

somewhat out of the mainstream, and a free download of *In a Monastery Garden* from James Flood's new CD, *What Used to Be Played*. For information: <michaelsmusicsservice.com>.

**The Royal School of Church Music** has launched a new scheme to support church organists and musicians, *Church Music Skills*. The *Skills* program for organists has already been released; other units for choir directors, cantors, and ensemble leaders will follow over the next twelve months. The program is based on distance learning, and combines practical skills with supporting studies on a number of relevant topics.

For organists, the scheme offers help with the playing of hymns, songs and choruses, as well as accompanying psalms, anthems and settings. The associated studies explore everything from choice of music and repertoire, to copyright and managing a budget. To measure progress, participants may, if they wish, work

towards a Church Music Skills Award. Alternatively, there is a flexible study scheme for those church musicians pursuing their own personal goals and at their own pace. For information: <www.rscm.com>.

**Andover Organ Company**, Methuen, Massachusetts, announces recent projects. The firm has completed the restoration of the 1831 Thomas Appleton organ at Nantucket Methodist Church, Nantucket, Massachusetts; Laurence Young played the dedication concert in September 2008. Andover has restored Casavant Opus 1531 (1936) as their Opus R-435, and installed it at St. John the Evangelist RC Church in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts. The firm has built Opus 117 for the residence of Peter Griffin of Harpswell, Maine: two manuals and pedal, 13 stops, 12 ranks.

Work continues on Opus R-345 for Christ Church, Episcopal, Charlottesville, Virginia. The three-manual E. &

G. G. Hook Opus 472 (1868) was originally built for Grace Episcopal Church, Chicago. Andover completed the renovation of the three-manual, 37-stop, 55-rank Gress-Miles tracker organ at First Church of Christ, Congregational, Suffield, Connecticut. For information: <www.andoverorgan.com>.



George Baker and Bertrand Cattiaux

**Orgues Bertrand Cattiaux** of Liourdres, France, has announced their collaboration with George Baker of Dallas, Texas, who will serve as the company's USA representative. Bertrand Cattiaux specializes in building new instruments in the true French style. New organs include one in Clicquot style in the Royal Chapel of the Château de Versailles (1995) and one in contemporary style in the Church of St-Remi de Reims (2000).

Cattiaux has 28 years of experience restoring historical Clicquot and Cavaillé-Coll organs, such as Cathédrale St-Pierre de Poitiers (F.-H. Clicquot, 1790), Basilique St-Sernin de Toulouse (A. Cavaillé-Coll, 1888), and Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris (A. Cavaillé-Coll, 1868). The experience Bertrand Cattiaux has acquired during all these years gives him the ability to build new organs in different styles: French baroque, French romantic, French symphonic, as well as French contemporary style.

Dr. Baker will help provide information and consultation services during the entire new organ project. For further information, visit the organbuilder's website <www.orguescattiaux.org> or contact Dr. Baker directly: <orguescattiauxusa@gmail.com>.

## Looking Back

### 10 years ago in the March 1999 issue of THE DIAPASON

M. L. Bigelow & Co. celebrates 20th anniversary

Noack Organ Company announces two organs for Reykjavik, Iceland

Robert C. Newton and John W. Morlock appointed tonal directors of Andover Organ Company

David Craighead celebrated his 75th birthday with a recital at St. Anne's Church, Rochester, New York

Catharine Crozier celebrated her 85th birthday with a recital at First Congregational Church, Los Angeles

David Wagner appointed assistant professor of music, Madonna University, Livonia, Michigan

Obituaries: Robert Shaw, Gordon Young

Feature articles: "Following the career of Martin Pasi," by Herbert L. Huestis; "A Performer's Guide to Schoenberg's Opus 40, Part 1," by Ronald J. Swedlund

New organs by Pasi Organ Builders and Steven Cook

### 25 years ago, March 1984

New, restored, rebuilt, and renovated organs by Andover, Gress-Miles, Hendrickson, Koppejan, Lewis & Hitchcock, Visser-Rowland

