

Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival

Sixteenth Anniversary

By David Spicer

What a treat to hear such wonderfully prepared young organists at the Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival in September! It speaks well of them developing their God-given talents, and of their excellent teachers. That, combined with wonderful organ music, set the stage for the sixteenth annual festival, held at First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, Connecticut. We are grateful to be able to encourage young organists with this competition. We had some wonderful applicants who sent in outstanding CDs, and we thank Charles Callahan for serving as the screening judge for these applications. Judges for this year's festival were Diane Meredith Belcher, Cherry Rhodes, and David Hurd.

On Friday evening, September 6, the traditional opening concert was held. The service/choral portions were played by this writer: *Andante Espressivo* (Sonata in G Major, op. 28), Elgar; *Psalm 150*, Franck; *Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation* (CHRIST CHURCH), Dirksen; *Kyrie* (from *Messe Solennelle*, op. 16), Vierne; *He Comes to Us* (text by Albert Schweitzer), Marshall; *Go Ye Into All the World*, Wetzler; *Let Heaven Rejoice* (ROCK HARBOR), (text by Hal M. Helms), tune by Alan MacMillan.

At the Friday evening opening concert, each of the judges played selections of their own choosing on the Austin organ. A video camera, via closed-circuit television, projected a view of the organists in the balcony onto a screen downstairs. The selections: *Salix* (from *Plymouth Suite*), Whitlock; *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor*, op. 7, no. 3, Dupré, played by Diane Meredith Belcher; *Variations sur un Noël bourguignon*, Fleury; *Toccata in B Minor*, Gigout, played by Cherry Rhodes; *Arioso and Finale*, Hurd, played by David Hurd.

Saturday morning, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, the high school division finalists played the required repertoire. At 2 p.m. the young professional division finalists were heard. All finalists were required to play the hymn tune ST. THOMAS (WILLIAMS).

The high school division finalists and the works they played were:

Anna Pan—Bach, *Prelude and Fugue in G Major*, BWV 541; Widor, *Andante Sostenuto* (from *Symphonie Gothique*); Demessieux, *Te Deum*, op. 11; hymn tune, AR HYD Y NOS.

Bryan Dunnewald—Bach, *Prelude and Fugue in D Major*, BWV 532; Widor, *Adagio* (from *Symphony No. 2*, op. 13); Duruflé, *Fugue* (from *Prélude et Fugue sur le nom d'Alain*, op. 7); hymn tune, AR HYD Y NOS.

Alexander Pattavina—Bach, *Fantasia and Fugue in C Minor*, BWV 537; Hancock, *Air for Organ*; Widor, *Meditation* (from *Symphony No. 1*, op. 13); hymn tune, AR HYD Y NOS.

The Young Professional Division finalists and the works they played were:

Alcée Chriss III—Bach, *Trio Sonata No. II in C Minor*, BWV 526; Franck, *Choral No. 1 in E Major*; Duruflé, *Toccata* (from *Suite*, op. 5); hymn tune, SLANE.

Derek Remeš—Bach, *Prelude and Fugue in G Major*, BWV 541; Franck,



David Spicer, Anna Pan, Alexander Pattavina, Bryan Dunnewald, David Hurd, Diane Meredith Belcher, Cherry Rhodes, Derek Remeš, Patrick Kreeger, Alcée Chriss III, and Linda Henderson (photo by Marla Darius)

Choral No. 3 in A Minor; Langlais, *Fête*; hymn tune, DIADEMATA.

Patrick Kreeger—Bach, *Toccata and Fugue in F Major*, BWV 540; Franck, *Choral No. 3 in A Minor*; Vierne, *Finale* (from *Symphony No. 5*); hymn tune, SLANE.

Later that evening, all finalists and judges had a chance for interaction and discussion over a delicious meal provided by Dana Spicer at Trinity Episcopal Church in Wethersfield.

On Sunday, September 8, the young professional finalists played portions of the 9 a.m. worship service. In addition, we thank Ezequiel Menéndez, who invited the finalists to play portions of the 11 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford. In Wethersfield at 1:30 p.m., a masterclass with the three judges was held. Many topics were covered, and awards were presented.

The judges' decisions

High school division, first place, Bryan Dunnewald from Arvada, Colorado (Interlochen Center for the Arts), student of Thomas Bara; second place (tie): Anna Pan from Burlington, Connecticut, student of Joseph Ripka; and Alexander Pattavina from Stoughton, Massachusetts, student of Philip Jones.

Young professional division, first place, Alcée Chriss III from Oberlin, Ohio (Oberlin Conservatory), student of James David Christie; second place, Derek Remeš from Rochester, New York (Eastman School of Music), student of David Higgs; third place, Patrick Kreeger from New Haven, Connecticut (Yale University), previously a student of Alan Morrison at the Curtis Institute of Music, and currently studying with Martin Jean.

We are grateful to Robert Bausmith and Jill Peters-Gee, M.D., for giving the young professional division first prize of \$3,500; the young professional division second prize of \$1,500 came from several individuals in the First Church family and others; our thanks to Evelyn Lee and Betty Standish for the \$2,000 award for first prize in the high school division, and to Marilyn Austin and family for the



Bryan Dunnewald (seated), first place, high school division, and Alcée Chriss III, first place, young professional division (photo by Dave Gilbert)

high school division second place prize of \$1,000. Thanks go to John Gorton and Richard Pilch for providing \$1,000 for the David Spicer Hymn Playing Award; \$500 was given to high school division finalist Bryan Dunnewald and \$500 to young professional division finalist Derek Remeš.

Special thanks go to Bon Smith and Alex Belair of Austin Organ Service Company of Avon, Connecticut, who were on hand throughout the Saturday competition to offer assistance, should the organ have needed it. (It did not!) We are also grateful to Bon Smith for his gracious gift of maintenance for this festival. Alex Belair and Michael Tanguay of Austin Organ Service Company are the regular curators of this instrument. Thanks to Linda Henderson, festival coordinator and associate, for so ably performing the organizational work that made the festival run smoothly and efficiently.

Churches that allowed their instruments to be used for additional practice included Bethany Covenant Church, Berlin, Olga Ljungholm, minister of music; the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, Ezequiel Menéndez, director of music; Covenant Village of Cromwell,

the Reverend Glen Halvorsen; First Church of Christ, Glastonbury, Angela Salcedo, director of music ministries; First Congregational Church, Southington, John Parsons, minister of music; and Trinity Episcopal Church, Wethersfield, Father Scott Lee, rector.

Our 2013 first-place winners, Bryan Dunnewald and Alcée Chriss III, will perform in recital on Sunday, March 23, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. at the First Church of Christ, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Plans are underway for the 2014 Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival, including the opening concert of the festival on Friday evening, September 5 at 7:30 p.m. Information about the Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival and current requirements for the competition are available by telephone at 860/529-1575, ext. 209, by e-mail at music@firstchurch.org, or by viewing the ASOF website: www.firstchurch.org/ASOF. ■

David Spicer began as Minister of Music and the Arts at First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1986. In 1996, he and Dr. Harold Robles founded the Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival. Spicer is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Dr. Alexander McCurdy, and the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

