

PipeNotes

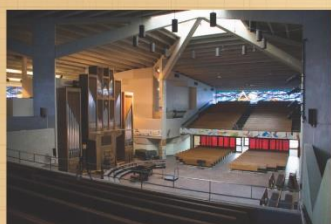
American Guild of Organists – Milwaukee Chapter

P.O. Box 11731

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

www.agomilwaukee.org • chapter@agomilwaukee.org

Volume 71 – February 2025



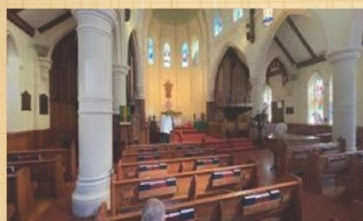
Carthage College Siebert Chapel
Casavant Op. 3276 1975 4/63



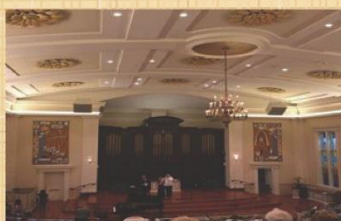
Holy Communion Lutheran Church
Casavant Op. 3541 1982 3/42



St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Wangerin Op. 841 1942
Besch 1927 | Schuelke 1905
Chant & Jackson 1869



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Skinner Organ Company Opus
505 1924 4/43
14 Bell Carillon Tower



First Presbyterian Church
William Johnson Op. 238 1867
3 manuals, Charles Besch 1938,
Colby 1988, Fabry 2009



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS - MILWAUKEE CHAPTER

CHURCH AND ORGAN BUS TOUR KENOSHA / RACINE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2025 | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

9:00 AM - BOARD LAMERS COACH BUS

Park and Board the Bus at the Southwest College Avenue Park and Ride Lot

9:30 AM - DEPARTURE

4:00 PM - RETURN

COST: \$50.00 PER PERSON

Advance/Pre-paid Reservations due by January 10, 2025

Beans & Barley Box Lunch Included

Registration Information on the Back

Chapter Directory
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chapter@agomilwaukee.org

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Pipe Organ Encounters

POE Pipe Organ Encounters are a 4–5 experience for young people, ages 13–18, organized by local AGO chapters. During the POE, participants receive group and individual instruction, take field trips to hear and play notable instruments, and enjoy recitals by accomplished performers. Most importantly, participants get a chance to meet and interact with other young people who share an interest in the organ. In 2025, three POEs are planned:

June 15-20, Twin Cities, Minnesota

[Twin Cities Chapter](#)

[David Jenkins](#), Director / [Catherine Rodland](#), Co-director

[Download Twin Cities POE Brochure](#)

June 22-27, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

[Harrisburg Chapter](#)

[Shelly Moorman-Stahlman](#), Director

[Download Harrisburg POE Brochure](#)

July 20-25, Houston, Texas

[Houston Chapter](#)

[Jeong-Suk Bae](#), Director

[Download Houston POE Brochure](#)

[Click here](#) to register. Use this form to apply for any of the POE sites above.

Advanced students should also consider the 2025 POEA in the tab below.



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Tour of Kenosha and Racine February 22, 2025

Here's a brief description of the tour destinations.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church dates to 1840. Construction on the present church building began in 1872, and was completed in 1879, making it the oldest church building in Kenosha County. The church is built of limestone in the Gothic Revival style. Organ: 1924 Skinner 4/43. Fourteen Bell Tower Carillon playable from the organ console.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church was established in 1838. The building was destroyed by fire on January 4, 1866. First services in the new building were September 8, 1867. The building is an excellent example of the English Gothic Revival style. The nine piece carillon bell set in the tower weighs 7200 pounds and was gifted to the church in 1887. Organ: 1869 Candy & Jackson/1905 Schuelke/ 1927 Charles Besch/ 1942 Wangerin /3 manuals.

First Presbyterian Church was founded in 1839. The congregation's first church building was dedicated in February 1843. The current building was built in 1852 and designed in the Greek Revival style. Organ: 1867 William Johnson / 1938 Charles Besch / 1988 Colby / 2007 Fabry/3 manuals.

