

THE DESERT WIND

Editor: Bruce Behnke © 2018 Issue: November/December 2018

Dean's Notes



Southern Nevada Chapter
American Guild of Organists

Dear Southern Nevada Chapter
AGO Members,

Greetings to our growing membership. I am excited and pleased to continue as your Dean for another season. I welcome William Freeman, new Sub Dean; David Zechman, Publicity and Reception; Jim Kasen and Christian Lentz, At Large Members; and returning Board Members David Dorway, Treasurer; Kathi Colman, Secretary; Bruce Behnke, Webmaster and Newsletter; Paul Hesselink, Recital Series.

These dedicated leaders bring much talent and enthusiasm to their assignments. We are planning a number of exciting activities, workshops and other opportunities for our members, in addition to our always-popular recital series.

Here are some of them, details to follow:

Saturday, January 12, 2019,
Registration Workshop from 9:00 A.M. to 11:15 A.M. The workshop entitled "Registration on the modern organ" will be presented by Robert Tall on the new Rodgers organ located at The Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer, 55 E Reno Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89119

Also being planned are an evening with Tim Cooper at a Jewish Temple, a BYU Organ Workshop at Meadows Stake Center on the new 30-rank Ballantyne organ, and a Choral Reading Workshop at Community Lutheran Church. There will also be an audition for students applying for a Raymond Barnes Scholarship for the POE workshop next summer. Please

watch for details about these programs in future issues of the Desertwind.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Wright, Dean
SNCAGO



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Young Organist Presents Stunning Program

Twenty-two year old organist Clara Gerdes wowed an audience of 110 persons in a spectacular program of all-late nineteenth century to present day compositions for the organ. The program was presented on Friday, September 14 at 7:30 P.M. on the 2004 Rudolf von Beckerath Maurine Jackson Smith Memorial Organ in Dr. Rando-Grillot Recital Hall in the Beam Music Center on the UNLV campus.

Ms. Gerdes, from Davidson, North Carolina, is a fifth-year student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where she studies with Alan Morrison. She is the winner of first prizes in the Albert Schweitzer, AGO-Quimby Mid-Atlantic Regional, and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts organ competitions; she was the recipient of the first annual AGO Pogorzelski-Yankee Scholarship.



Photo by Dorothy Young Riess

Recognizing that the general public's musical taste is "stuck" somewhere near the Tchaikovsky style, presenting a program of music all composed since 1891 (the date of the composition of Dvorak's *Carnival Overture*; her program opened with Edwin H. Lemare's transcription), carries an inherent risk. The musical public often finds itself challenged to appreciate newer music even though the music may be more than 50 or more years old. Ms. Gerdes' program, however, seemed to capture the attention and admiration of the audience. It is a testimony to the daring, excellence and dynamism of her performance of the works presented; everyone recognized the technical and musical quality of her performance.

For most people in the audience there were no "old chestnuts" or familiar works on the program. We heard a rarely performed *Fantasy Chorale in D-flat Major* by the English composer Percy Whitlock (not much performed these days), American composer David Conte's 1992 *Pastorale and Toccata*, two movements (Forlane and Rigaudon) from Maurice Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and transcribed for the organ by Ms. Gerdes. Flor Peeters' "classic" *Aria*, Op. 51 from 1945 was the perfect set-up for the final show-stopping quixotic *Gershwin'sca* (2000) by the Lebanese-French organist-composer Naji Hakim. This virtuosic tour-de-force was certainly the most "far out" work on the program, and surprisingly, when asked which selections on the program they particularly enjoyed, the largest number of respondents cited the Hakim!

It was an auspicious opening recital for the 2018-2019 Organ Recital Series, the chapter's fourteenth season.

Sixty audience members completed the evaluation survey. Here are the numbers:

First time visiting Doc Rando Hall = 9

First hearing of the Maurine Jackson Smith Organ = 8

First time at an AGO Recital = 8

Attendance at more than 5 AGO recitals = 46

How people heard about the recital:

e-mail = 35 previous program = 13 flyer = 7

from a friend = 21 radio = 1 other = 3

Each selection on the program was mentioned as being enjoyed.