Feature articles: "University of Michigan 23rd annual Conference on Organ Music," by Mary Ida Yost; "The Organ Works of Ottorino Respighi" (conclusion), by Susan Ferré; "The Choral Music of Orlando Gibbons," by Richard Lowell Childress

### 50 years ago, March 1959

News of Nita Akin, Gerald Bales, Emily Ann Cooper, Catharine Crozier, Richard Ellsasser, Virgil Fox, Alexander McCurdy, D'Alton McLaughlin, Russell Hancock Miles, Robert Noehren, Flor

Peeters, Graham Steed, Richard Warner

Organs by Aeolian-Skinner, Austin, Flentrop, William Hill and Son and Norman and Beard, Holtkamp, Möller, Noehren, Reuter, Schantz, Schlicker, Tellers, Wicks

### 75 years ago, March 1934

News of Charles Courboin, Clarence Dickinson, Channing Lefebvre, Rollo Maitland, J. A. Schaefer, Leo Sowerby, Carl Weinrich, Charles Marie Widor, Healey Willan

Organs by Aeolian-Skinner, Austin, Kimball, Lewis & Hitchcock, Möller, Pilcher, Wicks

## In the wind . . .

by John Bishop



### Monumental intimacy

In the July 2007 issue of *THE DIAPASON*, this column commented on a book by Arnold Steinhardt, first violinist of the Guarneri Quartet. *Violin Dreams* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006) is a sort of musical memoir—a great artist sharing his experiences as a child, a student, and an increasingly successful performer. He's articulate, humorous, and just humble enough. He shares many wonderful reflections, and I've commented on the book several times subsequently. Early on he writes about his relationship with his instrument:

When I hold the violin, my left arm stretches lovingly around its neck, my right hand draws the bow across the strings like a caress, and the violin itself is tucked under my chin, a place halfway between my brain and my beating heart.

A beautiful metaphor—makes you want to run down to the church and fire up the organ. But as I commented in 2007, he's leaving us out. He goes on:

Instruments that are played at arm's length—the piano, the bassoon, the tympani—have a certain reserve built into the relationship. *Touch me, hold me if you must, but don't get too close*, they seem to say. To play the violin, however, I must stroke its strings and embrace a delicate body with ample curves and a scroll like a perfect hairdo fresh from the beauty salon. This creature sings ardently to me day after day, year after year, as I embrace it.

Coincidentally, a friend who is violist of the DaPonte String Quartet (resident musicians in our town in Maine) recently asked me how organists relate to their instruments. She spoke of gigs she's played in churches where she saw organists at work, wondering how you play an instrument that's so far away from you. Of course I jumped in with these Steinhardt quotes, offering the opposite point of view. The organ is a monumental instrument. Your relationship with the instrument is as a vehicle with which you can fill a huge room with a kaleidoscope of tone colors.

I've always found it thrilling to hear my music come back as reverberation in a large room. I love the sensation of having a congregation barreling along with me as I lead a hymn. And I love the feeling that huge air-driven bass pipes can cause in a rich acoustic environment. So it was a gift when my wife shared this



Ruffatti façade, Uppsala Domkyrka

**Fratelli Ruffatti** has completed a new organ for the Domkyrka in Uppsala, Sweden. The building seats 2,500, is more than 350 feet long, and boasts a reverberation period of 11 seconds. The cathedral already houses an organ built by Per Larsson Åkerman in 1871. The new Ruffatti organ stands in a new gallery in the north transept, close to the central altar and to the choir stalls. It features slider windchests and electric action and comprises 74 ranks over four manuals and pedal, 4,126 pipes, with 37 bells in the Glockenspiel. The Solo division includes a brass Trompette-en-chamade and a big English Tuba. The Pedal division is crowned by two 32' stops, a Subbass and a Trombone, both of African mahogany.

The organ is playable from either of two four-manual consoles, one located in the balcony with the pipes, and one in the nave, close to the choir stalls. Each features a unique system that allows the raising and lowering of the entire upper part of the console, including the manuals and stop jambs, to accommodate even



Ruffatti console, Uppsala Domkyrka

the tallest organist. The organ was dedicated on February 8 with a recital by the Domkyrka's associate organist Andrew Canning. His program included works by Harold Nutt, Frescobaldi, Heiller, Emil Sjögren, Arbo Landmann, and Ad Wammes. For information: <www.ruffatti.com>.