Holy Communion Lutheran Church May 1898, the first English-speaking Lutheran church was organized in Racine. On April 21, 1902, Holy Communion's first church opened its doors. Richter & Eiler, an architectural firm from Reading, PA, was commissioned to build the new Holy Communion. Dedicated on February 17, 1929, the building was in the Gothic style and features a high rib vaulted ceiling. 43 stained glass windows were designed by the renowned glass firm, Giannini & Hilgard of Chicago, who also designed numerous windows for Frank Lloyd Wright's projects. The baptismal font was designed by the famous Danish sculptor, Bertel Thorvaldsen. Organ: 1982 Cassavant 3/42.

Some very interesting church buildings and organs. That's not the whole story of the tour.

We all remember going to AGO Conventions, seeing fine church buildings and hearing great organs but, it was the bus ride that generated unabashed conversation and community with participants. Add the box lunch designed for your gourmet needs by Beans & Barley, and you will have a wonderful experience.

- We encourage you to register by January 10, 2025. \$50 per person including the Lamers Coach Bus, Beans & Barley box lunch, and a unique chance to meet other folks interested in church buildings and organs.
- AGO members are encouraged to invite family and friends.
- The tour is limited to 36 people.
- You will receive notification regarding your box lunch options.

Additional information regarding the churches, organs and registration is found in this issue of *Pipenotes*.

James Burmeister
Program Committee

There is Still some room left on the bus if you would like to join register now!



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February 2025

1 (Sat) 6:00 Dr. Simone Gheller, Organ
St. Paul's Third Annual Organ Concert
St. Paul's Catholic Student Center
723 State St.
Madison, WI

7(Fri) 7:00 Michael Schaner, Organ
Carroll University
Shattuck Auditorium
218 N. East Ave
Waukesha, WI

7 (Fri) 7:00 Samuel Holmberg, Organ
Christ King Parish
2600 N. Swan Blvd
Wauwatosa, WI

22 (Sat) 9:30 Church and Organ Tour Racine and Kenosha

Various Locations

Please see the website

To register for this event:

www.agomilwaukee.org

March 2025

2 (Sun) 2:30 Organ Prelude
3:00 Choral Evensong for the Last Sunday of Epiphany
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
914 E. Knapp St
Milwaukee, WI

Events can be submitted to
event@agomilwaukee.org



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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Liz Walloch/Archivist and Historian

archivist@agomilwaukee.org

As promised at the end of last February's PipeNotes 2024, there would be a Part 2. So, this February 2025 article has just as much exciting musical offerings to explore and write about as Part 1. To refresh your memory of Part 1, members and friends can re-read the February 2024 Newsletter article on the Milwaukee Chapter AGO webpage. Let the month of February's music events begin!

Musical Offerings from the Month of February, The Early Years, 1920-1959 Part 2--(1938-1945)

Part 2's highlights start with the year 1938 and unfortunately there was no February events scheduled. The Chapter has now been active for 19 years and saved materials on programs were not so abundant. The main source of news was in the printed word in letters to members and meeting minutes. I found it interesting to learn from the March 21, 1938 minutes that the Chapter had "43 members...have paid their dues out of a total of 59 members." The Dean would "endeavor to get in touch with the delinquent members and collect their dues." This has a familiar ring to me in 2025!

However, in 1939 the programming brought Professor of Organ, LaVahn Maesch from Appleton's Lawrence College to Immanuel Presbyterian Church for a recital on February 7. From a note I found in the Archives, it's a member's reminder to NOT forget this recital and the Executive Board was anxious to have a large attendance by posting his program at your church and inserting it into church bulletins. After the recital, hospitality was extended at All Saints Cathedral Parish House for a meet and greet with recitalist Mr. Maesch, members and friends. The hope was to have 100% attendance by the guild members and a large audience after at the social hour. I checked the meeting minutes to see if a headcount was taken, but no luck. I did find a report by the Registrar from meeting minutes of May 16, 1939, that membership was now up to 65. Within one year there was an increase of 22 new members. Binder 2, Correspondence, Reports, etc. 1927-1939, Binder 2 (CR1927-1939) Container 1, Newsclippings, Events Printed Copies (C1NEPC)