Statement best describing feeling about the program/performer:

Loved it = 49 (84.5%) Liked it = 8 (13.8%)

Found it interesting = 1 (.017%) Might come back = 1 (.017%)

Not interested = 0 Wouldn't come again = 0

Combined “Superb” and “Excellent” ratings: 99.7%

Twelve respondents asked to be added to the e-mail reminder list for future recitals.

The next program in the series will feature Bruce Stevens from University of Richmond (VA) on November 2 at 7:30 P.M. at Dr. Rando-Grillot Hall in the Beam Music Center at UNLV.

Paul S. Hesselink, Chair
Recital Series Committee

(The following two pages were mailed to the membership prior to the recital)

Bruce Stevens Recital

Next on our recital series will be Bruce Stevens. He will be playing on Friday, November 2, 2018 at 7:30 P.M. in Doc Rando Hall on the campus of UNLV



Bruce Stevens is active as a recitalist across the United States and Europe. He frequently plays for the annual national conventions of the Organ Historical Society, and he has performed for regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists and for the national convention of the American Institute of Organbuilders. After receiving degrees in music from the University of Richmond and the University of Illinois, he moved to Europe, going first to Denmark for a year of organ study in Copenhagen with Finn Viderø and Grethe Krogh. Later, he moved to Vienna to become a student of Anton Heiller for several years. He also studied at the Royal School of Church Music near London. Mr. Stevens has been a finalist in the American Guild of Organists competition as well as in other national competitions held in Los Angeles and Fort Wayne. Active as a recording artist, he has produced seven discs for Raven Recordings, including a series of four CDs devoted to Josef Rheinberger's organ sonatas played on various historic American organs.

Mr. Stevens is director of Historic Organ Study Tours (HOST), which he founded in 1994 to further the study of historic organs in Europe and elsewhere. He also works as a writer-editor for the

Virginia Department of Education.

Bruce Behnke

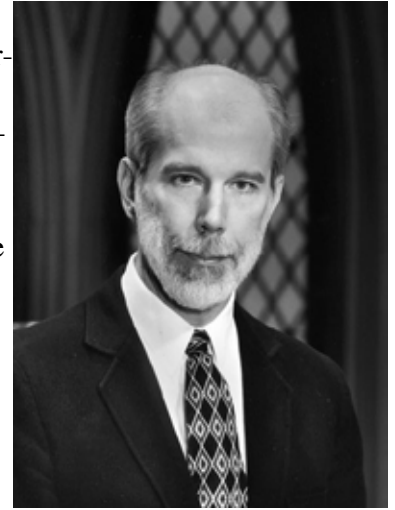
What first started your interest in the pipe organ?

Bruce Stevens

I was spontaneously drawn to the sounds of the pipe organ in church as a preschooler for no explainable reason. No one in my family was musical, and music at home consisted of typical 1950s radio fare and a few records, mostly of the big bands of my parents' generation and a few "light" classical collections. I was simply entranced by the church pipe organ. The highlight of going to church for me was hearing it and then watching the organist play the Postlude each Sunday. Somehow, I knew even then that I would play it someday.

Behnke How old were you when you first started studying the organ seriously?

Stevens Well, of course piano lessons were the first order of business, so I began lessons when I was about 8. By the time I reached middle school, my piano teacher moved away, and although I tried several replacement teachers, we couldn't find a suitable one close by. By that time, my family had switched churches and was attending a mission Lutheran church with a horrible electronic spinet organ that I didn't like at all. Then, an extraordinary thing happened: when our church organist became pregnant, she drafted 12-year-old me to take over for her while she was on maternity leave! She gave me a few lessons on managing the two half-keyboards and 12 pedal sticks, and away she went. I still remember how she always played with the "Full Tremulant" on, but I knew this didn't sound like the pipes in a real organ, so I refused to use it! Cheeky me. Somehow, I coped with playing the hymns, service music, and accompaniments for the tiny choir, and my voluntaries were mostly piano pieces played without pedals. The pastor was astonished but trusting and ultimately delighted, and my parents were quite proud. Meanwhile, I had discovered that an Episcopal church several blocks down the street from our house had a two-manual pipe organ with a full pedalboard. Although in hindsight it was really a poor unit organ, I thought at the time that it was fantastic. A good acoustic helped. So at age 13, I asked for organ lessons. A good teacher was found who was willing to teach me on this nearby pipe organ, and furthermore, the church was glad to let me practice every weekday for free! It seemed that my organ study was meant to be, and I was in organ heaven with a pipe organ in a good acoustic at my disposal after school every day.



