Reception, Lecture-Recital Highlight May Meeting

The closing event for the 2005-2006 program series will be held Monday, May 22, at Second Presbyterian Church. Traditionally, May is the month in which the St. Louis AGO Chapter recognizes members of the Guild and of the community who have contributed their time and talent to promoting the organ and performance of organ music. Please join your fellow members at 6 p.m. for a reception honoring all past recipients of the Avis Blewett award.

The program for the evening will be a lecture and recital by Dr. Kathleen Thomerson, who received the Avis Blewett award in May 1994. Dr. Thomerson has been very active in the Guild, both on the local and national levels. She is a past Dean of the St. Louis Chapter. She has been elected to the office of National Councilor, and served the national organization as director of the Committee on Educational Resources. She currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Austin, Texas, AGO Chapter.

Dr. Thomerson was born in Tennessee and grew up in Mississippi, California, and Texas. Her music degrees are from the University of Colorado and the University of Texas. She also studied in Europe at the Flemish Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, Belgium, and took private lessons in Paris. Her husband was a biology professor at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Dr. Thomerson taught organ in the music Department of SIUE for 25 years. She was music director at University United Methodist Church in St. Louis, and was active in Guild activities both in St. Louis and in the metro-east area. Dr. Thomerson is currently organist and music director at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas.

Dr. Thomerson has a deep personal interest in creating hymn texts and tunes and continues to write new material. Her best-known hymn text is “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light,” set to her original tune Houston (The Hymnal 1982, #490). In 2005, 16 of her new tunes, with texts by Patricia B. Clark of Austin, Texas, were published by MorningStar Music in the hymnbook titled “A Taste of Heaven’s Joys.”

Dr. Thomerson’s program will be a discussion and demonstration of works by Flor Peeters, with whom she studied in Belgium, and Jean Langlais, with whom she studied in France and the USA.

Before retiring to Austin, Texas, Dr. Thomerson lived in Collinsville, Ill., when her husband was a biology professor at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Dr. Thomerson taught organ in the music Department of SIUE for 25 years. She was music director at University United Methodist Church in St. Louis, and was active in Guild activities both in St. Louis and in the metro-east area. Dr. Thomerson is currently organist and music director at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas.

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The recital portion of the evening is open to the public. Please invite friends. Plan to attend to hear Dr. Thomerson play works by Peeters and Langlais, and to gain insight into these composers and their compositions.

— Martha Shaffer
The recent issue of The American Organist features a commentary by Haig Mardirosian on “the end of music,” conjecturing that perhaps classical music, having run its course, is defunct. His parting remark hints that he has more to say on the subject in the next issue of TAO. Nonetheless, one can hardly resist reflecting on his suggestion, as far as it goes.

My response is painted with a broad brush, and is concerned primarily with the music of the masters, whose standards of artistic integrity and discipline have provided the foundation for most serious musical endeavor. These standards may well encompass accomplishments in jazz and folk music, even traditional popular music; excluded from consideration, however, are most of the commercially successful entertainment and contemporary Christian forms in circulation today.

Art historian Kenneth Clark suggested that the greatest human cultural achievements arise from a confluence of factors: prosperity (but not excessive wealth); a prevailing confidence; a corresponding energy and enthusiasm; the providential appearance of men and women of genius; and a receptive and fertile social climate. Today, many of these vital ingredients are either lacking or misdirected—we would be hard-pressed to prove our times to be anything like a golden age of artistic achievement.

Our musical heritage is in large part a European gift. We often hear of the 1900’s as “the American century.” However, the case could be made that the era from Napoleon until 1945 was really the last great European age. It began with such promise, in the springtime of Romanticism, but it ended in the ignominy and cataclysm of the World Wars—conflicts that history may someday view as a single, broad conflagration. After Hiroshima, the world became inexorably smaller, increasingly frenetic, and potentially more violent than ever.

Following the World Wars, European civilization was no longer in any shape to assert itself. Ours had become preeminently an American world, and the lingering of “Old World” culture was largely honorary, an afterglow that has gradually given way to the abiding principles, values, and climate of the market economy. This “cross-fade” of cultures marks the world in which most of us music professionals have come of age.

