



The Journey to Christmas

President's Message Deirdre Piper

President's Message

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his is the month, and this is the happy morn,

Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King, Of wedded Maid and Virgin Mother born, Our great redemption from above did bring; ...

[On the Morning of Christ's Nativity]

John Milton's immortal lines of 1629 express so beautifully and succinctly the goal, and its cosmic significance, towards which the season of Advent, that is now upon us, is leading. I suspect that for most of you, as for me, the journey to a goal is often every bit as meaningful and rewarding as the final achievement itself. As a composer my delight lies in the act of composing, however hard and frustrating it may be at times; the finished and performed product is often rewarding in itself, of course, but by then I'm usually immersed in the next project, and that is where my heart now lies. Similarly, while Christmas itself sparkles with obvious musical delight, I suspect that for many of us the journey through Advent offers the more profound experience, for it is the journey to Bethlehem that nurtures the soul and deepens the spirit's immersion in the divine reality:

I spread my hands out as my soul pointed to the firmament and I slipped upward to him who redeemed me. [Odes of Solomon, no.35]

Yes, it's the quality of the journey that's so important, for ultimately it's that experience that makes sense of the goal attained. Is it not the same with musical performance? The hours spent in the practising of a challenging piece are not hours spent merely getting the notes in the right place at the right time; no, the sustained mental effort involved develops also one's unique insight into the structure and meaning of the piece. It is this

The journey through Advent offers the more profound experience.

that results in the individuality and integrity of the performance. As we make the musical journey to Christmas, let us plan for that joyous celebration to be the resultant of a longer journey that starts now. And then, to return to Milton:

Ring out, ye crystal spheres, Once bless our human ears (If ye have power to touch our senses so), And let your silver chime Move in melodious time, And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow; And with your ninefold harmony Make up full consort to th'angelic symphony.

A blessed Advent and a happy Christmas to you all.

2008/09 Programme of Events

e traditionally do not have any events in December but this year is an exception:

On Saturday December 6th at Knox Presbyterian Church between 10:00-1:00 Rachel Laurin will offer another masterclass on improvisation and will focus on improvising on given themes. Many will recall from Rachel's masterclass last year that she introduced two distinct ways to improvise: theme based improvisation and free form improvising. This masterclass will focus on the former and will use the music of Christmas as starting points. Organists are traditionally most busy at Christmas time with many services and musical events to manage - so perhaps this masterclass will be an opportunity for you to develop or refine your improvisation skills and perhaps put them to use at some point in the Christmas season.



Rachel Laurin

On Friday December 19th at 7:30pm at Eglise Sainte-Anne in Lowertown there will a member's concert focussing on the tradition of French noëls. This promises to be a delightful concert for the community and will feature about six members, a brass ensemble playing transcriptions by Michel Rondeau and congregational singing. This tuneful dance music is usually happily received by audiences and ... who doesn't like organ and brass? A poster is available on the web site for you to download and post in your workplaces and churches. Please do whatever you can to promote the concert and do plan to attend yourself.

The following was written for the local community newspaper, *The New Edinburg News*, and may also be used in whole or in part by members to promote the concert:

Concert of French Christmas Music at Eglise Sainte-Anne.



A special concert of French Christmas music will take place at Eglise Sainte-Anne on Friday, December 19, 2008 at 7:30pm. The concert is a community event sponsored by the Ottawa Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists and will feature among other performers, local organists playing organ arrangements of classic French noëls on the organ at Eglise St-Anne. There will also be a brass ensemble and opportunity for concert goers to sing a number of noëls as well.

Eglise Sainte-Anne is a parish church of the Ottawa Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in Lowertown. Its history is closely linked to the early days of Ottawa having been formed in 1872 to serve the growing French Catholic population in this area of town. The church was designed by the architect J.P.M. Lecourt and built by Pierre Rocque and James O'Connor. The cornerstone was laid by Bishop Guigues in 1873. The organ which dates from 1914 is a three manual instrument installed by Casavant Frères of St. Hyacynth, Quebec, with an array of sounds that suits French music in general and organ noëls in particular.

