

Nunc Dimittis

William Robert "Bob" Brittenham died March 17 in New York City. He was 82. Born in Rock Island, Illinois, he graduated from Augustana College in Rock Island, and earned a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1952. He worked as a computer programmer in Milwaukee and later for IBM in Poughkeepsie, where he received numerous awards, including a corporate award for creating and designing the system programming language PL/S.

Mr. Brittenham began playing the organ at age 14, and held positions at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Our Savior Lutheran Church in Fishkill, New York, and First Presbyterian Church in Poughkeepsie, New York, for which he compiled a ten-CD musical history, along with other organ and choral recordings. He served in the 33rd Seabee Battalion in the South Pacific during World War II, playing the organ for church services while on the island of Peleliu. He is survived by his wife Marjorie Lorraine, five children, nine grandchildren, brother Rex Rollins Brittenham, and nieces and nephews.

Mary Sherman Caskey died on March 20 at the age of 83, in Cornwall, New York. Born in Fremont, Ohio, she received a music degree from Oberlin College, and also attended Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, where she studied organ with her friend and mentor Claire Coci.

Mrs. Caskey served as organist at Bantam Episcopal Church in Bantam, Connecticut, Moulton Memorial Baptist Church in Newburgh, New York, St. John's Episcopal Church in Cornwall, and at Grace Episcopal Church in Middletown, New York for 30 years, where she created the Festival Brass Group, with whom she presented a concert at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. She was active in local organizations, including with Meals on Wheels and the local AGO chapter. Mary Caskey is survived by her son Jeremy Carroll, his wife Anne, and son Tyler.

Bess Hieronymus, 85 years old, died March 22 in San Antonio, Texas. Professor emerita in the University of Texas at San Antonio Department of Music, she had developed and spearheaded the organ studies program there.

Born in Temple, Texas, she began playing piano at age three and had her first organist position at age twelve. She earned a bachelor of music degree in piano from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, which awarded her an honorary doctorate in humanities in 1995, and a master's degree in music from Smith College, where she wrote her thesis under the direction of Alfred Einstein. She earned a DMA in organ performance and musicology from the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Hieronymus served on the faculty of Trinity University, San Antonio

College, and for over 30 years at the University of Texas at San Antonio, the first woman to be appointed full professor there. She built a nationally known organ department and supervised the installation of the 1982 Casavant organ, named the Bess Hieronymus Pipe Organ in 2004, in the school's Recital Hall. The Bess Hieronymus Scholarship Endowment in Organ and an eponymous faculty endowment were established in her honor. Dr. Hieronymus also organized the William Hall Pipe Organ Competition in San Antonio.

She concertized in many countries and served as organist-choir director at Madison Square Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, Alamo Heights Methodist Church, Temple Beth-El, and at the First Presbyterian Church, where she served for over 27 years and was named organist emerita. Her numerous awards include the Yellow Rose of Texas Education Award, and a resolution from the Texas House of Representatives for her musical contributions to the State of Texas. Bess Hieronymus was preceded in death by her parents and older brother.

David Ramsey died January 17 in Memphis, Tennessee. He was 68 years old. He made his debut as an organist at age nine, at Woodbine Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Nashville. He received a bachelor of music degree in 1961 from Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College), and a master of sacred music degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, studying with Vernon deTar and Alec Wyton. He joined the faculty of Rhodes College as accompanist and associate conductor of the college choir, and was named Distinguished Service Professor of Music in 2001. He served as director of music-organist at Holy Communion (Episcopal), St. John's United Methodist, and First Presbyterian churches in Memphis.

A 50-year member of the AGO, he served as dean of the Memphis chapter five times. A skilled improviser, Mr. Ramsey also played for the local professional baseball team, often quoting hymns during his playing if he knew a church group was in attendance. David Ramsey is survived by his sister Gayla Sutton, brother-in-law Barry Sutton, nephew Eric, and aunt, Charlene Turner.