One of the noblest of American values is the fundamental sense of egalitarianism, and our democratic system of self-government, for all its flaws, is a miracle of political history. In this context, the common denominator, the will of the people, is a good and necessary consideration. A less admirable American trait is the widespread inclination to dismiss or dismantle anything that fails to be readily profitable. Here, the common denominator, the “bottom line,” can often be a destructive consideration.

Free market principles are not all bad, but they are inherently hostile to religion and art, or at least, to art in the service of religion. The work that we do as sacred musicians ideally seeks to elevate truth above profit, and pursues the eternal rather than the temporal. What we do with heart and soul doesn’t sell, yet there are indeed profits to be won, however intangible. Great art, like vital religious faith, strives to reconcile the comprehensible with the ineffable; there’s no reward without appreciable intellectual and spiritual investment. As the saying goes, ‘no pain, no gain.’

While it is true that music offers an occasion and a means for building faith and charity among our spiritual communities, it can be so much more. Great music, like sacred art, like the Holy Scriptures themselves, can be a veritable expression of divine revelation—God with us. Once we’ve experienced something so transcendent, how can we possibly relegate it to a mere market niche?

I believe our calling at this moment in history is to stand firm, and uphold the artistic traditions that we know to be humanizing and life-giving. All this presupposes, of course, that we are discerning in the music we choose, and that we teach it and perform it well. In some measure we share the work of the prophets, rarely understood by their own times or their own people, but unsparingly committed to the truth. We may be swimming against the tide, but we need not be bitter or recalcitrant. We should bear in mind that truth without charity is counterproductive, and a little bit of diplomacy will go a long way. But hold the line, we must, to preserve our musical patrimony for future generations who may need it even more than we do—or better yet, for some unimagined golden age of music.

—Stephen Mager
PIE ORGAN ENCOUNTER (POE) UPDATE

Here’s the abbreviated schedule

As of May 1, we had 21 registrants for the St. Louis POE. Our goal is 25, and we’re almost there! The following is a schedule of events for the POE week. In addition to the listed events, the students will have lessons and practice time each afternoon. We encourage all chapter members to attend as many events as you would like. We also encourage you to help out at any event as well. To volunteer, send a note to POE Chair Mary Hitchcock-Reinhart at mary@thevillagesquare.org.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, June 11</td>
<td>Afternoon: Registration&lt;br&gt;Evening: Hymn service at Bethel Lutheran Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, June 12</td>
<td>Morning: Classes/Workshops with Michael Bauer&lt;br&gt;Late Morning: Fox Theater Lobby Organ with Stan Kann&lt;br&gt;Evening: Organ Crawl/Progressive Dinner incl. Ted Drewes (Cathedral Basilica, St. Monica’s, St. Anselm)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, June 13</td>
<td>Morning: (9-1) Pipe Building session and lunch at Martin Ott’s&lt;br&gt;Late Afternoon: Carillon at Concordia Seminary&lt;br&gt;Evening: Harpsichord exploration at Bethel Lutheran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, June 14</td>
<td>Morning: Classes/Workshops with John Ditto&lt;br&gt;Evening: (7:30) Recital by James David Christie at St. Peter’s Episcopal</td>
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<td>Thursday, June 15</td>
<td>Morning: Classes by James David Christie (Grace UMC)&lt;br&gt;Evening: Shakespeare Festival, Forest Park</td>
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<td>Friday, June 16</td>
<td>Morning: Student Recital at Grace UMC</td>
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On the Concert Horizon…


**Thursday, May 18**, 12:30 p.m. Christ Church Cathedral, 13th and Olive, downtown St. Louis. Organ concert by William Partridge, Cathedral Organist, [or by a guest organist]. Information: 314.231.3454.


* Monday, May 22, 6 p.m. AGO-Saint Louis Chapter event. Second Presbyterian Church, 4501 Westminster Place, St. Louis, MO 63108. Chapter Banquet; Wine and cheese reception precedes. 7:30 p.m. Lecture-recital by Dr. Kathleen Thomerson, FAGO, ChM: *Memoirs of a Student of Langlais and Peeters*. Make dinner reservations ($8) to Dr. Kathleen Bolduan, at 314.935.5517 or kbolduan@artsci.wustl.edu. Information: See the Opus newsletter.