The word *noël* derives from early French and roughly means *news*, as in the phrase 'good news'. Early uses of the

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word in fact did not refer to Christmas at all but rather were joyous exclamations to get someone's attention. There is an early French poem which describes a vegetable merchant announcing his wares at a market with shouts of *Noël! Noël!*

The word noël as a reference to the birth of Jesus Christ dates from the 13th century. By the 15th and 16th centuries the word was used as an exclamation and greeting during Christmas celebrations, as well as to describe a song or carol that incorporated some mention of the Christmas story. For instance, noëls often tell the stories of shepherds visiting Mary, Joseph and the Child and celebrating the birth with rustic instruments such as tambourines and pipes. Most noëls are parodies of vernacular poetry and in some cases are based on drinking songs and dance melodies that would have been well known in households and communities at the time. Collections of these lyrics and music were often printed and sold in the street to common folk for use during Christmas celebrations.



Église Sainte-Anne

As *noëls* became more and more popular in the 18th century some clergy incorporated them into worship services with the explicit intent to boost attendance. In other instances, they were summarily rejected as unwelcome secular influences on the church of the day. Once in the church, however, these tunes became fodder for organists who were always looking for a theme on which to improvise; improvisation involves composing music on the spot, for instance before, during and after the mass. Gradually these tunes and organists' treatment of them became a Christmas tradition although few formally composed and published them for sale. Thankfully at least, a few did and ever since we have had the opportunity to transport ourselves back to a time when crowds would gather in the churches and cathedrals of France to hear this unique contribution to the music of Christmas.



Among others, Louis-Claude Daquin and Claude Balbastre are well known for their organ arrangements of *noëls* and at least some of their work will be showcased at the concert. Both were organists in 18th century Paris and both spent time as organists of Notre Dame in the heart of the city. Their virtuosic playing drew large crowds whenever they played and especially at Christmas. It's reported that the Archbishop of Paris on numerous occasions forbade Balbastre access to the organ loft for fear that crowds would gather to hear him and disturb the peace.

If by the 19th of December you are not yet in the Christmas mood (and even if you are), make a point to come out for what promises to be a delightful and festive concert in a charming setting right here in our neighbourhood. Expect to leave the concert humming these delightful tunes and with a Christmas smile on your face. Eglise Sainte-Anne is located at 528 Old St. Patrick between Coburg St. and Beausoleil Drive. Admission is by freewill donation.



Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)

Looking ahead to 2009

hereas the events for the fall of 2008 were focused on more academic matters related to the organ, the events of the winter and spring of 2009 will be geared to assisting members (including students) to develop and refine practical skills as church musicians.

On January 24th, 2009, between 10:00 -1:00, Karen Holmes will present a masterclass on hymn playing at St. Luke's Anglican Church, 760 Somerset Street West (3 blocks west of Bronson Ave.). Karen is the RCCO Travelling Clinician this year and as such will be travelling to various centres across the country to offer a series of masterclasses on various subjects. Hymn playing is a central skill for most church musicians and yet there is always more to know about how best to lead choirs and congregations in song. This class will be of particular interest to students, reluctant organists, and church musicians who might primarily use piano. We are also hoping that many regular members might attend as well to create a real choir to make the whole event as practical as possible.

In February (date and location TBA in January Pipelines), we will host a day-long event for members and potential members on (1) working with small choirs, (2) finding and choosing practical and approachable repertoire, and (3) challenges working with clergy and church volunteers. This event will feature three experienced Centre members who collectively have worked in different denominational and liturgical traditions and with a range of other professional staff and volunteers. We are hoping that members might promote this personally to organists and church musicians that are not presently members of the College but who might benefit or welcome this opportunity to expand their skills.

In **March**, the annual student recital will take place on **Monday March 2, 2009**. Stay tuned for details on venue.

In **April** the Centre will offer another *Pedals, Pipes and Pizza* event at Dominion Chalmers United Church in Centretown. This event was very successful last year and is another opportunity to

Ian MacKay

promote the organ among young piano students. This year's event will coincide with the Kiwanis Music Festival and will be open to students 8 years and older.

