

1980s and mid-1990s. She taught organ privately in the Olympia area and as an adjunct faculty member at St. Martin's College (now University). Edge was one of the founders of the Olympia Masterworks Choral Ensemble, and was founding dean of the Olympia AGO chapter. She performed at national conventions of the Organ Historical Society, and in 1994 produced a CD recording entitled "In Search of the Lost Chord." Jane Edge is survived by her husband Dexter Jr., son Dexter, daughter Anne, and nephew Richard Tinder.

Glenn Earl Schieke, age 56, died on March 30. Raised in the Black Hills of South Dakota, he graduated from the University of Denver in 1977, where he majored in music, biology, and physics. He subsequently earned an MBA and had a lengthy career in advertising. An accomplished performer on French horn, piano, and organ, Schieke played with numerous groups, including the Denver Symphony and Boston Opera Company; he was a composer, an arranger, and accompanist. A longtime member of the First Christian Church of North Hollywood, he served as the church's organist for more than 15 years. Glenn Earl Schieke is survived by his mother, a sister, two brothers, nephews and nieces, a grandnephew, four grandnieces, and his longtime partner, Terry Cole.

John M. "Mac" Sue died March 16 in Olean, New York, at the age of 67. A graduate of Allegheny High School, Sue continued his education at Robert Wesleyan College in Rochester, and SUNY, Fredonia. He served as organist at churches including St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, St. Mary of the Angels Church, and the First Presbyterian Church in Bradford, Pennsylvania, where his wife Barbara serves as choir director. A past dean of the Allegheny AGO chapter, he was a cofounder of the Olean Community Chorus. John M. Sue is survived by his wife, four children, six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, a sister, a brother, three aunts, a sister-in-law, and nieces and nephews.

Here & There

In a three-month crowd-funding campaign, **Fugue State Films** has raised £80,000 for a documentary film about Aristide Cavaillé-Coll and the music he inspired. Support came from 419 funders who gave between £45 and £10,000. As producer, Fugue State Films invested £40,000. Filming starts on September 12 at the church of St. Ouen, Rouen.

To mark the 200th anniversary of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll's birth and the upcoming 150th anniversary of his organ at St. Sulpice, Paris, Fugue State Films will produce the first ever full-length documentary film about the organbuilder's life and work. English organist Gerard Brooks will present it, and famous French organists and scholars will perform and be interviewed. Additional

filmed performances and recordings will be included in a DVD/CD set. Details are at <www.fuguestatefilms.co.uk/cavaill-coll>.

Michael's Music Service announces new sheet music releases. *Legend*, by Gottfried Federlein (1883–1952) features a lyrical, haunting melody; it was written in 1913 and played on the first Wurlitzer in New York City. *In Te, Domine, Speravi*, by Joseph Hathaway (1870–1956), was arranged for organ by Herbert Brewer. *Festival March* by Ralph Kinder (1876–1952) from the 1904 "Three Pieces" combines a march rhythm with a chromatic melody. *Dance of Apprentices and Procession of Mastersingers*, by Richard Wagner, transcribed by Gottfried Federlein, has moderate technical demands.

Also available is a free book, *The Art of Transcribing for the Organ*, by Herbert Ellingford (1876–1966), subtitled "A Complete Textbook for the Organist in Arranging Choral and Instrumental Music." The original publication has been restored, complete with every musical example, for viewing on portable reading devices. For information: <<http://michaelsmusicservice.com/>>.

Randall Dyer & Assoc., Inc., Jefferson City, Tennessee, announces the selection of the firm by Alan Morrison, head of the organ department, to build a new three-manual, 14-rank studio teaching and practice organ for the Curtis Institute of Music, in Philadelphia. The firm's Opus 96 organ will be built in straight design, for correct inner voice leading while practicing music of complex harmonic texture, and will incorporate their standard Blackinton-style slider-and-pallet chests. Contrasting independent choruses will be available on each manual and pedal, and tonal variety will be enhanced by inclusion of flutes in closed, half-closed and open styles, as well as an extended-range Viola Celeste.

The drawknob console will feature ivory keys and a full complement of couplers, multiple piston memory levels, MIDI interface, and built-in record and playback capability. Information: 865/475-9539; <www.rdyerorgans.com>.