American Guild of Organists Wisconsin Chapter

presents

LaVAHN MAESCH

Professor of Organ and Music Literature
Lawrence College Appleton Wisconsin

in recital at

IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Tuesday February 7 1939

8 15 o'clock

* * *

PROGRAM

Concerto in F Major Larghetto Allegro Siciliano Presto	Handel (1685 1759)
Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor	Bach (1685-1750)
Chorale in B Minor	Franck (1822 1890)
Sonata in G Con Fuoco Allegretto Grazioso Rondo Allegro Molto Alla Breve	Bennett
Pantomime	Jepson
Pastorale on The Moon Shines Bright (From a set of Christmas Pieces)	Maesch
Toccata	Durufé

(over)

CHOIR FESTIVAL

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Chapter, American Guild of Organists

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

DR R BURTON SHEPARD, MINISTER
MRS REES E POWELL, ORGANIST

Sunday, February 18th, 1940, at 4 00 P M

GOLA W. COFFELT, CONDUCTOR

PROGRAM

PRELUDE	Mrs Rees Powell
PROCESSIONAL HYMN No 18, "For The Beauty Of The Earth"	
INVOCATION	Dr R Burton Sheppard
CHORUS "The Lord Is My Rock"	Woodman
ORGAN "Prelude" (From the Seventh Sonata) Mrs Frederick Wergin	Rheinberger
CHORUS "There Shall A Star From Jacob Come"	Mendelssohn
ORGAN "Adagio" (From the Trio Sonata No 5) William A Krahn	J S Bach
CHORUS "Lord, For Thy Tender Mercies' Sake" "God So Loved The World" (The Crucifixion)	Farrant Stainer
OFFERTORY Hymn No 465, "Where Cross The Crowded Ways Of Life" (Verses 1, 2, 5, 6)	
ORGAN "Prelude and Fugue In G, Major" (From Little Prelude and Fugues) John Christensen	J. S. Bach
CHORUS "Hallelujah" (From The Mount Of Olives)	Beethoven
POSTLUDE	Mrs Rees Powell

CHOIRS PARTICIPATING Pilgrim Congregational, Methodist:
First Church, Kenwood, Kingsley, Trinity, Evangelical
Friedens, St Paul.

The fall of 1939 was the beginning of World War II in Europe with the United States assisting our Allies with military supplies in the fall of 1940. As the United States' position to engage in the war looms the chapter continued to program musical events. In 1940, the chapter hosted a Choir Festival on February 18 at First Methodist Church with conductor Gola W. Coffelt and member Mrs. Rees E. Powell as Organist. From this program local choirs combined from Pilgrim Congregational, First Methodist, Kenwood, Trinity and Evangelical Friedens from St. Paul, MN to raise their voices in praise. The program was blended with an invocation, organ works, congregational and choir vocals. (C1NEPC)

GERTRUDE LOOS BARR
presents
MR CALVIN BRICKELL
in an ORGAN RECITAL

Assisted by Mr James Reilly, Baritone
Mr James R Barr, Tenor

at All Saints Cathedral
828 East Junco Avenue
Sunday Afternoon, February 2nd, 1941, at four o'clock

P R O G R A M M E

DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

CONCERTO ----- Bach-Vivaldi
Introduction
Grave
Fuga
Lento e Spiccato
Allegro
Mr Brickell

I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS ----- Ward-Stephens
Mr Barr

CHORAL IN A MINOR ----- César Franck
Mr Brickell

IT IS ENOUGH - (from "Elijah") ----- Mendelssohn
Mr Reilly

PRELUDE DE "LA DAMOISELLE ELUE" ----- Debussy
MAGNIFICAT - (6 Versets en forme de variations) ----- Bonnet
ROMANCE - SANS PAROLES ----- Bonnet
CAPRICE HEROÏQUE ----- Bonnet
Mr Brickell

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

The next year of 1941 chapter member Gertrude Loos Barr presented Mr. Calvin Brickell in a recital at All Saints Cathedral on February 2. This program was a Devotional Service with organ solos and choral works sung by Mr. James Reilly, Baritone and Mr. James R. Barr, Tenor accompanied by Ms. Barr. I discovered that Mr. Brickell was a chapter member who was fulfilling his membership requirement by playing this recital. He served on the Programming Committee and he along with two other members, Mr. Graf and Mr. Winston F. Luck, were called into service during the war. The chapter was interested to learn that Mr. Graf was heard on a program which was broadcast from Fort Benning. Upon Mr. Brickell's return from service, he shared his experience with members of being a Chaplain's Assistant in the U.S. Army. (C1NEPC); (B3CR 1940-1959)

