



Pipeline

American Guild of Organists—Red River Valley Chapter

Volume 34, Number 1

Jan/Feb/Mar
2020

Message From the Dean

As I write this letter on January 15, how can it already be the middle of January? And how can it be 2020?

It seems as if our “lovely” weather is going to last forever. I do like winter and snow, but I do not like super-cold temperatures and wind. Thank goodness that, in the midst of the super-cold weather on occasion, it hasn’t been terribly windy. That’s one good thing!

Several of us got together a few weeks ago to plan PEDALS, PIPES, AND PIZZA which will be held on Saturday, March 28. While the event is geared toward piano students wanting to become familiar with The King of Instruments, the event is actually open to anyone interested in learning more about the pipe organ. Venues for this event include First Lutheran Church, First Presbyterian Church, and the Fargo Theatre. A full schedule of the day’s events can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

We will get a date selected for our annual year-end Potluck and Used Music Exchange at First Presbyterian Church. People find some “real deals” when browsing through the piles of music, and the price is right! And the food is wonderful and the fellowship is great as well.

If you haven’t already done so, make it a point to attend the First Friday Lunch at the downtown Fargo Fryn’Pan Restaurant at noon. We always have an area reserved for us on the west side of the restaurant, so join us whenever you’re able to do so. On January 3, we had eight people at the lunch! I was able to

come to lunch because I hadn’t yet begun teaching for the second semester. I usually have students over the lunch hour on Fridays.

Plans are being made for the 2020-2021 Diamond Anniversary of our RRVAGO chapter. We are going to have a very exciting year of programming. More details will be forthcoming, but you won’t want to miss any of the events! We hope to encourage present members, former AGO members and new people to join our group and take part in these events.

If you have any questions or concerns about AGO, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stay warm and “enjoy” the remaining weeks of winter. We know what comes after winter - - and that would be spring! And, yes, they’re already talking about flooding. But let’s think positively!!

The Nominating Committee recently met to do its work to present a slate of officers for the 2020-2021 year. That committee’s report is also found elsewhere in this newsletter. Thanks for the hard work of those folks, and thanks to those who have put their names into nomination.

Sincerely and musically,
Michael Olson
Minister of Music, First Lutheran
Church, Fargo
Dean, RRVAGO
Vice President, Red River Chapter
ATOS

First Friday Luncheon

Who Everyone is Welcome!

When First Friday of the
Month at Noon

Where Fryn’ Pan
302 Main Ave, Fargo

Chapter Officers

Dean: Michael Olson

Sub-Dean: Robyn Vinje

Secretary: Brad Steen

Treasurer: Brad Steen

Updates from the RRVAGO Secretary/Treasurer

Financial and Membership Status of the Red River Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists as of October 31, 2019:

Bell Bank Checking account balance: \$5,468.68

Membership Numbers:	10 Regular
	6 Special
	7 Young Organist
	2 Dual
	1 Volunteer
	<hr/>
	26 PAID MEMBERS

Michael Olson “And Friends” Wednesday Organ Recitals

Every Wednesday afternoon from 12:45 to 1:15 PM in the sanctuary of First Lutheran Church throughout the school year from early September through late May, Michael Olson “and friends” perform half an hour of organ music (or sometimes piano music or another instrument).

If anyone would like to play one of the Wednesday recitals, or a piece (or two) on a recital, please let Michael know. Variety is the spice of life!! It is a fairly small but very faithful group of folks who come to the Wednesday recitals. Many of the people stay for a worship service after the recital, so the recital acts as a musical prelude to the worship!

RRVAGO Diamond Anniversary Committee Organizational Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

November 11, 2019— Moorhead, MN

The meeting was called to order at the Hvidsten Hall of Music, Concordia College at 8:20 p.m. Dean Michael Olson, Dillon Swanson, and Alex Swanson were present. Jean Hellner, Bradley Steen, and Jim Gurney were absent.

Alex read a few items from the 50th Golden Anniversary Pipeline newsletter from September, 1995. It was decided that we would like to emulate the

1995 program and reception, along with a historical display to kick off our Diamond Jubilee programming season.

Discussion regarding the programming of the 2020-21 season ensued, and the following suggestions and possibilities are being considered:

September—Historical/musical program followed by a reception and historical display, location to be determined.

October—Some joint event with the Red River Theatre Organ Society, maybe relating to their annual Silent Movie Night event. Also, bringing in a Piano-Organ Duo from Arkansas, one of whom is formerly from Fargo, the recital being held at First Lutheran Church in Fargo.

