

A Letter From the Dean

Dear Members,

I recently was sorting through a number of boxes of old organ and piano music, given to me when acquaintances were cleaning out their attics, or their mother's house, etc. It is always a real hodge podge - there were things that went directly into the recycling, things that I put on my own music shelf to play later, things I called other musician friends to come look through, funny things I kept for laughs (The Greatest Pop Hits of the 90's I just couldn't pass up - I graduated from high school in the 90's!)

Maybe the thing that struck me the most was an issue of Etude magazine from 1939. It was fascinating to flip through and read articles written in such a different age. I was most fascinated by the realization of how differently we accessed information, in the pre-digital era. Like most of you, I easily remember when we hand-wrote letters, called friends on the phone, and used both the encyclopedia and the typewriter! But still, what a shock to realize how much harder we had to work, to find information, just a few decades ago. Of course, what we work harder to find sometimes means more to us. At the click of a button, we can now find almost anything we need or are curious about, from obscure recipes to any kind of information, musical scores and recordings, news from all over the globe. I suspect though, this information, so easily found, is just as easy to forget, whereas in previous times, a score or recording that one had taken months to search down, would be treasured and revisited often.

I don't know about you, but even though we can now access a recording of almost anything online, I still much prefer to hear music in person. Of course, sometimes it's raining, or hard to find parking, or you've got a headache, or work to do, and then going out in the dark and cold can seem like a hurdle to surmount, but I'm almost always rewarded by those attempts to connect with other music lovers, share an experience of beauty, and find meaning together through the arts.

Our October chapter event, the dedication of the Pasi organ at Grace Episcopal church, was a great evening, and I enjoyed seeing as many of you there as didn't have Wednesday evening church duties. It was a special pleasure to hear each organist play really different repertoire, in keeping with their personality and interests. Steve played both a piece by Calvin Hampton (a 20th century NYC organist and composer who's works are influenced by jazz and rock, as well as many classical styles), and a piece he composed himself. He's promised me a copy of it, so you might be hearing it again sometime! Craig Cramer, the organ professor at Notre Dame, played a wonderful variation set by Georg Boehm, (a German 17th century composer) which showed off an incredible variety of sounds of the instrument. Huw Lewis ushered us into the Romantic era, and showed off the Cromhorne stop with the Franck Prelude, Fugue, and Variations, which was gorgeous, and an energetic Postlude by the British composer Stafford. I took us back to the Baroque, with a short Buxtehude Praeludium, and then played one of the Bach arrangements of a Vivaldi concerto. The clergy and staff have been supportive, the congregation at Grace is clearly thrilled with their new instrument, and everyone who I've talked to finds both the look in the room and the sounds stunning. Congratulations Steve and Grace! By the way, Steve is always interested in sharing, so if you'd like to see or play the organ, contact him.

In November, we are going to meet at Hope Church on Monday, November 6 at 7:30pm for a session sharing wedding repertoire together. As we've done in the past with Funeral Rep last year, and

seasonal rep in previous years, you can bring some of your favorite music along, and either play it for us, or just tell us about it. We can all sit up in the chancel together, where it's easy to converse. We all play weddings, and we all get in a rut and play the same music too often, so it can be a refreshing change to get some new ideas!

Keep reading for more info about where you can experience live organ and church music in our humble town, and I hope to see you soon!

Rhonda

Upcoming Chapter Events

In January, Julia has offered to host our Winter Potluck at her new house – thank you Julia! It will be on Monday, January 8 at 6:30pm, at 439 Hayes, which is the second house west of Aniline, one block south of James St.

In February, Tony Monaco, the jazz organ prof at Hope college, will present to us on the Hammond Organ. I've asked Tony to not only talk about the history of how the instrument developed, which I think is fascinating, the way it was invented to be a low-cost substitute for the church pipe organ, and gradually evolved into a totally new instrument, used mainly in jazz and rock music. But, he will also tell us all about what exactly those drawknobs do, how to make different sounds, and how he registers. Tony is a gracious and fun guy, and I'm looking forward to the chance to learn more about the Hammond! The exact date is TBD, and this event will take place at Hope College.

In March, we look forward to Huw Lewis presenting to us about developing skills to take (and pass!) the easiest of the AGO exams – the Service Playing Exam. Skills include transposition, hymn playing, performing basic repertoire, sightreading, and anthem accompanying. Many of you, like me, have probably idly thought every now and then, “Maybe sometime I should study for, and take, one of those guild exams...” The board thought this might be a good impetus for all of us to think again about such ideas. And it never hurts to get better at each one of these skills, exams or not.

I was considering organizing another group visit to Mike Van Doornik at Freedom Village. It was lots of fun to gather with some of you to do this last year, and I've heard from Roberta and George Kraft that while his condition is about the same physically, spiritually he is “amazingly bouyant.” (Sounds like Mike!) I'm looking at a Friday or Sunday night in late January – details to follow.

Around Town

Keep in mind that this Sunday afternoon at 5pm at Christ Memorial will be the Community Reformation Service. I've heard from Bob Batastini that he has over 100 singers in the joint choir! There will also be a brass group, organ, and John Witvliet from the Calvin Worship Institute will be preaching. Should be a very festive occasion.

In November, Linda Stof has invited a wonderful young organist from Northwest Indiana, Kevin Vaughn, to play the Rietberg series, on Sunday, November 12 at 3pm. I know Kevin and am really excited to hear him play in Holland. He has his DMA from Notre Dame, teaches organ at Goshen College, has won a number of competitions, and played a lovely concert last spring in Grand Rapids at Park Church with baritone Stephen Lancaster, who he collaborates with frequently.

Also in November, the latest Grace Notes series at Grace Episcopal will feature organist and composer Nick Palmer. Cathedral musician for many years in Grand Rapids, Nick has recently taken a position at the Episcopal church in Grand Haven, to give him more time for composing and organ playing, and he will be performing compositions he has written, included one for organ, clarinet, speaker, and violin. This will be on Sunday, November 19 at 3pm.

Rhonda

Chapter Officers for 2017-2018

Dean - Rhonda Edgington

Sub-Dean - Julia Colingsworth

Secretary - Judy Koeman

Treasurer - Gordon Bruns

Board Members - Roberta Kraft, Jim Folkert

Hope College Student Board Member - Jonathan Bading

Newsletter Editor - Paul Dalman

Website - hollandareaago.org

2017-2018 Calendar		
Sun, Oct 29, 5:00 p.m.	Community-Wide Worship Service Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation - John Witvliet preaching, with brass, choir, and organ	Christ Memorial Church, Holland
Mon, Nov 6, 7:30 p.m.	Wedding repertoire - bring your favorites	Hope Church, Holland
Sun, Nov 12, 3:00 p.m.	Annual Rietberg Recital - Kevin Vaughn (DMA from Notre Dame, Organ prof at Goshen College)	Third Reformed Church, Holland
Mon, Jan 8, 6:30 p.m.	Winter Potluck	Julia Collinsworth's house, 439 Hayes St. (2nd house west of Aniline, one block south of James)