On February 2, 1942, on a Monday evening at 6:30 pm, the chapter held its first annual Organist-Pastor Dinner. The location was Ascension Lutheran Church with the "dinner served by the ladies of the church." The price for dinner was 65 cents per plate. It was an enjoyable evening with the chapter grateful to the church for their hospitality to those in attendance. The keynote speaker of the evening was Dr. James H. Welsh who spoke on the relation of the Organist and the Pastor in the church service. After this sharing, Mr. Arthur Griebing, Dean, "gave his ideas on what the organist is entitled to expect from

his pastor." There was "a general discussion that followed and pastors from the various churches were given an opportunity to discuss the relation of the pastor and the organist. From opinions expressed by many of those present, this experiment was a success, and it is felt that the Organist-Pastor meeting should become an annual affair." Binder 3, (B3CR 1940-1959)

During the same month on February 15, 1942, the Chapter prayed a Vesper's Service at Trinity Methodist Church with French Music on the program. Three Chapter members shared the bench that day. They were Lauretta Cotton, John K. Christensen, and Hermann Nott. Trinity's choir director Ms. Ethel Gibbs Vidito led the choir for two anthems and congregational hymn singing as well. This program shared the rich talents of the French composers and member's contributions to musically pray together this Vesper Service. (C1NEPC)

The years of 1943-44 were lean years with slim budgets. The Chapter was to hold an Organist-Clergy-Choirmaster meeting on February 15, 1943, at the First Methodist Church. The invitation was extended beyond chapter members to invite local organists,

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
- VESPER SERVICE -
Sunday, February 15th, 1942 4 00 O'clock
French Music

Under the auspices of Wisconsin Chapter of The American Guild of Organists, Doris A. Jones, Dean.

. . PROGRAM . .

Organ Prelude	Lied des Chrysanthemas Lauretta Rossiter Cotton, Organist, Trinity Church	Bonnet
Processional Hymn	"The church's one foundation"	No. 381
Invocation	Rev. Reuben J. Bailey, Pastor	
Anthem	"Lovely Appear" from "The Redemption" Trinity Choir, Ethel Gibbs Vidito, Director	Gounod
Org'm	Allegro from 5th Symphony John K. Christensen, Organist, Ascension Lutheran Church	Widor
Meditation	"In Tune with the Infinite"	
Offertory	Adagio Lauretta Rossiter Cotton	Franck
Anthem	"Praise the Lord" Trinity Choir	Franck
Organ	Alleluia In Paradisum Fiat Lux Herman Nott, Organist, Kenwood Methodist Church	Dubois
Recessional Hymn	"Saviour again to Thy dear Name"	No. 29
Benediction		
Postlude	Grand Jeu Lauretta Rossiter Cotton	Du Mage

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THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER
AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

assisted by
Kenwood Methodist Choir
DR. HERMANN A. NOTT, DIRECTOR

PROGRAM

Processional - "Song of Praise." Hobanson

Organ

SONATA No. 2 in D minor James H. Rogers
Chorale
Adagio
Scherzo in Modo Pastorale

ELMER IHRKE
(Lake Park Lutheran Church)

Choir

SHEEP AND LAMBS Mac Kinnon
I AM MUSIC Flooring

Organ

PAX VOBISCU (Peace be unto you.) Garth Edmondson
TWILIGHT AT ILLSOLE Seth Bingham
TOCCATA ON "THANKS BE TO GOD" Richard Keys Biggs

LAURETTA COTTON
(Trinity Methodist Church)

Choir

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT Cyril Jenkins
Solo - MILDRED BURR

Organ

HYMN ON GLORY Pietro Yon
ARTHUR H. ARNEKE
(Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist)

