

ster Choir College, a bachelor's degree in composition and theory from Central Michigan University, and is currently pursuing a DMA at Michigan State University. Rice has won several prizes for his compositions, including awards from Chanticleer, the Kansas University Choral Society, SibeliusMusic.com, the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Central Michigan University, Westminster Choir College, and others.

First Congregational Church dates to 1868. The church's first quartet was formed in 1882. Over the years, musicians including Duke Ellington and Virgil Fox have performed in the sacred space. The sanctuary boasts a three-manual, 70-rank organ containing historic pipes from Skinner Opus 751; it is presently under renovation. The chapel houses an unaltered two-manual, nine-rank pipe organ built by the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company, Inc. (Opus 1327). For information: 989/754-6565; <www.fcscaginaw.org>.

## Nunc Dimittis

**Paul Emerson Opel** died March 1 in Rutland, Vermont. He was 55. He attended Bennington College and earned degrees in music and Russian; following graduate studies in library science, he served as Bennington's music librarian from 1988–95. During that time he also served as organist for the Old First and First Baptist churches, and managed the Sage City Orchestra. In 2002 Opel became the choir accompanist, and later director of the applied music program, at Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont. He was also an adjunct professor of music at Castleton State College. Opel served as organist for Poultney Methodist and Federated Church of Arlington. He was a member of the Organ Historical Society and the Vermont AGO chapter, which he served as dean from 2004 to 2008. Paul Emerson Opel is survived by his wife Jennifer (Baker), his parents, two sisters, two stepsons, and an adopted son.

**George H. Shorney**, who was president (1970–1991) and chair (1992–2001) of Hope Publishing, died on March 31 in Naples, Florida, after a three-year battle with lung cancer. Born in 1931 in Oak Park, Illinois, Shorney served two years in the U.S. Navy after graduating from Denison University. He married Nancy Leith in 1955, and three years later went to work for Hope Publishing—a business owned by his family. He was highly respected in the church music publishing world, and he served four terms as president of the Church Music Publishers Association. He became a fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, and he received an honorary doctorate from Westminster Choir College in 2002. His memorial service was celebrated at Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, on April 17.

## Here & There

**Augsburg Fortress** announces the release of new music for organ: Michael Bedford, *Rejoice, O Earth—Organ Improvisations on World Songs* (ED018844); Teresa Bowers, editor, *Pippings for Flute and Organ* (ED015843); Edwin T. Childs, *Communion Hymns for Organ, Volume 2* (ED018842); Benjamin Culli, *Praise the One—Ten Organ Impressions for Worship, Vol. 3* (ED018846); Emma Lou Diemer, *Organ Voluntaries on Sainly Tunes* (ED018847); Charles Lenz, *All Are Welcome—Hymn Variations for Organ* (ED018843); *Organ Plus Anthology—Settings for Organ and Instrument, Volume 1* (settings by Ashdown, Cherwien, Christiansen, Farlee, Harbach, Leavitt, Petrich, Roberts, Stover, Weaver, ED018852); Lynn Peterson, *Thankfulness and Praise—Ten Organ Settings* (ED0188450). For information: <www.augsburgfortress.org>.

**Beckenhorst Press** announces the release of *Praise Ye, the Lord of Hosts—Eleven Organ Solos for the Christmas season*, arr. by Albin C. Whitworth, with settings of well-known carols and arrangements of works by Saint-Saëns and Handel. For information: <www.beckenhorstpress.com>.

**Wayne Leupold Editions** announces new releases: Jeffrey Brillhart, *Breaking Free—Finding a Personal Language for Organ Improvisation through 20th-century French Improvisation Techniques*; Robin Dinda, *Casey at the Bat for organ and narrator*, Op. 26 (Organ Demonstrator No. 45, for middle school and high school students and adults); Denise Lanning, *In the Beginning—An Encounter with Improvisation at the Organ*; Johann Pachelbel, *Complete Works for Keyboard Instruments, Volume VII, Chorale Partitas, and Volume VIII, Arias with Variations*, edited by Michael Belotti; John R. Shannon, *Improvising in Traditional 17th- and 18th-Century Harmonic Style—A Volume Based on the Musical Language of the Mature Baroque*, Volume I and Volume II; Calimerio Soares, *Pequenos Prelúdios Folclóricos (Órgão)*, Volume 2: Books 5, 6, 7, & 8 (A collection of easy preludes based on Brazilian folk songs). For information: <www.wayneleupold.com>.