Also in **April** we are planning an organ crawl to Rochester, New York. Rochester is about a four-hour drive from Ottawa which is comfortable for a two day event in the late spring when the weather is predictably better than earlier in the year. So...New York here we come! This event that will feature visits to three new instruments that have been installed in the city in addition to other notable instruments associated with the Eastman School of Music. Details are still being worked out but stay tuned to Pipelines and the web site for more information.

In **May** we are planning to host a hymn sing somewhere in the Ottawa Valley as a way to connect the urban side of the College with our rural counterparts. Stay tuned for more details as the event planning evolves.



Wednesdays 3, 10 and 19 December, 12:30-1:00 p.m.

Noon days at Knox. Knox Presbyterian Church (Elgin/Lisgar)

Friday, 5 December, 7:30 p.m.

Erinne-Colleen Laurin, soprano & Heather Rice, piano/organ. As Christmas Draws Near-A l'Approche de Noël - A Recital of Christmas Songs & Carols. St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, 579 Parkdale Ave./ Queensway. Admission \$10, children 12 and under: Free. All proceeds donated to St. Stephen's Church. Holiday treats served after the concert!

Saturday, 6 December, 7:30 p.m.

Korean Christians in Ottawa are gathering together for a night of unity, performing *Handel's Messiah in Korean* at the Ottawa Korean Community Church, 384 Arlington Ave. Directed by Chunson Park, soloists and orchestral performers from local Korean churches and schools will highlight the event. Admission by donation. All proceeds go to a local charity for the Christmas season.

Sunday, 7 December, 3:00 p.m.

17th Annual Concert: "Alta Vista Carol Sing", to be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 1758 Alta Vista Dr. Free admission and ample parking. Donations in support of the Heron Emergency Food Centre would be appreciated. Come sing the carols of the season with: le Choeur du Moulin, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Choir and the Ottawa Wind Ensemble/Ensemble à vents d'Ottawa.

Sunday, 7 December, 3:00 p.m.

Seaway Valley Singers Christmas Concert, Iroquois United Church (2 Elizabeth Drive, Iroquois). Directed by Robert Jones, accompanied by Valerie Kilpatrick. Tickets \$10 (adults) and \$5 (students) available at the door. The Junior Handbell Ringers from Winchester United Church will also particpate. For info, contact Bob Jones at (613) 220-3420 or via the web at www.seawayvalleysingers.ca.

Wednesday, 10 December, 7:30 p.m. Hommage à Messiaen is the one hundredth anniversary of Olivier Messiaen's

birth. Carleton University's School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music) is marking the occasion with a celebration of Messiaen's extraordinary works, life, aesthetics, and contribution as a teacher. **Location: Dominion-Chalmers United** Church, 355 Cooper Street (at O'Connor) Tickets: Adults: \$25, Students: \$15. Tickets may be purchased online at www.oliviermessiaenottawa.com or at the door. Please direct all questions and enquiries to James Wright@carleton.ca. Program: Dieu parmi nous, from La Nativité du Seigneur (1935), Prière après la communion, from Le Livre du Saint Sacrament (1984), Thomas Annand, organ; Selections from Poème pour Mi (1936) (l'Épouse, Ta voix, Le collier, Prière Exaucée), Zorana Sadiq (Toronto), soprano, Elaine Keillor (Emeritus Professor, Carleton University), piano; O Sacrum Convivium (1937), Ottawa Bach Choir, directed by Lisette Canton (York University); Le Courlis cendré (the Curlew), from Catalogue d'oiseaux (1956-58), Xenia Pestova (McGill University), piano; Abîme des oiseaux (Abyss of Birds) from Quatuor pour la fin du temps (1940-41), Rebecca Danard (University of Cincinatti), clarinet; Louange à l'éternité de Jésus (Praise to the eternity of Jesus) (1940-41) from Quatuor pour la fin du temps, Stanley Leong, cello, James Wright (Carleton University), piano, Sylvie Desrosiers, choreography; Le Merle noir (the Blackbird) (1952), Robert Cram (University of Ottawa), flute; Elaine Keillor (Emeritus Professor, Carleton University), piano.

Sunday, 14 December, 3:00 p.m.