Foley-Baker, Inc., of Tolland, Connecticut, has been commissioned to replace the entire relay system of the III/III/85 Wicks organ Opus 6393 at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Cathedral in Rockville Center, New York. The present system has been damaged by repeated lightning strikes. The organ's twin three-manual consoles and its multiple locations throughout the building complicate the updating process. More than 7,000 families worship at the cathedral, making it one of the busiest churches on Long Island. The project includes significant rewiring of the organ and removal and complete rewiring of both consoles. Despite limited access, work is scheduled to take less than five months. Michael Bower and Michael Wustrow are co-directors of the cathedral's music schedule. For information: 800/621-2624; <www.foleybaker.com>.



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Harpichord News

by Larry Palmer



Larry Palmer and Neil Roberts, Fort Burgwin, 1988 (photo by Ann Walton)



WNR with two Roberts & Brazier instruments

Remembering Wm. Neil Roberts (1929–2011)

Contemplating an invitation to play a harpsichord recital in California and not knowing where to find a suitable instrument, I turned to Gustav Leonhardt for some advice. His response, "You can't go wrong with an instrument by William Neil Roberts and Anthony Brazier," led me to that Los Angeles team of harpsichord builders and early music promoters. Diary entries show that my initial query to Roberts and Brazier resulted in their delivering a very fine small Flemish double harpsichord for the 1981 recital at Chapman College, south of the city, as well as an invitation to play the March 8 and 9, 1980 solo recitals for their Harpsichord Center series in Los Angeles.

Thus began an association that resulted in my inviting the more-experienced Neil to help with planning and to share teaching assignments for the first Southern Methodist University Harpsichord Workshop at the school's New Mexico campus, the Fort Burgwin Research Center near Taos. In August 1988 Neil and Tony drove cross-country from the Pacific Coast to "the land of enchantment," transporting not only two of their instruments to complement the ones being brought from Dallas, but also, in a bit of luck, serving as emergency transportation for Neil's student Ed Petron, a participant in that and each subsequent workshop, whose aging Volkswagen had given up the ghost



Neil's hands, May 2010 (photo by K. R. Perl)

outside Albuquerque as he drove eastward, fortuitously noticed by Tony as the Harpsichord Center van nearly sped by the stranded motorist.

The instruments were, indeed, superb. So was the teaching. I particularly recall Neil's inspired connection of the term "fringing" (a non-simultaneity of bass and upper chord notes) with a possible Anglicization of the word "frenching," as indeed this technique for softening certain textures at the harpsichord is a particularly French one. After the lengthy closing recital given by students, Neil shared some memories of similar workshop recitals past, including the daunting recall of an already very long California program that morphed into a marathon when the final player decided she wanted to play the entire *Goldberg*

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Roberts & Brazier Franco-Flemish harpsichord, 1988 (photo by Beth Zucchini)

Variations—with repeats! Both from experience and this anecdote we learned to put strict time limits in place for such closing events!

Invited back for the next summer offering at Fort Burgwin, Neil was sidelined by an attack of kidney stones only days before the event, but hoped to be able to travel. It was not to be: an early morning call from Tony on day one of the summer program relayed the bad news that they would be unable to make the trip. I was fortunate to find Susan Ferré as an immediate replacement, but with the largest enrollment of all the seventeen workshops, and only the two harpsichords that we had brought from Dallas, this extremely wet week proved a challenge for all of us. The Roberts-Brazier duo was sorely missed.

Neil and Tony did have one subsequent summer outing at the Fort during the first segment of a two-week workshop scheduled in July 1990. I did not observe Neil's insightful interaction with the small group of students, since he had made it clear that he did not want me to attend his classes, but I remember the sensitive French works on a duo flute and harpsichord recital with Tony as the highlight of the week's faculty concert offerings. I had assumed that most of the students would find the opportunity—to learn both from Neil's teaching and from a second week in which Susan Ferré would coach them in continuo playing with her Texas Baroque Ensemble artists—an irresistible package deal. But, in reality, half of the class enrolled in either one or the other week, meaning that our expenses doubled while our tuition income basically halved, and we closed the books deeply "in the red." A double session was not offered again.