**Symétrie** (Édition d'Yves Jaffrès) announces a new publication of Michel Corrette's *XII Offertoires* for organ. The *XII Offertoires* add to the five previously known books by Corrette, and fill a gap in Corrette's work for organ between 1756 (the *IIIe Livre d'orgue*) and 1787 (*Pièces pour l'orgue dans un genre nouveau*). Each *Offertoire* (except the last) is named after a particular saint's feast day, and includes the name and date (such as for St. Bernard, August 20; St. Francis, October 4; and St. Cecilia, November 22). Corrette desired to honor the patron saints of religious communities that were the most frequent recipients of organ

books (Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc.). Édition d'Yves Jaffrès; €25; 21 × 29.7 cm, 64 pages, ISMN: 979-0-2318-0538-3. For information: <http://symetrie.com/fr/edition/michel.corrette/xii-offertoires>.

**John-Paul Buzard Pipe Organ Builders** announces the addition of live streaming videos to its website, <www.buzardorgans.com>. The videos coordinate with the "Seamless" theme of Buzard's print advertisements, which appear in *The American Organist*, *THE DIAPASON*, and *Choir and Organ*.

"Seamless Voicing & Tonal Design" demonstrates how seamless crescendos and diminuendos may be accomplished on Buzard organs. "Seamless Engineering & Silent Wind" demonstrates how quiet the wind systems in Buzard organs are and shows how wooden wind trunks weave themselves seamlessly around the building's structure. "Seamless Visual Design" offers the viewer a "Virtual Organ Crawl" through Buzard's Opus 39 organ at Hayes Barton United Methodist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. Views of the organ cases and interior are accompanied by SALZBURG and EVENTIDE. In coming weeks a video highlighting the Buzard company's service department projects and personnel, "Seamless experience," will be uploaded.

## Harpichord News

by Larry Palmer

### Harpichordists in the news

What with the recent multi-million-dollar endowment of the Juilliard School's early music program, New York City steadily increases its profile as an emerging major center for historically informed performance. And that has meant an unusually high *New York Times* profile for our favorite instrument. In case some of our readers have not noticed several recent news or review items of special interest to harpichordists, here are a few favorite citations encountered during the first months of the year.



**Mahan Esfahani** (photo credit: Marco Borggreve, Amsterdam)

In the edition of Tuesday, April 3, 2012 (page C7), critic Vivian Schweitzer's cogent review of **Mahan Esfahani's** Sunday afternoon recital at the Frick Collection was illustrated with a dramatic chiaroscuro photograph of the artist about to take his seat at the spotlighted harpsichord. Schweitzer began with a reference to Wanda Landowska, who gave her last public recital on the Frick's stage in 1954, and then mentioned Esfahani's currently unique place among today's solo performers as the first harpichordist to be appointed a New Gen-

eration Artist by the BBC. Mahan's wide-ranging program included music by William Byrd, Scarlatti, Bach's "English" *Suite in G Minor*, and Mel Powell's rarely heard *Recitative and Toccata Percossa* (composed in 1951 for Fernando Valenti). Schweitzer particularly lauded Esfahani's choice of encores: the *Gavotte and Variations in A Minor* by Rameau and William Croft's *Ground in C Minor*. Iranian-born Esfahani studied harpsichord with Elaine Thornburgh at California's Stanford University and with Peter Watchorn in Boston.



**Jory Vinikour** (photo credit: Charles Mize)

In an opera review (Friday March 2, 2012, page C3) the *Times'* chief music critic Anthony Tommasini praised a sensational production of George Frideric Handel's *Rinaldo* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The following sentence certainly captured my attention: "At Armida's word a huge harpsichord descends from above: literally her instrument of enchantment . . ." [For a picture of this faux instrument, see the June 2012 issue of *Opera News*, page 44.]

Later, in the concluding paragraph of his four-column critique, Tommasini wrote:

As Armida, the bright-voiced, fearless soprano Elza van den Heever stole every scene she was in, especially the end of Act II, in which the thwarted Armida sings a fiery aria of defiance, "Vo' far guerra." The music has a virtuosic harpsichord part, played brilliantly by **Jory Vinikour**. On-stage a dancer pretends to play the gargantuan harpsichord. The real battle is between [the soprano], who sends chilling phrases flying, and Mr. Vinikour, in the pit. He wins. A diva put in her place by a harpichordist! Chalk one up for the period-instrument movement.