Bytown Voices Christmas Concert with guest baritone soloist Garth Hampson. Directed by Robert Jones, accompanied by Valerie Kilpatrick, St. Basil's R. C. Church (Maitland Ave just north of the Queensway). Music of Vaughan Williams, Cornelius, Yon and carols for the audience Tickets available at the door: \$12 (adults), \$6 (students); children under 12: free. For info contact Bob Jones at (613) 220-3420 or www.bytownvoices.com.

Sunday, 14 December, 4:00 p.m.

Festivals of Lessons and Carols. Knox Presbyterian Church (Elgin/Lisgar).

Sunday, 14 December, 7:30 p.m. *Opus Four* (flute quartet: Kirsten Carlson, Natasha Chapman, Loyda Lastra, Cathy Rollins Baerg) with guest harpist Mary Muckle. Opus Four and guest harpist Mary Muckle present and enjoyable evening of flute and harp selections that include unfamiliar Christmas music as well as some old favourites. St. Luke's Anglican Church, 760 Somerset Street West (3 blocks west of Bronson Ave.) Ottawa. K1R 6P9, #2 Bus stops at our door. (613) 235-3416, www.stlukesottawa. ca. The church is wheel-chair accessible. Admission by donation.

Sunday, 21 December, 7 p.m.

St. Alban's Choir presents "Go Tell It", a Christmas Cantata by Jack Schrader. The church is located at 454 King Edward Ave

Sunday, 21 December, 7:00 p.m.

"Christmas Joy!", St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 971 Woodroffe Ave. (just north of the Queensway), Ottawa. Christmas anthems, brass band selections and carol singing, featuring California organist, *Mark Thallander*, and St. Paul's Senior Choir conducted by Gloria Jean Nagy. Free admission. Special program provided for children up to age 8. Information: 613-729-3384.

OUT OF TOWN...

Mercredi 10 décembre, 9h00 à 17h00 Basilique Notre-Dame, 110, rue Notre-Dame Ouest, Montréal, Métro : Place d'Armes. OLIVIER MESSIAEN: INTÉ-GRALE DE L'ŒUVRE D'ORGUE. Avec Pierre Grandmaison, titulaire des orgues de Notre-Dame de Montréal; Philippe Bélanger, Jacques Boucher, Vincent Boucher, Thomas Annand, Jean-Willy Kunz, Nicolas-Alexandre Marcotte, Laurent Martin, Matthieu Latreille, Réjean Poirier et Patrick Wedd. Entrée libre (contribution volontaire) 514-842-2925.

A Canadian in London

he Annual Festival of New Organ Music is dedicated to promoting new music for the king of instruments from around the world. Founded three years ago by London-based composer and organist Martin Stacey, the Festival has included works from the U.K., Spain, Finland, France, the U.S.A. and Canada. The fourth Festival will occur in August 2009 and will be entirely dedicated to Canadian organ music in honour of the RCCO's 100th anniversary celebrations.



Gilles Leclerc at the console of the Willis / Harrison & Harrison organ Westminster Cathedral, London

I was invited to give the first of two Festival recitals that are always given at Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. I performed in the latter which, at the time of my recital, was filled with scaffolding as the entire vault was being checked over after a brick came tumbling down near a member of the congregation. The acoustics were somewhat dampened; however, because the Cathedral is so large, there was still some reverberation left. My programme included the premiere of Bizantine which I wrote especially for this event. It was followed by my chorale prelude on St Theodulph and by the Finale of my Tryptic on Nun Komm', der Heiden Heiland. I concluded with a free-style improvisation.

Built in 1922, the organ of Westminster Cathedral is considered one of the finest by Henry Willis III. It was restored by Harrison & Harrison in 1985. Marcel Dupré was the principal consultant for the project and he subsequently give numerous recitals as the organ was completed and enlarged over many years. On the Saturday evening prior to my recital, I participated in the second Exhibition recital during which various organists played either their own works or works by colleague composers. The venue was St. John's Church, Islington, in London, which boasts an excellent three-manual organ by J. W. Walkers & Sons (1963), more recently restored by Keith Bance in 2006. Despite the tracker appearance of the organ (see the photo), it is in fact an electric-action instrument voiced in classical style. I played *Byzantium* by British composer Geoffrey Allan Taylor, followed by my *Epilogue* from *Te Deum Laudamus*.