**Thursday, May 25**, 12:30 p.m. Christ Church Cathedral, 13th and Olive, downtown St. Louis. Organ concert by William Partridge, Cathedral Organist, [or by a guest organist]. Information: 314.231.3454.

**Sunday, May 28**, 3:00 p.m. Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 5020 Rhodes Ave. at South Kingshighway. Saint Louis Chamber Chorus, Philip Barnes, Conductor. Music of Brahms; world premiere of Sasha Johnson Manning’s *Requiem for Saint Louis*. Ticket information: 636.458.4343 or Metrotix at 314.534.1111.


(Continued on Page 4)
JUNE


* Sunday, June 11. AGO-Saint Louis Chapter event. Campus of Fontbonne University, Big Bend at Wydown, Clayton. Opening of Pipe Organ Encounter 2006. Institute concludes Friday morning, June 16. Information: See the Opus newsletter.

Wednesday, June 14. 7:30 p.m. AGO-Saint Louis Chapter event. Saint Louis Abbey Church, 500 South Mason Rd. near I-64-Hwy 40. Organ recital by POE guest artist, James David Christie. Information: See the Opus newsletter.

Chapter election in progress

Chapter membership should by now have received ballots for the election of Chapter officers and “at-large” executive officers (Class of 2009). The ballot also includes a proposition for a procedural amendment to the chapter by-laws. Completed ballots must be postmarked by May 17 to be counted. Any chapter member in good standing who has not received an official ballot, may request another. Please contact the dean by telephone, 314-453-0987, or by e-mail at agostldean@aol.com, before May 15. We thank our nominating committee of Regina Morris, chair; Cathy Cassie; Greg Caldwell; and Stephen Mager and Martha Shaffer, ex officio.

Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous

Here’s a tale involving a composer in a tavern that is attributed to Franz Josef Haydn. As a young man, Haydn was a friend of the composer Dittersdorf. The two were out carousing one night, when they came upon a beer hall whose musician entertainers were performing, quite poorly, a minuet by Haydn. The composer approached the principal fiddler, and very casually asked, “Whose minuet?” The musician responded curtly, “Haydn’s!” The composer replied with mock disdain, “What a wretched minuet!” Whereupon, the fiddler and his band arose in a rage, brandished their instruments as weapons, very nearly assaulted the visitors and chased them away, who for their part found the whole episode uproariously funny.
Positions Available

Assistant Organist/Music Assistant
Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, 45 West Lockwood Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119, seeks a part-time assistant organist/music assistant. Duties include being principal organist for all 11:15 a.m. Sunday chapel services of worship; coordinating soloists/ensembles from the Chancel Choir and/or congregation for anthem material for this service as needed, and serving as Chancel Choir accompanist (piano and organ) for Thursday night rehearsals and 9 a.m. Sunday services and other worship services/concerts where the choir is present. This is a nine-month position from September-May. Position is open immediately but will begin in September. Please e-mail resumes to spp@wgc.org or send to Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, Attention: Shawn Portell, Director of Music Ministries/Sr. Organist.

Organist
Curby Memorial Presbyterian Church, 2621 Utah, St. Louis, MO 63118 is seeking an organist to play at their 10:30 a.m. service beginning May 28. Instrument is eight-rank pipe organ. Salary is negotiable. Contact Rev. Gordon Senechal at 314-771-0242 or e-mail curbychurch@juno.com.

Music Director
Zion Lutheran Church, 123 Carson Road, Ferguson, MO 63125 is seeking a part-time music director, beginning June 1. Duties include accompanying two Sunday services (one during the summer months), special seasonal (Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Holy Week), and directing a senior choir, gospel choir, and praise band. Prefer someone with ability on both the pipe organ and keyboard/piano, who is proficient in a variety of musical styles. Send resume and/or inquiries to Rev. Jeffrey Lindgren at the church. Phone 314-522-0100 or e-mail zionferg@juno.com.

Minister of Music
Ivy Chapel UCC, 620 North Woods Mill, Chesterfield, MO 63017, is seeking a part-time minister of music. Duties include playing the organ and piano, as well as directing the Chancel and Youth choirs. Fax resume to 314-434-5077, Attention: Search.