The national convention of the American Guild of Organists was held in Los Angeles in summer 2004. It served as a focal point around which to organize pre- and post-meeting stays with Neil and Tony, memorable both for the vocal interjections of Gus, their parrot, and for the opportunity to observe Neil's new interest in non-harpsichord-related painting. During our visit Neil was frequently to be found in the studio, working on his evocative watercolors. We departed Burbank's Bob Hope Airport that July with new purchases for the Palmer-Putman art collection: the framed sketch of a friend relaxing with his three dachshunds, and a limited edition signed photograph of Neil's *Portrait of Dr. Bell*, violinist Joshua Bell's psychologist father Alan, a work that continues to elicit strong reactions from those who see it. If the eyes truly are the gateway to the soul, Neil's



WNR's *Portrait of Dr. Bell* (2002)

concentration on the upper part of Dr. Bell's face is certainly apt, striking, and unexpected. The unique 2002 painting belongs to Los Angeles collectors Kay and Jack Lachter; thus, the rest of us, including Dr. Bell's family, must remain satisfied with a print edition of ten numbered examples.

Neil was born in Iowa on June 2, 1929. He succumbed to lymphoma in Los Angeles on April 7, 2011. Concerts had taken him to central Europe, Taiwan, Tahiti, Mexico, and the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, in addition to the continental United States. Memorable career moments included frequent appearances on American Public Media, especially those on Bill McLaughlin's "Saint Paul Sunday."

Roberts' musical growth was influenced by harpsichordists Alice Ehlers,

Ralph Kirkpatrick, Gustav Leonhardt, and the many artists sponsored by the Southern California Baroque Association, of which he was president. His solo harpsichord recordings covered a wide range of composers and styles: Byrd to Bach, Scott Joplin rags ("even before they were discovered by E. Power Biggs," Neil pointed out), and his beloved French repertoire, including period transcriptions from Lully and other solo keyboard works by D'Anglebert, played stylishly on two then-recent Roberts & Brazier instruments for a 1981 Nonesuch disc. Obviously, it is extremely rare for a professional player to build his own harpsichord. (I can recall only the young Tom Pixton doing a similar thing.)

Penning a laconic dedication on my complimentary copy of that long-playing record, Neil wrote, "I'd better get a good review!"

Accomplished, dear friend!

Finally, to complete an arch form of associations, my May 2011 harpsichord recital in Santa Rosa, California, was played on the 1988 Franco-Flemish double instrument belonging to Concert Artist Cooperative founder and director Beth Zucchini. It seemed appropriate to add one of the most intensely moving commemorative pieces from the 17th-century solo repertoire to this program, Louis Couperin's ineffably beautiful F-major *Tombeau de*

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Gilbert Martinez, with Neil Roberts and Ann Walton in the background, Joni Mitchell reclining, Fort Burgwin, 1988 (photo by Clyde Putman)

In the wind . . .

by John Bishop



Stephen Tharp at the Kotschmar Organ

We're havin' a heat wave

It's hot. I'm writing in mid-July from the coast of Maine, where we usually enjoy cool ocean breezes. But records are being set. It was 98 degrees in Portland yesterday and it's 98 degrees at home today. I said ocean, didn't I. That means humidity. A few minutes ago, the meteorologist on the radio said the humidity is "about as high as it can go." Like most desk-days, I'm talking on the phone with people all over the country, and everyone says it's terrible today. Electric utilities are limiting power even though they're dealing with record high demands. Hospital emergency rooms are busier than normal. Several of the church offices I tried to call today had messages on their phones saying they had closed early in order to save energy.

For fun (or longing) I looked at the website of the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to learn that while it's 98 here, it's in the high 60s in Nome, Alaska and around 70 in Helena, Montana. But it's 90 in Detroit, 103 in New York City and 104 in Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania.

All those organs sounding terrible

Many churches have summer schedules during which the organ isn't used much—a good thing, because when the weather gets hot, the pitch of flue pipes rises dramatically, while the reeds stay right where they are. I advise clients (and resist temptation myself) not to raise the pitch of reeds in the summer to match the rest of the organ. That's how tuning scrolls get wrecked—you roll them down "into the quick," as if you were trying to get a carp out of a sardine can, to match the pitch of the flues. Then in the winter when you try to get the reeds back to usual pitch the scrolls are torn. When a tuning scroll is damaged and "leaks," the speech of the pipe is compromised.