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passage from *I am a Conductor*, the autobiography of Charles Munch (Oxford University Press, 1955):

The organ was my first orchestra. If you have never played the organ, you have never known the joy of feeling yourself music's master, sovereign of all the gamut of sounds and sonorities. Before those keyboards and pedals and the palette of stops, I felt almost like a demigod, holding in my hands the reins that controlled the musical universe. Walking [to work], opening the little door to the organ with a big old key, looking over the day's hymns lest I forget the repeats, finding a prelude in a good key in order to avoid a difficult modulation, choosing a gay piece for a wedding or a sad one for a funeral, not falling asleep during the sermon, sometimes improvising a little in the pastor's favorite style, not playing a long recession because it would annoy the sexton—all this filled me with pride.

"... a certain reserve built into the relationship..." Funny, I think some of my best moments on an organ bench have been when I was free of reserve.

#### Anything you can do, I can do better

What's really going on between Arnold Steinhardt and Charles Munch? Is it like a playground spat that winds up with did-not, did-too? Or is it the childish idea that one instrument is more difficult to play than another? I've certainly heard people admire the complexity of playing the organ—all that dexterity with hands and feet. But can't you also argue that the organist is only pushing buttons?

The violinist has to create an even and convincing tone through the manipulation of the bow against the strings while making the notes happen at the same time. And, while the organ produces notes that are in tune or not in tune no matter what the organist does (as long as he's hitting the right notes), the violinist has to put the finger on the fingerboard in *exactly* the right place. (No worries. They leave the fretting to the guitarist.)

The flautist adds breath control to all the complexities of manual dexterity. The trumpeter has a finicky relationship with a mouthpiece. A trumpeter with a cold

sore is like Roger Clemens with a hangnail. Neither can go to work that day. And singers? Let's not even get started with singers!

No matter what instrument you're playing, once you've mastered the physical technique you can get down to making music. As I get older, I notice that on the printed page I can track the development of my technique. I still play some of my favorite pieces from the same scores I had when I was a student, hopelessly marked up with teachers' comments and registrations for dozens of different organs. Each time I get reminded of the physical crises of 30 or 35 years ago as I play past those passages that I just couldn't get at 20 years old. You might say it's the reward of a lifetime to be able to breeze past those danger zones—a lifetime of practice, that is.

Learning to drive a musical instrument is a barrier between you and artistic expression. Whether you're learning the "pat your head and rub your tummy" thing about playing the organ, developing the finger strength and control to pluck harp strings, or the incredible muscle control of the mouth of the oboist, all you're doing is teaching your body the physical tricks necessary for it to become a conductor between your mind and the sonorities of the music.

It's the actual music that's so difficult to do right. Shaping notes and phrases, placing the notes in time and tempo, and following your instincts to express the architecture of the music form the essence of the art of music. And you get a whiff of that essence when the physical act of operating the machine that is your instrument doesn't distract you.

There is an aspect of the art of organ playing that most other musicians don't necessarily experience. A clarinetist might own the same instrument for most of his career, seldom playing on another. That is a very personal relationship that like any intimacy includes inherent danger. Imagine the master player who discovers a crack in his instrument and

ments before an important performance. Or worse yet, what if the treasured instrument is lost or destroyed in a fire? I suppose more than one musical career has ended simply because the musician couldn't face starting over with a new instrument. Yo-Yo Ma famously left a treasure of a cello in a New York taxicab. It was later recovered because he had bothered to save his receipt and the cab could be tracked down. When you get into a New York cab you hear a gimmicky automatic recording—the voice of a celebrity giving safety tips. Along with Jessye Norman reminding you to fasten your seat belt, there's one with Yo-Yo Ma advising you to keep your receipts!

The organist is at the mercy of whoever hires him. How many of us have arrived in town to prepare a recital, only to sit down at a mediocre instrument in terrible condition? You can refuse to play, or you can recognize that it's the only instrument the local audience knows and accept the challenge of doing something special with it. "I've never heard this organ sound like that!"