November—Participate in Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral’s “Evensong” event with a few organ performances.

December—Annual Red River Valley Chapter Christmas Carol Sing-Along at First Presbyterian Church of Fargo.

January—American Organ Music Recital, including some piano-organ duets, location to be determined.

February—Bringing in famed organ composer/arranger Rebecca Groom te Velde (a former Red River Valley Chapter member!) and have a couple local organists showcase some of her music published in the Oxford Hymn Series books. She has expressed interest in this. Location to be determined.

March—J.S. Bach Organ Music Recital at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead at 4:00 p.m. on “3-21-21.”

April—Dillon Swanson’s Junior recital, location to be determined.

May—Annual Red River Valley Chapter music swap event and potluck meal.

If the Casavant Organ at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd is in better working condition at the time, it was suggested as a good instrument to include in our anniversary year programming. Peter Nygaard and Judy Sanders were suggested as two former Deans of our chapter who would be desirable performers at some point in the program lineup.

It was mentioned that this anniversary year could be a way to re-establish our chapter’s presence in the community, and hopefully we could draw in some new members, as well as bring some former members back.

Alex will be responsible for the writing/updating the history of the Red River Valley Chapter and printing some sort of history booklet for the September kick-off event.

The Chapter Sub-Dean will be asked if she (continue)

RRVAGO Diamond Anniversary Committee Meeting Minutes

(Continued from Page 2)

would like to be a Co-Chair of the Anniversary Committee with either Dillon or Alex, and the Chapter Secretary will be asked if he would serve as the Anniversary Committee Secretary.

Dean Olson suggested that information regarding this meeting and the upcoming Evensong at Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral be sent out to the Newsletter Editor, so it may be printed in the upcoming issue of the "Pipeline."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m. The date of the next anniversary committee meeting has yet to be determined.

Alex Swanson, Acting Secretary

Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza Event Coming Up in March!

On March 28th, local piano students will have the opportunity to learn about and play some of downtown Fargo's most notable pipe organs. Throughout the day, members of the Red River Theatre Organ Society and the Red River Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will be presenting mini-concerts, masterclasses, and hosting open consoles at First Lutheran (4/65 Austin), First Presbyterian (3/59 Schantz), and the Fargo Theatre (4/32 Wurlitzer). The day will culminate with "The Evolution of Movie Music" concert, hosted by the Red River Theatre Organ Society at the Fargo Theatre and played by RRTOS President, Ryan Hardy. The concert will be open to the public and begins at 4:00pm.

Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza is free to attend for piano students (or students with piano experience) grades 4-12. Interested students will need to pre-register, with registration opening in mid-February. The day's events will begin with check-in at 9:00am and conclude at 5:45pm. A pizza lunch will be provided.

For additional information, contact Ryan Hardy, President, Red River Theatre Organ Society at www.rrtos.org or P.O. Box 121, Fargo, ND 58107.

RRTOS/RRVAGO Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2019—Fargo, ND: A meeting of the Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza planning committee was held

in the social hall of First Presbyterian Church. Those present included Michael Olson (Dean of RRVAGO and Vice President of RRTOS), Ryan Hardy (President of RRTOS), Bradley Steen (Secretary-Treasurer of RRVAGO), Alex Swanson (Treasurer of RRTOS), Dillon Swanson, and Sally Harmon.

The meeting was called to order at 12:23 p.m. Ryan Hardy gave a general outline of the Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza event, and a discussion ensued, concerning its composition, and what tasks need to be completed by volunteers.

The schedule and format of the day will tentatively be as follows:

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2020—Fargo, ND

9:30am—11:00am at First Lutheran Church

Master class taught by Michael Olson, mini-performance of *Rex, the King of Instruments* and open console time.

11:00am—12:30pm at Sammy's Pizza or First Lutheran

Lunch

12:30pm—2:00pm at First Presbyterian Church

Master Class, possibly taught by Andrew Steinberg, mini-performance by Dillon Swanson, and open console time.

2:00pm—3:30pm at the Fargo Theatre

Master Class taught by Ryan Hardy and mini-performance and open console time.

4:00pm at the Fargo Theatre

Organ concert by Ryan Hardy

Although this event is being geared towards pianists who may be interested in the organ, it was suggested that organ students be invited to the event as well, and that maybe the piano students interested in the open console time have some sort of piece prepared.