The Festival always provides opportunities for composers and performers to discuss about new organ music and how they can help to promote such new music to audiences. The importance of the relationship between composers and performers was well illustrated during Jennifer Bate's conference on her experience working



Scaffolding throughout Westminster Cathedral, London

with Oliver Messiaen. He bestowed upon her the responsibility of recording all of his organ music under his guidance prior and even during the recording sessions. It is available from the Regis label. My

GILLES LECLERC

exchanges with Geoffrey Allan Taylor proved most fruitful and helped me further understand what he wanted to convey in his music. I'm delighted he was pleased with my performance.



J.W. Walkers & Sons organ, St. John's Church, Islington (London)

On Thursday evening, the day of my arrival, I attended a recital given by Olivier Latry marking the rededication of the Grand organ at St. Paul's Cathedral, the first of two such recitals. The work on the instrument included tonal revisions, including a new set of reeds on the Great, and the addition of a new movable console which was donated by the son of a former assistant organist of St. Paul's. The work was carried out by Mander. The current organist of St. Paul's is Simon Johnson. The new console was used Sunday morning for both of the services I attended.

For more information on the Annual Festival of New Organ Music visit their web site at at www.afnom.org where you can also hear past Festival performances. My recital should be up in a few months. Check for special articles on the Festival in upcoming issues of Choir and Organ.

- Gilles Leclerc

Messiaen Master Class and Lecture

Many thanks to Centre Vice-President Tom Annand for a very informative pre-concert lecture on the organ works of Olivier Messiaen. Tom walked

us through all of Messiaen's works for organ and played highlights from each major work to give us a sense of how his compositional style developed over the course of his life from his days as a student through his 60 years on the bench at Eglise de la Sainte-Trinité. Tom also spoke about what influenced Messiaen's style including his devotion to the Christian faith, bird song, styles and rhythms from other parts of the world, the war and his predecessors and contemporaries.

Tom started with a fragment from a posthumously published work: Offrande au Saint Sacrement which is thought to have been written in 1929. Tom then played Le banquet céleste which was

Messiaen's fist published work (1928) and which was revolutionary at the time because of the vast time scale of the piece and the in the sense that the piece did not

have a particular emotion-

al goal but rather hangs in

the moment. The piece

ends on a seventh chord

which Tom described as

the only the beginning of

Tom then played

du Seigneur and Les corps

what was to come.



Olivier Messaien (1908-1992)

glorieux which round out the first phase of Messiaen's compositional output for organ. We then heard excerpts from Messe de la Pentecôte which begins Messiaen's second phase of composition where we find extensive use of bird song and rhythms from Greek and Hindu

Lilian Forsyth Scholarship

pplications are now being accepted for the 2009 Lilian Forsyth Scholarship for church music. The award of up to \$1,500 may be used for summer study programs, regular diploma or degree courses, or private tuition. Candidates should be active church musicians who have completed their basic musical training.

The deadline for applications is February 15th, 2009. For application forms or information contact the Registrar, Lilian Forsyth Scholarship, Knox Presbyterian Church, 120 Lisgar Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 0C2. FAX: (613) 238-4775. E-mail: knoxottawa@bellnet.ca or visit our web site at www.knoxottawa.ca

musical traditions. With this particular work Messiaen looks forward as much as he looks back to Tournemire whom he greatly admired and as such is likely the centre of the oeuvre. Tom then moved to the last two major works for organ namely Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité and Livre du Saint Sacrement . In Méditations we find Messiaen's communicable language at work to convey a series

of religious statements by towering figures of the church e.g. Thomas Aquinas. Livre is Messiaen's most extensive work -- at 18 movements, this is Messiaen at his most abstract. And yet as disembodied as some of the movements and registrations feel, there are moments of great harmonic and rhythmic clarity.

Tom ended the evening with just such a movement Prière après la communion which if it had not been introduced by name, could have passed as a lullaby.