§

Busy organists might be playing on dozens of instruments each year, but there are also many examples of lifelong relationships between players and their "home base" organs. Marcel Dupré played hundreds of recitals all over the world, but he was Organiste Titulaire at Saint-Sulpice in Paris from 1934 until 1971. He succeeded Charles-Marie Widor, who had held the position since 1870. So for more than a century that great Cavaillé-Coll organ was played principally by only two brilliant musicians. What a glorious heritage. Daniel Roth has been on that same well-worn bench since 1985. I first attended worship in that church in 1998 and vividly remember noticing elderly members of the congregation who would remember the days when Dupré was their parish organist. I suppose there still may be a few. I wonder if any of them cornered Dupré after church to complain that the organ was too loud!

§

#### It's the real thing, baby

My work with the Organ Clearing House often takes me to big cities where I get the thrill of hearing important organists playing on mighty instruments. Both the organist and the organ have a relationship with the church building—the sound rings and rolls around the place, the organist has the knack of timing the echo, and the effect is dazzling.

But most of our organists are playing on instruments of modest size in "normal" church buildings. The effect of the beautiful pipe organ in a small country church is just as dazzling as that of the 200-rank job roaring away in a room with a 150-foot ceiling. There's such magic to the combination of the sound of wind-blown organ pipes and human voices, even in the setting of a small country church. The sounds meld together, exciting the collective air that is the room's atmosphere. The organ has a physical presence in the room, letting us know before a note is played that there's something special coming. We decorate church buildings with symbols of our faith. The organ joins pictorial windows, banners, and steeples as one of those symbols.

We plan a dinner party. On the way home from the supermarket we stop at the florist to get something pretty to put on the table. Likewise, we place flower arrangements on the altar on Sunday morning. In church, do we do that simply for decoration, or are those flowers a celebration of God's creation—of the beauty of nature? Are there candles on the altar for atmosphere like that dining room table, or is there another loftier reason? Does a choir sing an anthem to

cover the shuffling of the ushers as they take up the offering, or is the anthem a true part of the experience of worship? (If so, why don't they take up the collection during a scripture reading, or during the sermon? Why all this tramping around while the music is playing? But that's a rant for another month!)

The organ, that instrument that makes us "music's master, sovereign of all the gamut of sounds and sonorities," stands in our churches declaring our devotion. The pipe organ is testament to the wide range of the skills with which we humans have been blessed. We've been given the earth's materials and learned to make beautiful things from them. And for centuries the pipe organ has been part of our worship, monument to our faith, and symbol of the power of the Church.

But with the advance of technology we are deluded by dilution. We settle for plastic flowers. We buy cheap production hardware for the doors of our worship spaces. We substitute artificial sound enhancement for real acoustics. And we substitute arrays of circuits for those majestic organ pipes.

Walk through a museum and look at sculpture made of gold, jade, or ivory. Don't tell me you can't tell it's special. When we experience something special, we know it's special. Walk through a jewelry store and try to tell the difference between the expensive stuff and the fake costume stuff without looking at price tags. You will never be wrong. Of course we know the difference. If your fiancée is not a jeweler, don't bother with a real diamond. She won't know the difference. (Oh boy, are you in trouble.)

And buy a digital instrument to replace the pipe organ. "After all, I'm not a musician. I can't tell the difference." Baloney. Of course we can tell the difference. And our churches and we deserve the best. ■

## On Teaching

by Gavin Black



#### Practicing II

Last month I wrote that the "concept of 'slowly enough' is the key to the whole matter of practicing organ and harpsichord." This month I want to explore that concept further. I will also discuss a couple of other aspects of the art of practicing.

In urging that students practice their pieces slowly, I want to avoid giving particular, specific practice-tempo suggestions, and I also want to advocate that teachers not expect, by and large, to give their students such specific suggestions. One of the keys to really efficient practicing is to develop a feeling for what the right practice tempo is. That is, literally, a *feeling*, since the right tempo at which to practice a given passage at a given moment is the tempo at which that passage *feels* a certain way. The way to guide a

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