The expenses involved with the event were discussed. Red River Valley Chapter of the AGO has about \$5,100.00 in their treasury and Red River Theatre Organ Society has about \$7,200.00, so the expenses could be split between the two organizations. It was also mentioned that maybe a grant or sponsorship could be sought instead. As both clubs bank at Bell Bank, it will be checked into by both treasurers if Bell would like to sponsor the event in any way.

Ryan Hardy will check to see if the theatre would donate popcorn for the event, or offer reduced-rate concessions. Dillon Swanson will talk to Andrew Steinberg about his availability. Ryan and Alex will handle program designing and printing as well.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Minutes recorded by Alex Swanson, Treasurer, RRTOS.

Organist Paul Jacobs to Perform in Minneapolis in 2020

Grammy Award winning organist Paul Jacobs will be performing at **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**, 4100 Lyndale Avenue S., **Minneapolis, MN 55409** on **Sunday, May 3, 2020 at 4:00 PM** as part of the Bethlehem Music Series. This series is the longest running series of its kind in the Twin Cities area. Their eclectic concerts are enjoyed by everyone and offer an opportunity to experience all types of music in a unique setting with great acoustics—and free admission!



Paul Jacobs is one of the great living virtuosos who made musical history at age 23, when he played Bach's complete organ works in an 18-hour marathon on the 250th anniversary of the composer's death. No other organist is repeatedly invited as soloist to perform with prestigious orchestras, thus making him a pioneer in the movement for the revival of symphonic music featuring the organ. An extraordinarily expressive performer and an intensely intelligent musician, Paul Jacobs is helping the King of Instruments retake its rightful place in classical music. Many RRVAGO members will remember Paul's performance and master class presented in Fargo several years ago.

The Bethlehem Music Series program features a pre-concert conversation with the artist one-half hour before the concert. There is no admission charge. A free-will offering will be taken. Refreshments are served in the gallery following the concert. There will be free nursery services available for children three months to three years of age. Free valet parking is available.

From The American Guild of Organists Chapter Leadership News
January 2020

Happy New Year!

It is hard to believe that we have now entered the third decade of the 2000's. My wish for you is that 2020 will provide you with robust leadership, financial stability and many opportunities for membership growth and sustainability.

As we embark on the new year, I look forward to scheduling several chapter visits. If I can facilitate a strategic planning session, attend a board meeting or chapter event, please let me know as soon as possible. Meeting with AGO chapters is one of my most favorite—so please don't be afraid to ask for a visit!

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and most successful 2020!

SUGGESTED TIPS TO BRING IN MORE VOLUNTEERS

Tip #1: Build a team dedicated to improving the volunteer pool.

Whatever you want to name it, use this team to seek "talent" (aka volunteers) and match them to "exciting opportunities" (aka jobs). Consider calling members to learn more about their skills and expertise, so that you can match them with something they will enjoy, based on your volunteer needs.

Tip #2: Try Micro-volunteering

Members are busy and might not have the time to commit to a long-term volunteer program. "Micro-volunteering" is small, bite-sized volunteer opportunities that can take anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours to complete. Letting a volunteer know the estimated amount of time the task will take, makes it easier for them to commit.

Tip #3: Make it easy for members to raise their hands.

If members don't know volunteer opportunities exist, they can't sign up. Get the word out about volunteer activities at each chapter event, and then provide everyone an easy way to sign up while they are there. As well, acknowledge a "volunteer of the month" or MVP at your event, recognize their accomplishments on your website, Facebook page and in your newsletter. A little recognition can go a long way to making volunteers feel valued and appreciated and can also lay the groundwork to initiate a pipeline of future leaders.

Tip #4: Highlight Volunteering's "Member Value."

Paint a picture of what the volunteer role is along with the desired outcomes. Sell the value of volunteering and create a compelling list of benefits that always include "having fun!"

Elizabeth George, CMM

Director of Member Engagement and Chapter Development

American Guild of Organists

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Composers Corner—Louis Victor Jules Vierne (1870-1937)



2020 is the 150th anniversary year of the birth of French organist and composer Louis Vierne. Louis Victor Jules Vierne was born in Poitiers on October 8, 1870. At an early age he was discovered to have an unusual gift for music. When he was only two years of age, he heard the piano for the first time: a pianist played him a Schubert lullaby, and after he had finished young Louis promptly began to pick out the notes of the lullaby on the piano.