Choir

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU Garlin, house

pastors and choirmasters to this evening. This was also a way to invite these guests to join the chapter and raise the membership numbers. The date of February 15 was a conflict with the Chicago Symphony concert so it got moved to February 22nd at the Wisconsin College of Music at 1584 N. Prospect at 8 pm. In the member's letter of February 12, 1943, "this will be a most interesting and instructive evening. A number of the clergy, choirmasters and organist will take part in a round table discussion of various topics that should be of great interest to everyone." Here is a quote from the annual Program Committee report. "One of the most interesting Guild evenings this year was the Organist-Clergy-Choirmaster Round Table. In as much as most of the trouble in the war department of the Church is between organist and choirmaster rather than between organist and clergy the committee felt it would be most profitable for all to include the choirmasters. This event was in the library of the Wisconsin College of Music." This topic seems to be ever present in the music ministry through the decades. Binder 3, (B3CR, 1940-1959)

On February 20, 1944, at 4 pm, Kenwood Methodist church choir under the direction of Dr. Hemann Nott hosted a program of combined musical gifts. Chapter members Elmer Ihrke, Lauretta Cotton, and Arthur H. Arneke shared the bench weaving a musical experience of organ works, choir selections with soloist Ms. Mildred Burr. This uplifting program's opening piece "Song of Praise" to the last organ piece of "Hymn of Glory" lead to the choir's finale piece of "May the Lord Bless You" expressed the gratitude and hope during the war time. Binder 1, (B1NEPC, 1920-1953)

The year 1945 offered two programs during the month of February, one week apart. The first was on February 11 and it was a 20th anniversary organ program presented by Dr. O.M.J. Wehrley at Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer at 4 pm. The extensive program was a blend of choir, congregational singing and psalms recited. J.S. Bach's "Fantasie and Fugue in A minor," vocal works by the Junior and Senior choirs and a spoken passage of "The Adoration" (Va anachnu). This passage from the Hebrew liturgy was set to music for a soprano solo by Dr. Wehrley. Interspersed in the program were five additional organ pieces of "The Bells of St. Anne de Beaupre" and "Song of the Basket Weaver" by Alexander Russell; "Dreams" by Hugh McAmis; "Sarabande" by Arthur B. Jennings; and "Rhapsody" by Alfred J. Silver. To see the complete program, it can be viewed in the Archives; it was too long to include in this article. It's worth taking the time to read all the detailed notes of the program. It was a finely crafted celebration. (C1NEPC)

A week later, the chapter hosted "the eminent and nationally known organist" Carl Weinrich from New York. This concert "was the first time the chapter sponsored two recitalists in one season" for the program year of 1944-1945. Mr. Weinrich's concert was held at Kenwood Methodist church on February 18, 1945, at 8 pm. Looking at the program's works, he presented an uplifting, lighter pairing of works showcasing the unique sounds of the "King of Instruments" on the Mozart, Mason and Jepson pieces. Binder 3, (B3CR, 1940-1959)

Our time enjoying the Musical Offerings from the month February - Part 2 has come to a pause. There is plenty of material to share in Parts 3 and possibly 4. Until next February's - Part 3, the Archives is accessible to members to explore the rich and creative history of our Milwaukee Chapter.

THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER
of the
AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

presents

CARL WEINRICH

in an

Organ Recital

Sunday February 18 1945 — at 8 00 p m
at KENWOOD METHODIST CHURCH
MILWAUKEE WISCONSIN

Programme

HANDEL	Tenth Concerto in D Minor Allegro — Adagio — Allegro
BUXTEHUDE	Chorale Prelude on How Brightly Shines the Morning Star
BACH	a) Toccata and Fugue in D Minor b) Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring
MOZART	Andante in F (for a mechanical organ)
MASON	Arise Arise (from Suite after English Folk Songs)
JEPSON	Pantomme
KARG ELERT	The Reed-Grown Waters (from Seven Pastels from Lake Constance)
VIERNE	Finale from First Symphony

Saint Patrick's Day Organ Concert

Sunday, March 16th at 3:00 PM

All Saints' Cathedral
818 E. Juneau Avenue - Milwaukee

Co-sponsored by AGO Milwaukee Chapter and All Saints' Cathedral



Benjamin Stone, Craig Sproat, Nick Renkosik, and Rob McWilliam, bagpiper, present a Saint Patrick's Day Organ Concert at All Saints' Cathedral (818 E. Juneau Ave. Milwaukee) on Sunday, March 16th, at 3:00 PM. The American Guild of Organists-Milwaukee Chapter and All Saints' Cathedral co-sponsored the concert, featuring the Pepper-Graves Memorial Organ 2025 with 46 ranks. All Saints' Hospitality Committee is hosting a Saint Patrick's Day Reception in Guild Hall for the audience following the concert.