Organist/Choir Director
Epiphany Lutheran Church (LCMS), 4045 Holly Hills Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63116, is seeking applicants for the position of organist-choir director available in July. Responsibilities include playing for two Sunday liturgies, a Wednesday evening liturgy, and the typical feast days; conducting the adult and youth choirs, and meeting with the pastor regularly to plan the liturgies together. The church has a two manual, 22-rank Reuter Organ (1972), utilizes The Lutheran Hymnal (1941) and the Hymnal Supplement 98 (1998). Applicants should have experience as a church musician working within a liturgical and traditional environment; college level training is highly desirable. Applicants should contact Rev Timothy Landskroener (314-752-7065) for more information.

Music Director
Clayton United Methodist Church, 101 N. Bemiston Ave., Clayton, MO 63105, is seeking a part-time music director. Duties include continued development of an adult choir as well as creating a new children’s choir. Prefer person who is creative, energetic and imaginative with a ready command of musical resources. The position is available immediately; salary and hours are negotiable. Please contact Rev. James Christy (314-721-2282) for more information.

Organist
Christ Lutheran Church, Webster Groves. Mo., is seeking an interim organist/choir accompanist from Aug. 1, 2006 to Aug. 1, 2007, to fill in for organist who will be on academic sabbatical. Responsibilities include two services each Sunday morning, accompanist for Wednesday evening choir practice, as well as Wednesday evening services during Advent and Lent. 14 rank Schlicker organ. Send resumes to Organist Search, Christ Lutheran Church, 1 Selma Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119 or e-mail to christwg@sbcglobal.net or fax to 314-962-4810.

Organist/Choir Director
Little Flower Catholic Church, 1264 Arch Terrace, Richmond Heights, MO 63117, is seeking an organist/choir director. Duties include playing for the 5 p.m. Saturday Mass and 8 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday Masses. Direct adult choir and cantor program. Choir practices on Thursday nights.

(Positions Available continued on back cover)
Positions Available

(Continued from Page 5)

Organist

First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mo., has an immediate opening for an organist. Primary responsibilities include Sunday worship at 10 a.m. and Wednesday Night choir rehearsal. Special services during the seasons and Wednesdays during Choral Rehearsal are also included. Please contact the Rev. Grant Gillard at 573-243-4265, Susan Venable at 537-243-2243, or Jane Hull at 573-243-5484 or send an email to reddoorswarmhearts@yahoo.com.

Organist

Zion United Methodist Church, 3652 State Hwy Z, Gordonville MO 63701 (just west of Cape Girardeau), is seeking an organist for two weekly Sunday services (8 and 10:30 a.m.) and several special services. Organist prepares prelude, offertory and postlude, and plays several hymns and other service music during the services. Contact the Rev. Andrew Flood at 573-465-7944 or send an email to the attention of the Organist Search Committee at info@zionumc-gordonville.org for more information.

Organist

First Christian Church, Edwardsville, Ill., seeks a choir director to be responsible for the choral ministry of our traditional worship service, including weekly rehearsals (Sept.-June) and Sunday morning worship participation. Resumes and inquiries may be sent to Rev. James Brooks at 618-656-7498 or e-mail to jrbrooks@fccedwardsville.org.

Organist/Choir Director

Lafayette Park Methodist Church, 2300 Lafayette Ave., St. Louis MO 63104, is seeking a part-time organist/choir director. This position enhances the worship experience of a small diverse urban congregation that has an amazing outreach ministry. The position supports the music in our 8 a.m. celebration/contemporary service and 10 a.m. traditional service. They conduct weekly choir rehearsals preparing the choir for the worship services from Sept.-May. They also coordinate special services such as Christmas Eve. Please contact Rev. Kathleen Wilder at 314-479-8446 or e-mail to lppastor@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Organist

Dardenne Presbyterian Church, 7400 Hwy. N, Dardenne Prairie, MO 63368, is seeking a full time director of music to oversee and direct the chancel choir, music program and music staff. Proficiency in piano, strong leadership abilities, and a competency in a broad range of music genre required. Please e-mail resumes to music-director-search@charter.net or send to Dardenne Presbyterian Church, Attention: Music Director Search Committee.

Organist

Saint Louis, MO 63130-2732
8056 Brookview Drive
St. Louis Chapter
American Guild of Organists

The OPUS