Behnke Who are some of the most influential teachers with whom you have studied?

Stevens Anton Heiller was the most influential musician with whom I studied. His talent and insights were legendary in Europe and America when I went to study with him in Vienna in 1975, and I absorbed more from him than any teacher I'd ever had. Fortunately, he was delighted to let his students sit in on each others' lessons, so in addition to my own weekly lesson, I had countless semi-private "masterclasses" with him during those two years, thus becoming thoroughly familiar with his perspectives. But one learns valuable things from every teacher, well-known or not, and I recall and pass on to my students specific things I learned from all my teachers, including my choral teachers.

Behnke What are some of the more interesting venues in which you have played?

Stevens As the founder and director of the annual Historic Organ Study Tours to Europe for the past 25 years, I feel like I've played every truly outstanding, exceptional pipe organ in Europe. Of course, I haven't, but it does feel that way. And I've been fortunate to have played many top-notch organs in the U.S. Quite often, the most famous venues don't have the most outstanding organs, and the fabulous organ gems are frequently found in places normal tourists never go. That being said, I've greatly enjoyed playing absolutely incredible organs in Roskilde Cathedral in Denmark, Our Saviour's Church in Copenhagen, Grundtvig's Church in Copenhagen, the Bavo Church in Haarlem Holland, Saint Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, the Catholic Cathedral in Pittsburg, Wichita State University, and Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, among others.

Behnke Who are some of your favorite modern composers?

Stevens I believe two of the best composers for the organ today are two women -- French Canadian Rachel Laurin and my colleague at the University of Richmond, Mary Beth Bennett. They write idiomatic music that is pithy, well-crafted, gratifying, and attractive -- the kind of music you'd like to hear again.

Behnke What pieces will you be playing for us?

Stevens I call this program “The Leipzig Connection” because all of the composers represented were influenced by the history and culture, particularly the musical culture, of that great German city. Some were born there; some attended the city’s university and/or music conservatory; some lived and worked there for a period of time; and some visited for the purpose of engaging in music-related activities. I’ll play works by J. S. Bach, of course, J. G. Walther, Krebs, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Danish composer Niels Gade, Brahms, Reger, and Hugo Distler.

Celia Langston POE

The Los Angeles POE was definitely one of the best experiences of my life. I was extremely nervous to go; it was my first time really being on my own, and not knowing anyone. The members of the Los Angeles AGO did a phenomenal job at putting together our itinerary. Each day, we had the opportunity to visit and play multiple pipe organs, make friends, have lessons from great teachers and organists, learn about all sorts of music and how we can better play the organ in religious meetings and recitals. I especially enjoyed going to the Walt Disney Concert Hall at 2 a.m. to play that organ; it was really my favorite experience out of the whole week. I also enjoyed learning how to play better in church meetings, and how to adapt pieces to the organ. I really appreciated being able to play on so many different pipe organs; overall, it was an amazing experience.

POE Scholarship Recital

The Southern Nevada Chapter of the American Guild of Organists sponsored five students at Pipe Organ Encounters in Los Angeles and Phoenix this summer. Three of the five students, Celia Langston, Everett Minnick and Ashlyn Henriod presented a recital on the Moller organ, Sunday, September 16, 2018 at the Las Vegas Stake Center on West Charleston at 6:00 p.m. Each student commented on their POE experience and expressed appreciation for the Chapter’s financial assistance. Langston performed *Shall We Meet Beyond the River*, arranged by Richard Elliott; Minnick played *Prelude in F* by J.S. Bach and *Adagio* from 4th Sonata by Mendelssohn. Henriod performed *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*, arranged by James Kasen.



An Interview with our District Convener, Kristin Holton Prouty

What is the role of a District Convener?

The District Convener is the person bridging the gap between the local chapter leadership and the Regional Councillor. Especially in our West Region, which covers the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Oregon, and Washington as well as Korea, Shanghai, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Sydney, Australia, it is very helpful for the Regional Councillor to have District Conveners who have a closer connection with the individual chapters. The Regional Councillor nominates candidates for the position, and National Council approves them. District Conveners may serve up to three two-year terms. As District Convener I try to be a resource to the deans and other chapter leadership and have tried to foster a sense of community within the district. I especially enjoy visiting the chapters and attending events, and I am often invited to install new officers. I have been fortunate during my two terms to have attended the 80th anniversary of the Southern Arizona chapter, the 70th anniversary of the Central Arizona chapter, and the 50th anniversary of the Southern Nevada chapter!