After completing school in the provinces, he entered the Paris Conservatoire. From 1892, he served as an assistant to the organist Charles-Marie Widor at the church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. He subsequently became principal organist at the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, a post he held from 1900. He also taught at the Paris Conservatory and the Schola Cantorum. Maurice Durufle and Marcel Dupre were among his pupils.

Vierne had a personal and professional life that was physically and emotionally very difficult, with severe spiritual trials that are reflected in much of his music. His symphonies were all written in minor keys and followed the musical scale: e, f-sharp, g, a, and b. He had planned to write a seventh symphony in c-minor to complete the series, but that was not possible due to poor health. Although born nearly blind, his congenital cataracts did not make him completely blind, but he was what would be called today “legally blind.” Early in his career, he composed on outsized manuscript paper, using “a large pencil” as his colleague Marcel Dupre recounted. Later in life, as his already limited sight continued to diminish, he resorted to Braille to do most of his work.

Vierne was deeply affected by a separation and subsequent divorce from his wife, and he lost both his brother Rene and his son Jacques to the battlefields of World War I. Though he held one of the most prestigious organ posts in France, the Notre-Dame organ was in a state of disrepair throughout much of his tenure at the instrument. He eventually undertook a concert tour of North America to raise money for its restoration. The tour, which included major recitals on the famous Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia and its smaller sister instrument, the Wanamaker Auditorium Organ in New York City, was very (continue on pg. 8)

Composers Corner (continued from pg. 7)

successful, although the trip physically drained him.

A street accident in Paris caused him to badly fracture his leg, and it was briefly thought that his leg would need to be amputated. The leg was saved, but his recovery, and the task of completely re-learning his pedal technique, took a full year during one of the busiest times of his life. Despite his difficulties, however, his students uniformly described him as a kind, patient and encouraging teacher. Among his pupils were Edward Shippen Barnes, Lili Boulanger, Nadia Boulanger, Marcel Dupre, Alexander Schreiner and others. Despite all the hardships of his life, Vierne maintained a deep faith.

The government of France made Vierne a Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur in 1931.

Louis Vierne had an elegant, clean style of writing that respected form above all else. His works showcased a full range of tones and dynamics as well as technical skill, making him a well-known recitalist on both sides of the Atlantic. His harmonic language was romantically rich, but not as sentimental or theatrical as that of his early mentor Cesar Franck. Like all of the great *fin de siècle* French organists, Vierne's music was very idiomatic for his chosen instrument and has inspired most of the great Parisian organist-composers who followed him.

His output for organ includes six organ symphonies, 24 Fantasy Pieces (which includes his famous *Carillon de Westminster*), and *Vingt-quatre pieces en style libre*, among other works. His first symphony, *Symphony No. 1 for organ in D minor, Op. 14*, was premiered in 1899. It had six movements but it was the last movement, or Final, that is often performed as a solo. From the first note to the last, it is non-stop with the melody in the pedals and rapid accompaniment in the manual keyboards. This movement is loud, with many stops preset to achieve the full sound. It is one of those works that is breathtaking both to those listening and watching the performance.

Vierne also wrote for piano, vocal solos, orchestra, choral and chamber ensembles. Many of his vocal works were religious but not all of them. He composed vocal solos based on Greek poems and other secular sources. He wrote a series of nocturnes for the piano and a variety of secular music for various instrumentation. However, it was the pipe organ for which he is best known.

Louis Vierne suffered either a stroke or a heart attack (eyewitness reports differ) while giving his 1750th organ recital at Notre-Dame de Paris on the evening of June 2, 1937. He had completed the main concert, which members of the audience said showed him at his full powers ("as well as he has ever played"). Directly after he had finished playing his "Stele pour enfant defunt" from his "Triptyque" Op 58, the closing section was to be two improvisations based on themes submitted to him. He read the first theme in Braille, then selected the stops he would use for the improvisation. He suddenly pitched forward, and fell off the bench as his foot hit the low "E" pedal of the organ. He lost consciousness as the single note echoed throughout the church. He had thus fulfilled his oft-stated lifelong dream—to die at the console of the great organ of Notre-Dame. His former student and major French organist and composer Maurice Durufle, was at his side at the time of his death.

(Excerpts from Wikipedia and a 3/25/2016 CMUSC article by Cynthia Collins)



Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 28, 2020, 9:30am-5:00pm

"Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza"

First Lutheran, First Presbyterian, Fargo Theatre
Downtown Fargo, ND

Every Wednesday, 12:45pm—1:15pm

Michael Olson and Friends Organ Recitals
First Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND

Contact Information

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