Rev. Dr. Jaroslav J. Vajda, composer, hymn writer, and musician, died on May 10. A Lutheran pastor, Rev. Vajda was named editor of Concordia Publishing House's *This Day* magazine in 1963, and served Concordia as book developer and editor from 1971 until his retirement in 1986. Vajda was the author of over 200 hymn texts, including "Now the Silence," "God of the Sparrow," "Christ Goes Before," "Go, My Children, with My Blessing," and "Now the Silence." He also made effective translations from Slavic languages. His hymns and translations can be found in nearly 50 hymnals of various Christian denominations worldwide. Pastor Vajda was named a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. The complete collection of his hymns, *Sing Peace, Sing Gift of Peace*,



Jaroslav J. Vajda

was published in 2003. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Louise, two daughters and two sons, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Here & There

The American Guild of Organists has released *Conversations and Lessons with David Craighead*. In this new CD, David Craighead shares his insights in an interview and in recordings of his lessons. Professor of organ and chair of the organ department at the Eastman School of Music from 1955 to 1992, he has been the recipient of many awards throughout his career. The CD contains an extensive interview led by Robert F. Troeger, who guides Craighead through a series of questions about his career as an organist and teacher. As Judith Hancock plays *The World Awaiting the Saviour* (Dupré) and *Jesus Christus unser Heiland* (Bach), Dr. Craighead's discussion touches on teaching methods, score preparation, touch, and other topics of interest for organists at different levels of proficiency. \$10; <www.ago.org>.

Michael's Music Service announces the publication of new restorations of organ sheet music. *Festival Prelude* introduces a choral theme from Palestrina by Dudley Buck. This piece was first published in 1896. "Victory," sung to "The Strife Is O'er," was known to Americans from *The Hymnal* (Episcopal), 1874. *Canto Popolare* by Edward Elgar is a transcription by Alfred Brewer of a song called "In Moonlight," an arrangement that Elgar made of a melody from his tone poem, "In the South."

Coronation March by Edward Elgar was also transcribed by Brewer. Before he was knighted by George V, Elgar wrote the *Coronation March* (organ and orchestra) for the coronation of George V in 1911. Brewer transcribed it for organ alone, including as much of the original as possible. For information (and to vote on future pieces to be restored): <http://michaelsmusicsservice.com>.

Paraclete Press announces the release of a new recording of Messiaen organ works in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth. *Olivier Messiaen: The Mystical Colors of Christ* features works based on events from the life of Christ, including selections from *Meditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte-Trinité*, *L'Ascension*, *La Nativité du Seigneur*, and *Messe de la Pentecôte*, performed by organists David Chalmers, James E. Jordan, and SharonRose Pfeiffer, on the E. M. Skinner organ at the Church of the Transfiguration in Orleans, Massachusetts. For information: <www.paracletepress.com>.

The St. Gregory Society announces a new recording, *Solemn Mass of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross*, on the JAV label (R-309, \$20.00). The CD was recorded in thanksgiving for the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI and the *motu proprio*, which went into effect on the Feast of the Holy Cross of this year. The Mass setting is Palestrina's seldom-recorded *Missa Sacerdos et Pontifex*, with two motets—*Nos autem gloriamur* and *O Sacrum Convivium*—by the same composer, and the Gregorian Mass Propers of the Feast of the Holy Cross. For further information: <www.pipeorgancds.com>.

Foley-Baker, Inc. has removed Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1389 for complete reconditioning at their Tolland, Connecticut shops. The organ's 24-rank specification is original and will remain unaltered. Work will take nine months. Fred Guzowsky is the interim director of music for St. John the Evangelist Church, Hingham, Massachusetts. For information: 800/621-2624; <www.foleybaker.com>.

Allen Organ Company of Macungie, Pennsylvania, provided instruments for the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States in April. Allen provided a selection of large three and four-manual instruments for the three major public appearances by the pontiff: April 17, at the new Nationals Park in Washington, D.C.; April 19, on the grounds of St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York; and April 20, at Yankee Stadium in New York City.

Johannus Orgelbouw bv announces a new website for its Monarke series, <www.monarke.org>. The site (whose content is also available in art book form) focuses on the Monarke instruments, including details on their features such as Real Time Sampling®, Multi Sampling®, and Long Loop Samples®.

Johannus also has produced a DVD, *Johannus in Concert Part II*, featuring works played by David Hart, Rolf Kunz, Klaas Jan Mulder, Joseph Nolan, and Pierre Pincemaille. Johannus's newest organ series is the Sweelinck and Rembrandt Platinum Edition, an instrument that comprises three basic organs (Romantic, Symphonic, and Baroque), each of which encompasses Classical, Solo, Hymn, and Trio intonations. For information: <inform@johannus.com>.

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