Benjamin Stone is Director of Liturgy and Music and Assistant Professor of Sacred Music at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners. Ben is also the Director of Music at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Elkhart, Indiana. Ben holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance from the University of Notre Dame. Ben is a dual member of the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and AGO St. Joseph Valley Chapter (Indiana). Ben Stone will perform the blockbuster *Sonata No. 4 "Celtic," Op. 153* by Charles Villiers Stanford. The Sonata's final movement is based on the hymn tune *St. Patrick's Breastplate*. The audience will join in singing the hymn embellished by Ben's organ improvisation after the Sonata.



Craig Sproat is the Assistant Professor of Organ and Director of the Church Music Program at Concordia University Wisconsin. Craig serves as Kantor at Luther Memorial Chapel in Shorewood. Originally from the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Craig holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance from the University of Oklahoma. Craig serves on the Board of the AGO-Milwaukee Chapter. Highlighting Craig's program will be *From the Gaelic: Ten Preludes on Irish Melodies, Op. 81* by Derek Healey (b. 1936). See the separate article in Pipe Notes about the music.



Nick Renkosik is a regularly performing organist in the classical pipe and American theatre organ. Nick is based out of Kenosha and has performed in such venues as Orchestra Hall Chicago, the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, NY, Sanfilippo's Place De La Musique in Barrington Hills, IL, the Oriental and Riverside Theatres in Milwaukee, WI, and other venues across the United States. Nick received a Bachelor of Arts degree in organ and piano performance from Carthage College as a student of Christopher Berry (organ) and Dr. Wael Farouk (piano). Nick also received a Master of Science in Business Design and Innovation from Carthage College. Nick is a member of the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and the Dairyland Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. Highlights of Nick's program include *Fantasia in F minor, K. 608* by W. A. Mozart, and *Irish Air* from "County Derry" by H. Lemare.



Rob McWilliam is a Bagpiper, music composer, recording engineer, and organist living in Milwaukee. Rob is a member of the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and will join Nick Renkosik in performing movements from the *Highland Cathedral Suite* arranged by James Wetherald for pipe organ and bagpipes.



Invite your friends and family, church, and work associates to the concert celebration on Sunday, March 16th, at 3:00 PM at All Saints' Cathedral, 818 E. Juneau Avenue in Milwaukee. www.ascathedral.org. Free Parking is available in the Immanuel Presbyterian Church Lot, 1100 N. Astor Street, just one block east of All Saints' Cathedral.

A free-will offering will be received.



Everyone is invited to a post-concert reception in Guild Hall hosted by the All Saints' Cathedral Hospitality Committee.

Article by David Bahrke, Sub-dean | AGO Milwaukee Chapter
All Saints' Cathedral photos by Rick Bate.



Notes about *From the Gaelic: Ten Preludes on Irish Melodies, Op. 81* by Derek Healey

Derek Healey provided these notes in an email correspondence with Craig Sproat who will perform *From the Gaelic: Ten Preludes on Irish Melodies, Op. 81* at the Saint Patrick's Day Organ Concert on March 16th at 3:00 p.m. on the Pepper-Graves Memorial Pipe Organ of All Saints' Cathedral, 818 E. Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee WI.

The composition of this set of preludes was a way of being a 'thank-you' to a friend and graduate composition student of mine, the organist, Albert Ahlstrom. Albert had been a great help to me in my move to Brooklyn in the Summer of 1996. He is very proud of his Irish ancestry and of Irish literature in particular, so I thought it only right to present him with a work based on folk material from that country. Many of the melodies I selected will probably be unknown to many people, with the exception of 'Slane' and 'Bunessan', but these melodies have a wonderfully strong construction and a very varied character.

Early on in the composition process I decided to write four preludes on 'Slane', one for each of the verses of the text 'Lord of all Hopefulness': day-break, noon, evening and the end of the day. I decided to use these verses as a spine, as it were, throughout the work; and would give the complete work a general dawn to dusk progression. The selection of the remainder of the melodies was made on account of the 'chime' it elicited in me.

