springfield. Reception to follow by the Springfield AGO.

October 13, 2007 7:00 PM

Silent Movie, "The Kid," starring Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan. Organ accompaniment performed by Peter Krasinski. Suggested donation of \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. Holyoke UCC, High, Maple, Appleton Sts.

October 14, 2007 3:00 PM "The Brick Church Music Series" Deerfield, MA

TRIO TULSA. Diane Bucchianeri, cello, Maureen O'Boyle, violin, Anna Norberg, piano. Gwyneth Walker's Craftsbury Trio, Haydn's Trio in G Major, and Dvořák's Trio Op. 90 "Dumky".

October 16, 2007 10:30 AM

"Tuesday Morning Music Club", Woodwind Ensemble at Providence Place, Holyoke. Larry Picard (South Congregational, Springfield), organist. \$10 Admission.

October 20 & 21, 2007.

"The Poet as Prophet", hymn workshop with Dr. Thomas Troeger at Center Church, Hartford.

October 26, 2007 7:30 PM

Frederick Swann in concert on the Æolian-Skinner organ at All Saint's Church, Worcester.

October 27, 2007 9:00 AM

McClosky Institute of Voice one-day workshop. Assumption College, Worcester. \$100. www.mcclosky.org for more info.

November 2007

November 4, 2007 4:00 PM

The Yale Camerata, under the direction of Marguerite Brooks, Thomas Murray will accompany on the four-manual E.M. Skinner organ at United Church of Christ, Holyoke. Featuring Benjamin Britten's 'Rejoice in the Lamb'.

November 11, 2007 3:00 PM "The Brick Church Music Series" Deerfield, MA.

CHRISTA RAKICH, organ. Concert, recording artist, and Distinguished Artist in Residence at First Lutheran Church, Boston. Ms. Rakich will play works by Buxtehude and Bach on the two-manual Richards & Fowkes organ, Opus 13, at the Brick Church.

December 2007

December 2, 2007 3:00 PM

Paul Jacobs in recital on the Gress-Miles Organ in Mead Chapel, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT.

December 9, 2007 2:00 PM

Handel 'Messiah' sing-along, with noted area soloists. Bring your own score! Admission free, suggested donation of \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. Holyoke United Church of Christ.

Positions Available...

Organist/Director of Music Friendly and active congregational Church seek energetic and experienced person for the position of Organist/Choir Director at Somers Congregational Church (Somers Ct) available immediately. Part time (12-15 hours per week). Interested candidate must be proficient in playing the organ, have excellent manual and pedal board skills, direct a 15-20 member Senior Choir and be available for special services throughout the year. Salary is \$14,000 per year. There is also an extra stipend for weddings and funerals.

For more information about the church visit our website at www.somersnow.com/somerscong. Send resume and cover letter via email to somerscong@somersnow.com or fax to (860)763-5146. If more info is needed please call the church office at 860-763-4021.

Organist & Keyboardist, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. 585 South Street, Suffield, CT 06078. Service Times: Sunday, 9:00 (contemporary) & 10:30 AM (traditional). Contact Name: Lenore Brooks. Contact Phone Number: 413-530-7152. Salary: \$100/service. Vocal abilities and choir direction experience a plus but not necessary.


Organist, First Congregational Church of Chicopee, 306 Chicopee Street. Hammond Organ (1946), \$100.00 weekly, (August vacation). Please contact: Peggy McKinstry 413-562-8873 or 413-568-0555 for more information.

Organist & Music Director: The Catholic Community of Adams in Adams, Massachusetts announces an immediate opening for a part-time (15-20 hours per week) Director of Music & Organist who will plan and lead the music for weekly worship. The Catholic Community of Adams (in the Springfield, Mass. Diocese) comprises two parishes, three church buildings (Notre Dame/St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Stanislaus Kostka) and a school in the beautiful Northern Berkshires. There are three weekend Masses with music. In addition to the salary, the Director has additional income from funerals (avg. 90-100/year) and weddings (avg. 12- 15/year). The organs in Notre Dame and St. Thomas are both older model Allen Organs that have been repaired and upgraded (summer 2007). Notre Dame is contemplating the restoration of its 1902 three manual Casavant. Saint Stanislaus Kostka houses a beautiful two manual Casavant (installed in 1979). Successful candidates will have complete familiarity with the work of a Roman Catholic Parish Director of Music. This includes the Rites and Liturgies of the Church Year, and the liturgical planning ability and knowledge of resources necessary for a congregation and adult choir utilizing a mix of traditional and contemporary music. The minimum proficiency of organ and piano playing shall be at the B.Mus. (organ performance) or AGO Service Playing Certificate level, with a more advanced level desirable. The candidate will also have the skills necessary to rehearse the adult choir (SATB, 25-30 members) weekly. There is also a funeral choir (SSA) of approx. 15 people who sing at each liturgy of Christian Burial. The annual salary of \$20,000 includes two weeks vacation. Professional development and a book & music allowances are negotiable. Interested applicants should send their resume (including at least three professional references) and any other supporting material such as CDs, programs and reviews to Rev. Daniel Boyle, Pastor, Adams Catholic Community, Maple St., Adams, MA 01220. Please contact Fr. Boyle for any further information or questions at 413-743-0577.

Organist/Director of Music, St. Luke's Church, Bolton Street Hartford CT. Responsible for playing at 3 weekend masses, plus funerals and weddings and other liturgical celebrations. An additional duty includes directing the adult choir. At least 3 years of experience is preferred. References from previous employers are required. Contact Fr. Aniello at 860-296-8681.

Organist/Director of Music, Stowe Community Church, Stowe VT. The Stowe Community Church, a non-denominational Protestant church, seeks a Music Director and Organist to provide a meaningful ministry of music that is an integral part of the worship experience. This church is located in the village of Stowe and is a well-respected partner in the community, with an active and growing congregation. In addition to a traditional service calendar, the Church also hosts many musical performances throughout the year. The Church has recently restored its 1864 Simmons Tracker Pipe Organ (ed. Restored and enlarged to II/30 by Bob Newton and Andover Organ Co.) and also owns a restored 1898 Steinway Grand Piano. The Director of Music / Church Organist will oversee all areas of the music programs, including the music library, guest musicians for services, and adult and children's choirs. He or She will work with the pastor and the Music Committee in selecting music for services and special occasions, and will play for two weekly services during the September to June months, one service weekly in the summer and additional services for the Easter and Christmas seasons. Adult Choir 15-20 Possibility of a Children's Choir. Complete organ details available at www.andoverorgan.com under Instruments, Restored. Ed. Contact your editor about this position.

*Springfield, MA
Chapter, American
Guild of Organists*



Chiff Chat Newsletter

To submit information regarding positions, upcoming concerts, recitals, or area events, please email newsletter@springfieldago.org. Submissions for the October/November issue are due September 20, 2007.

If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of Chiff Chat newsletters, please let us know! Visit us on the web at www.springfieldago.org

Celebrating 61 Years as a Chapter!

Chiff Chat

American Guild of Organists

Springfield, MA Chapter

Nicholas F. Russotto, Editor

24 White Birch Circle

Somers, CT 06071-1007