If your church has "Church School Sunday" on the first Sunday in June, then summer services in the air-conditioned chapel (pretty common in New England Protestant churches), you're fine. I played for almost twenty years at

a church with exactly this schedule. It was a delight because there was no choir in the summer, and the services were an hour earlier. I was active in a sailing club in those days and we ran races every Sunday, so it was handy to be finished with church at 10 a.m. We moved the church's wonderful piano from the sanctuary to the chapel each year so I could play on a "real" instrument for the summer—a great opportunity to keep my fingers around my piano repertory. The permanent instrument in the chapel was an aging and low-end electronic organ. Something about it meant that every A# in all the "stops" was out of tune and the dealer/technician said it couldn't be fixed. There was a sprinkler head above it that never leaked.

The problem with this summer schedule at my church involved the huge and popular Sheraton resort nearby. A couple would book one of the banquet rooms for their wedding reception and ask the wedding consultant if there was a pretty church nearby. We had dozens of weddings. Not bad for the pocketbook, but couples who "booked" their weddings because ours was a "pretty church nearby" were often less devout than we might have wished and came with priorities counter to many of the church's teachings. 'Nuff said.

I might be scheduled to play ten or twelve weddings in July and August. The church had a large and attractive electro-pneumatic organ with plenty of reeds, and any organist knows how important reeds are to the standard wedding repertory. Think of all those eighteenth-century English trumpet tunes or that ubiquitous Mendelssohn march without reeds. If it was 80 degrees or less, the organ sounded okay. Much above that and the reeds couldn't be used. And I would not tune them in temperatures higher than chamber temperatures at Christmas or Easter, when the furnace was running for days on end and the organ got good and hot. That was the limit. I'm not willing to wreck \$75,000 worth of reeds for a wedding march. On a re-

ally hot summer Sunday you can play a perfectly respectable worship service without using the reeds.

§

It's a privilege for me to serve on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Kotschmar Organ (FOKO) in Portland, Maine. It's one of two instruments in the country with a municipal organist on the bench (Ray Cornils in Portland and Carol Williams in San Diego, California) and it's a popular beloved civic icon. It was built by Austin in 1912—the centennial year is coming up—and has 100 stops and five manuals. The people of FOKO work diligently to maintain the instrument and present up to twenty concerts each year with a variety of international stars. In addition, the organ is used in performances of the Portland Symphony Orchestra, Choral Arts Society, and for many high school and college graduations each year. You can see a full schedule of concerts, specifications of the organ, and information about educational activities at the website <www.foko.org>.

Last week Stephen Tharp played a concert as part of the regular summer series. His program included some wonderful twentieth-century music, a couple of the big classics, and his own transcription of *The Fair* from Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. Stephen has been voted 2011 International Performer of the Year by the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and will be presented in recital at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York City as part of the chapter's annual President's Day Conference next February. That is the weekend before the beginning of Lent, a perfect time for a few days off between the high spots of the liturgical year. Come to New York for the conference. You'll hear great musicians playing great organs. You can find details at <www.nycago.org>.

Stephen and his wife Lena stayed with Wendy and me for a couple nights after the concert, and we had plenty of chance for shop-talk, carrying on about the state of organ teaching, performance, and building. Much of our talk focused on the philosophy of performance—what do we try to accomplish when we perform, what are the benefits for the performer and the audience? Many organists have two levels or venues for performance—worship and concert. Are they the same?

When we work from the organ bench on a Sunday morning, we are certainly trying to do our best, maybe even consciously hoping that the congregation (at least the personnel committee) is impressed. But our challenge is to focus our skills and diligence to enable the fullest communication between the congregants and God. It's essential to do your very best, but it's not appropriate for you to be feeding your ego.

I'm reminded of a story from the Johnson White House. President Johnson was presiding over a working lunch with members of Congress and foreign dignitaries. He asked his press secretary Bill Moyers (whose Ph.D. came from



WNR and Katherine Roberts Perl, May 2010

Mr. Blancrocher, as my way of remembering Wm. Neil Roberts.

Among Neil's gifted students, two outstanding ones, now professionally active in the San Francisco Bay Area, are Gilbert Martinez (attracted to that first Fort Burgwin Workshop through Neil's influence) and Katherine Roberts Perl (who continues Neil's rare combination of distinguished harpsichord performance and skillful technical expertise in the maintenance of the instrument), both of whom have contributed to this memoir. Further information was offered by David Calhoun of Seattle; Elaine Funaro, through the *Aliénor Newsletter* for Spring 2011, viewable at <www.harpischord-now.org>; and by Neil's business and life partner, Anthony Brazier, who survives him. ■

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

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