Hooray and hearty congratulations Jory! At last here is a review truly worth quoting in future publicity releases!

While in Chicago the busy Mr. Vinikour also participated in performances of another rarely heard baroque opera, *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* (*Orpheus's Descent into the Underworld*) by Marc-Antoine Charpentier. *Chicago Tribune* classical music critic John von Rhein wrote that the Haymarket Opera's "able, nine-piece ensemble of violins, recorders, viols and theorbo included the expert contributions of harpichordist Jory Vinikour, moonlighting from his *Rinaldo* duties over at the Lyric." [February 25, 2012]

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Frances Bedford (photo credit: Charles Mize)

North of Chicago, at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, the centerpiece among the new Regional Arts Center spaces for the Music Department is the **Frances Bedford** Concert Hall, named in honor of the well-known Professor Emerita and author. A naming ceremony and gala reception took place as part of the two sold-out December performances of Handel's *Messiah*. On these occasions Bedford played harpsichord continuo, as she has done since 1993 for each of the triennial presentations of this beloved work. Also participating in the orchestra were three additional family members: oboists Monte Bedford and Leslie Outland Michelic, and Matt Michelic, viola.

One of the more memorable declarations from centuries of comments about musical instruments comes from **Giovanni Maria Trabaci**, who wrote in the Preface to Book II of his pieces "per ogni strumenti, ma ispecialmente per i Cimbali e gli Organi" (1615): "the harpsichord is the lord of all instruments in the world, and on it everything may be played with ease." ["il Cimbalo è Signor di tutti l'istromenti del mondo, et in lei si possono sonare ogni cosa con facilità."] While I am not always convinced about the "ease" involved, it does seem quite evident that, despite an ever-increasing overabundance of baroque music played on the piano, the lordly harpsichord continues to garner the attention of writers on music as it provides tonal sustenance and aural enjoyment to its own special audience. ■

Comments and news items are always welcome. Address them to Dr. Larry Palmer, Division of Music, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas 75275. E-mail: <lpalmer@smu.edu>.

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## In the wind . . .

by John Bishop



### Former glories

I love visiting church buildings. I love experiencing all the different forms these buildings can take, reading bulletin boards to try to understand what's going on in the place, meeting with church officials, hearing organs, imagining what organ from our lengthy list of available instruments might best suit a given church. I love the vitality of an active church—gaily decorated classrooms, purposeful rooms for the rehearsing and production of music, busy offices chattering and clattering away. I love the sense that all that activity and dedication of treasure is focused on the public worship of a faith community. And I love meeting with the committees charged with the task of acquiring a new organ for their church, discussing the various forms of the pipe organ, and helping them focus on how to conceive a plan and present it to their superior committees.

Around 2000 when I had just joined the Organ Clearing House, I visited a church building and was greeted by the organist who recognized me and asked, half in jest, "What are you doing here? We love our organ!" I guess my reputation preceded me. It was the first time I realized that I might be considered the Grim Reaper of the pipe organ. I like to think that what I do is bring beautiful vintage organs into church buildings, but I realize how likely it would be that I would be known for the reverse—taking organs out of buildings.

There's a church in suburban Boston that I've known for more than 25 years. In the early 1990's, my firm, the Bishop Organ Company, renovated the organ. We installed new pitman windchests replacing poorly designed and sluggish vented chests, releathered fifteen reservoirs, and installed a solid-state combination action and relay. It's a big organ, more than 60 ranks with nine 16' voices. It's a big church building—the sanctuary seats 1,200. But when we did this extensive project, there were only 75 pledging units—church-finance-speak for "families." The job cost more than \$250,000. Do the math.

Elsewhere in the building there is a dining hall that is served by a big commercial kitchen, all fitted out with the latest restaurant-style appliances from about 1952. Adjacent to the kitchen is a pantry lined with elegant oak-and-glass cabinets filled with what must be a thousand place settings of china, all monogrammed with the church's initials. It must be 40 years since they had a really big dinner, but all the stuff is there and ready to go. This church is doing pretty well. There's a relatively new pastor who is attracting new people, they have a good organist who is inspiring people to join the choir, and in general they are doing quite a bit better than holding their own.