Kristin Holton Prouty

Tell us about yourself and what led you to this position?

I began my organ infatuation when I heard the organ at West Point's Cadet Chapel when I was 5 years old, but I didn't begin studying organ until I went to college. I had the privilege of studying on several Brombaugh instruments in college, and that interest in tracker/early instruments led me to go to Austria to study for two years. Following Austria, I moved to Arizona in 2007 to attend Arizona State University. As many organists have done, I fell in love with the southwest and have continued to live here after completing my degrees. I became involved with the Central Arizona chapter as a student, and when I was nearing the end of my DMA I became first sub-dean and then dean. It has been so wonderful getting to know organists from near and far by attending conventions and networking through social media. Knowing that there are others out there doing similar things and having similar struggles and successes makes the sometimes lonely role of organist seem less isolated.

Has this position always been a part of the AGO structure?

As with most things, change happens. The first records I am aware of show the position of District Convener beginning in 1988. Before that there were State Chair positions. Just as National restructured the re-

gions recently, districts have also changed as chapters dissolved or formed. Technological and infrastructure advances have made it much easier for people to remain connected across greater distances, resulting in fewer but larger chapters, districts and regions. Below are the names of those who have served through the years.

Grand Canyon District Conveners:

Helen Donaldson (CAZAGO): 1988-91, 1991-93
Janet Tolman (SAAGO): 1993-95, 1995-97, 1997-99
Judy Riden (CAZAGO): 1999-2001, 2001-03, 2003-05
Paul Hesselink (SNAGO): 2005-07, 2007-09, 2009-11
Mark Ramsey (CAZAGO): 2011-13, 2013-15
Arizona/Nevada District Convener:
Kristin Holton Prouty (CAZAGO): 2015-17, 2017-19

What does the future look like?

Bright! This summer I attended several events that were part of the Pipe Organ Encounters hosted by the Central Arizona chapter. Students from all over, including many from the Southern Nevada chapter, made it very obvious that love for the organ and quality music will continue on through future generations. The goal of the American Guild of Organists is “to advance the cause of organ and choral music, and to promote their understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment,” and I am excited to continue to be a part of the AGO as it grows and evolves in the ever-expanding world of the 21st century!

Registration Workshop

There will be a Registration Workshop on Saturday, January 12, 2019 from 9:00 A.M. to 11:15 A.M. The workshop entitled “Registration on the modern organ” will be presented by Robert Tall on the new Rodgers organ located at The Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer, 55 E Reno Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89119



Robert Tall



Spring Mountain Stake
6601 West Twain
Las Vegas, NV 89103



The Southern Nevada Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is pleased to join with the members of the Spring Mountain Stake to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wicks Organ, Opus 5760. The building was built in 1978 and the organ was installed early in 1979. This is another in the long line of Wicks organs installed by Dick Mitchell. It is the fourth oldest organ in the Las Vegas valley to still be playing in its original place of installation.



GREAT

Principal	8
Gedeckt	8
Gemshornm (SW)	8
Praestant	4
Rohrflute (SW)	4
Blockflute	2
Mixture	III
Trumpette (SW)	8

SW to GT 16
SW to GT 8
SW to GT 4

SWELL

Rohrflute	8
Gemshorn	8
Gemshorn Celeste	8
Koppelflute	4
Principal	2
Quinte	1-1/3
Trumpette	8

SW to SW 16
SW Unison Off
SW to SW 4

PEDAL

Subbass	16
Lieblich Gedeckt	16
Principal (GT)	8
Rohrflute (SW)	8
Choral Bass (GT)	4
Trumpette	16
Trumpette (SW)	8

GT to Ped 8
SW to Ped 8

Five combination pistons, duplicated by toe studs and three levels of memory.

Trinity Wall Street Offerings

by Bruce Behnke

There are two exceptional series available on the web from Trinity Wall Street. The first one is called **Bach + One**.