Welcome to our newest member:

Pierre Gauthier, 456, rue Charles-Desnoyers, Gatineau QC, J8P 3X, 819 669-6202 (H), 819 997-2225 (W) 819 994-5140 (F). pierre.gauthier@ pc.gc.ca, Dipl. Mus. Conserv. du Québec, Carleton Memorial United Church, Ottawa.

News from a Scholarship Winner

recently received a message from Titus van den Heuvel. - Some of you may remember him; he was one of our teenaged scholarship-winners in 1999. He went from Ottawa to do a double degree in chemistry and organ performance at Oberlin. As if that weren't enough of a challenge, while he was at Oberlin he got interested in organ-building, worked with

Hal Gober, and looked after Oberlin's practice organs. Then he went to Göteborg University in Sweden, to participate in the Fine Arts Department's GOArt project, which involves studying historic organ construction, and working on building copies of historic instruments. He works mainly as a pipemaker, and has gained a lot of experience in casting metal pipes on

KAREN HOLMES

sand - GOArt's specialty. At the moment, they are working on a reproduction of the Schnitger organ in the Berlin Charlottenburg Palace's Eosanderkapelle (destroyed by fire in 1944). This will replace a Wolff organ at Cornell University's Anabel Taylor Chapel. Titus will be in Göteborg until the end of June 2009. He sends very best wishes to the "Ottawa organ crowd".

IAN MACKAY

OTTAWA CENTRE EXECUTIVE 2008-2009

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Please note: Supply list can also be found on the RCCO Ottawa web site at http://www.rcco-ottawa.ca Anyone interested in adding their names to the Supply List, please contact Suzanne St-Germain at 613-841-0246 or via email at newsletter@rcco-ottawa.ca



D. Mervyn Games, B.Mus., FRCO, ARCM. Students in piano, organ, and theory at all levels. For info call 613-729-2515.

Robert P. Jones, M.Mus., ARCCO (ChM). All levels of students (teenager or adult). Lessons at St. Luke's Church (760 Somerset Street W.) Info:pentland@hotmail.com

Heather Rice, ARCT, BMus, ARCCO (ChM). Welcomes students in piano, organ, voice and theory, Beginner - Intermediate, Children - Adult. Lessons at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, 579 Parkdale Ave. at Sherwood. Call 613-563-1409 or email choirmaster@bellnet.ca.

Wesley R. Warren, M.Mus., FRCO, (ChM), ARCT. Beginning to advanced organ students at St. Barnabas Anglican Church, (Kent St. at James), Ottawa. Info: 613-726-6341

Newsletter submissions

Send your articles and photos to:

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Advertising Policy

1. Any Ottawa Centre member may announce his/her events in the *Around Town* section of the newsletter free of charge if they are the coordinator, conductor or organist/accompanist of the event.

2. If a member wishes to place a free announcement in *Around Town* for an event of another organization he/she is a member of (not covered by Policy 1), the member must make a written request to the RCCO Centre Executive for approval of that one specific event. Approval may be granted on the basis that this event would be of specific interest to our members: i.e Church/Choral, and/organ/bells,encouragement of young organists and pianists.

3. If a non-member wishes to freely announce an event of his/her Organizations in *Around Town*, he/she must make a written request to the RCCO Ottawa Centre Executive for approval of that one specific event. Approval may be granted as per policy 2, however in most circumstances we would expect the Organization to pay as per the rates set out by the Centre for advertising.

The Royal Canadian College of Organists presents:

French Noëls for Organ and Brass



An evening of festive French Christmas music for organ and brass quartet, and audience carol singing.

Friday, December 19, 2008 at 7:30 pm Église Sainte-Anne 528 Old Patrick

Free will admission (Suggested donation: adults \$10 / students \$5)

Noëls français



Une soirée de musique avec orgue, ensemble de cuivres et cantiques de Noël traditionnels avec la participation de l'assembée

Vendredi, le 19 décembre 2008 à 19h30 Église Sainte-Anne, 528 Old St. Patrick

Offrande libre (dons suggérés : adultes,10\$ / étudiants, 5\$)