As a respect to Albert's intellect I decided to pull no punches in the techniques employed, there is much bi-tonality (modality) as well as use of the octotonic (diminished) scale. The set was worked-out in rough between September 3rd and the 12th 1996, being finally completed on November 27th of that year.

'Slane I': Lord of all hopefulness'

The concept behind the first prelude is one centuries old, namely in that each line is displayed in an ornamented version followed by a repetition of the line in a more hymn-like manner. In the decorated lines I wished to evoke the technique of the traditional Irish pennywhistle which I accompanied by 4ths from a different key center. In the line's repetition I used the technique of organum at the fifth but staggered by a beat or so, so that the melody harmonizes itself as it were; the bass part is free.

‘Bunessan ‘: ‘Morning has broken’

I always considered the Lydian mode as having an early-morning feel to it and so the right hand accompanies the C major melody with Lydian clusters preceded by sixteenth-notes, the 8th pedal has a counter-melody in B flat. The registration is bright to accent the exhilaration of early morning.

‘Caoineadh na marbh’: Alas, grief at night and in the morning’

This is not strictly speaking a hymn tune, but rather a lament probably thousands of years old - it is a Coine, also known as the ‘Irish Cry’. The melody is in a low tenor range, accompanied by sustained chords built mainly on fourths.

‘Slane II’: ‘Lord of all eagerness’

The ‘noon’ verse makes much use of the octatonic scale (starting C, D flat, E flat) in the accompaniment. It is a vigorous movement making use of the Sarabande rhythm and with very active sixteenth-note gestures in the pedals.

‘Fanad Head’: ‘They are all gone into the world of light.’

The fifth prelude is concerned with the life beyond and makes a good contrast to the previous movement. The countersubject displayed in the left hand at the opening is a B Mixolydian as opposed to the hymn melody’s C minor. This flowing pastoral line makes much use of the 3-note set A, C sharp and D sharp, for which I have a particular fondness. The two melodies, which retain their key/modal centers consistently for most of the piece, give a calm other-worldly feel. The pedal makes its only appearance near the close in a slow stepwise descent.

‘Wexford Carol’ (Intermezzo): ‘Good people all, this Christmastime’

After the seriousness of much of these pieces, the Wexford Carol arrangement (vivo) makes a marked contrast. The theme is lightly ornamented, and except for line three remains in the left hand. The prelude opens with an upward flourish, which also appears at the close, much use is made of staccato chords in the free voice.

‘Slane III’: ‘Lord of all kindness’

The ‘evening’ verse of this hymn has a whole-tone feel to it, and, as before, much use is made of bi-tonality. The melody is mildly decorated in an elegiac manner in E flat, while the left hand moves gently stepwise centering on A, while the pedal moves slowly on whole tone pitches down from C sharp.

‘Cormac’: ‘For the might of thine arm we bless thee’

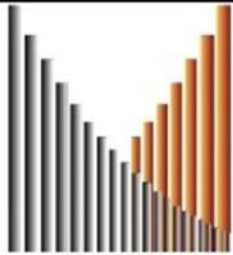
This very vigorous prelude is mainly in a fast triple time, and the strong melody is, for the most part, undecorated. Very important are the frequent wave-like structure of the accompanying sixteenth notes; the work builds up to a climax in the closing measures with an active pedal display.

‘Peacefield’ (Divisions): ‘Jesus, Lord, we look to thee’

This set of variations is in marked contrast to the fire of the previous prelude. Key to my concept of this prelude are the lines ‘Show thyself the Prince of Peace; Bid our strife forever cease.’ There are five short variations in all: the first four all contain bi-tonality: one stave in C with the other in three flats. A general feeling of lightness prevails. The final variation, although commencing with all voices in E flat, gradually opens out as the bass voices gradually move lower, so that at the close these voices are in A major, while the melody remains in E flat.

‘Slane IV’: ‘Lord of all gentleness’

The final prelude is based on the last verse of ‘Lord of all Hopefulness’ which ends with the line ‘Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day’. The right-hand melody commences above the stave, thereafter; each line moves into a lower octave. The accompaniment consists of second inversion major triads gradually moving by step a whole-tone lower; these sustained chords are consistently three and a third beats long, giving the prelude a bi-metric construction. The pedal does not make its appearance until the final E flat cadence.



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