<https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/music-arts/2018-2019/bach-plus-one>

The first run though of all the Bach cantatas has just finished and the Trinity Wall Street Choir under the direction of Julian Wachner is beginning their second run through of the cycle. Starting on October 15 and continuing most Mondays they will present every Bach cantata in the BWV order or the order in which they were first published. The plus one refers to the fact that a second vocal work will also be presented. It will be written by a composer that either influenced Bach or was influenced by Bach. In addition to the vocal works there will also be organ solos.

The second one is called **Pipes at One**

<https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/music-arts/2018-2019/pipes-at-one>

Starting on September 21 is a series of organ recitals on the Noack organ that was recently moved from the Church of the Redeemer, Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, and installed into the historic 1802 Geib/England case of St Paul's Chapel, part of Trinity Parish, New York City. Previous recitals are available online plus you can view the list of future recitals. Pictures and stop list of the Noack organ

<https://www.noackorgan.com/opus/161/>



David Haas in Concert & Workshop



One of the most prolific composers of Catholic music will be visiting Las Vegas on Friday, February 21 and Saturday, February 22 at St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church in Las Vegas. David Haas, the composer of many songs including "You Are Mine," "Blest Are They," "We Are Called," and "We Have Been Told" will be presenting a concert of his music and life experiences as a Catholic musician, composer, and clinician at a special Friday night concert. Tickets will be going on sale in November. On Saturday, Mr. Haas will be presenting a workshop on using music as a way to develop one's relationship with Christ. This workshop, though geared toward Catholics, is open to people of all faiths as the message is universal.

The Saturday workshop will be held free of charge. All events will take place at St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church, which is located at 6350 North Fort Apache Road (corner of Fort Apache and Centennial). For more information, please contact the Director of Music and our guild's Sub-Dean, Bill Freeman.

Fall Social Potluck and Officer Installation



About 30 people attended our fall potluck social on September 7(delete comma) at the home of Paul Hesselink. Rev. Mike Link led us in an installation service of chapter officers which included the singing of the hymn “If thou but trust in God to guide thee,” accompanied by our host on his Steven Cook house organ. Officers present included, Front Row: Paul Hesselink, Recital Series; David Dorway, Treasurer; Steve Wright, Dean; Bill Freeman, Sub Dean; Second Row: Rev. Mike Link; David Zechman, Member-at-Large; and Kathi Kolman, secretary. Unable to be present were Jim Kasen and Christian Lentz, Board Members-at-Large, and Bruce Behnke, Newsletter editor and Webmaster

Pump Organ for Sale



Ornate Antique Lyon and Healy pump organ for sale. Has electric wheel in back so no need to pump. On wheels so it is easy to move. My cancer has returned so I'm selling some of my instruments. Also have a victrola with 78s.

If interested, please contact Kathy Kavanaugh 702 340.3030



We are busy preparing
for your arrival!

The Orange County Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
is thrilled to host the 2019 West Region Convention.

The convention website <http://www.agowest2019.com> is up and running
with the convention schedule, artists, venues, how to donate, and much more.

Hotel Irvine

You will be pleased with the convention hotel and the many amenities offered. Just 1.5 miles from John
Wayne Airport, with free shuttle provided
on the quarter and three-quarter hour.

The Irvine Transportation Center (train station – 15215 Barranca Parkway) is served by Metrolink (the Orange
County and Inland County-Orange County lines) and Amtrak (the Pacific Surfliner).

Hotel Irvine is approximately eight miles from the
Transportation Center with cab or Uber approximately \$20-25.

Arrival at the hotel will be a breeze.

Hotel Irvine provides a resort atmosphere
that will allow for relaxing while you enjoy the convention.

Join us in 2019!

Alicia Adams

Convention Coordinator

info@agowest2019.com

Christ Church Episcopal Presents
VETERANS DAY SPECTACULAR

featuring
TWIN PEAKS BRASS
and
DR. DAVID L. DEFFNER
performing on the largest pipe organ in Nevada



Patriotic music
J. S. Bach's Toccata & Fugue in D minor,
Audience participation

Sunday, November 11th, 3:00 pm

Christ Church Episcopal
2000 S. Maryland Parkway

The \$15 suggested donation will be split 50/50 between the concert series and the Invictus Games Foundation (for Wounded Warriors). All are welcome regardless of donation! Call 702-735-7655 for more information.


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