There are many buildings like this around the country. Great big places originally built and furnished to serve huge congregations are now being operated by dwindling groups of faithful who struggle with fuel oil bills approaching \$10,000 per month, and 80-year-old roofs that are starting to fail. It's increasingly common for a congregation to worship in a chapel, parlor, or low-ceilinged fellowship hall during winter months to reduce the heating bill. And it's common for these churches to close.

§

We at the Organ Clearing House have had many experiences with people who are losing their church. We organize the sale of an instrument, and arrive at the building with scaffolding, crates, and packing supplies to start the dismantling of the organ, and an elderly church member comes to us with a photograph of her parents' wedding taking place in front of that organ. Her parents were married and buried, she and her husband were married, her husband was buried, and her children were all baptized, confirmed, and married with that organ.

It's a regular and poignant reminder of how much the church means to people. There have been a number of occasions when people have wept as we start to dismantle an organ.

Last year I was invited to assess the pipe organ in a church building in New Jersey that had closed. It was a grand building with mahogany-fronted galleries surrounding the sanctuary, sweeping stairways, and an organ with more than 80 ranks. This place was unusual in that there had apparently been no planning for the closure. It was two years since the last worship service, and the place looked like a ghost town. It was as if the organist finished the postlude, the ushers turned off the lights, the sexton locked the doors, and no one came back. The last Sunday's music was still on the console music rack. Stuffed choir folders complete with lozenges and Kleenex were piled on the choir room piano. Half finished glasses of water were on the pulpit, there was unopened mail on the secretary's desk, and the usher's station at the rear of the nave was still stocked with bulletins, attendance records, and the neat little packets of biblical drawings and crayons for little children. All it needed was tumbleweeds being buffeted down the center aisle.

Some churches form a "disbandment committee" that is charged with the task of emptying the building, divesting of furnishings, and archiving parish records. I contact the chair of that committee when I want to bring a client to see and hear the organ. There's a myth that says that the nominating committee is the worst duty to draw in a church (or in any non-profit institution) because you get rejected so regularly, but I think the disbandment committee must be worse. Pageant costumes, Christmas decorations, hymnals, folding chairs, classroom supplies, communion sets, Styrofoam coffee cups, choir and acolyte robes, and all the other gear it takes to run a church are piled in corridors, destined for dumpsters. People leaf through it all thinking there must be uses for it, without registering that there are a hundred other churches in the state going through the same thing. You'd think you could sell a nave full of pews in a heartbeat, but more often, a nave full of pews is heartbreaking.



E. & G. G. Hook Opus 283, Woburn, First Congregational

There's a positive side to all this. Often we can save the organ, and when we do it moves to another parish representing a spark from its original home.

Woburn (WOO-burn), Massachusetts is a suburb of Boston with a population of a little under 40,000, located about ten miles north of the city. During the nineteenth century Woburn was a center for the tanning of leather—the high school football team is still called "The Tanners." It's the next town to the north from my hometown, Winchester, and when I was in high school I was assistant organist at the First Congregational Church of Woburn, home of E. & G. G. Hook's Opus 283 built in 1860, with three manuals and 31 speaking stops. I think I had an idea at that young age of how fortunate I was to be playing on such an instrument. William H. Clarke was the organist of that church when the organ was installed, and ten years later he was organist of the First Unitarian Church, just across the town square, when the Hook brothers installed their Opus 553 in 1870. (Note that Hook covered 270 opus numbers in ten years!) A few years after that, William Clarke left the Boston area to establish an organbuilding shop in Indianapolis, taking with him Steven P. Kinsley, the head voicer from the Hook factory.



Die Berliner Hook, Opus 553

Opus 283 is still in its original home. It is still playable, though the parish is not strong enough these days to mount a proper restoration. But Opus 553 is now in Berlin, Germany—widely referred to as "Die Berliner Hook." When the Woburn Unitarian Church closed in 1990, the organ was sold to the church in Berlin, and the proceeds from the sale were saved under the stewardship of former church member Charlie Smith with the intention that they would be used when an appropriate opportunity came along. (See "Hook Opus 553 to Berlin, Germany" by Lois and Quentin Regestein, *THE DIAPASON*, October 2001.)

Stoneham, Massachusetts is the next town east of Woburn, with a population of about 21,000. In 1995 the Stoneham Unitarian Church was closed, and the building was converted into a nursery school. A crew of organ lovers man-