

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS CENTENNIAL

AGO CONVENTIONS 1960–1978

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In retrospect, 1960 seems like one of the last years that the world of church music moved in a predictable and orderly manner along the aesthetic path mapped by Archibald Davison and his disciples 30 years earlier. Its capital was New York, and its fountainhead Union Seminary's School of Sacred Music. January 1960 was the midpoint in my sophomore year at Boston University. The middle weekend of our annual choir tour was free and would be spent in New York. I remember especially well that Sunday morning at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine with Alec Wyton and his choir of men and boys.

By 1978, not quite two decades later, the School of Sacred Music was gone from Union Seminary, and Alec Wyton and his choir of men and boys from St. John the Divine. The church music students, who 20 years earlier had climbed the cathedral steps like medieval pilgrims approaching Santiago de Compostela, were entering their mid-career years in a profession that seemed to be undergoing a fundamental artistic and theological change. They (we) could not know that things were already beginning to sort themselves out by 1978; just as we could not have known on that wintry weekend in 1960 what was in store for American church music.

The 1960 Guild convention, held in Detroit during the last week of June, was no different in style or content from the pattern set over the three previous decades or more. Once again, the Guild reaffirmed its identity and ideals by displaying its best and brightest concert artists—Biggs, Coci, Craighead, Fox, Held, Jensen, Maekelberghe, Mason, Noehren, Salvador, and Schreiner, along with competition winner David Mulbury and two distinguished visitors: Finn Viderø from Denmark and Julian Zuniga from Mexico—in an unrelenting sequence of recitals on just as unrelenting a sequence of large organs, leavened here and there with

choral concerts, carillon recitals, lectures, and panels.

What surer index could there have been of that identity and those ideals than the music selected for the Festival Service at Christ Church Cranbrook on Thursday? The processional and recessional hymn tunes were "Hyfyrdol" and "King's Weston." The choirs of Christ Church, St. James, and First Presbyterian in Birmingham sang service music by Leo Sowerby and anthems by Thomas Matthews, T. Charles Lee, Joseph Clokey, and Henry Purcell.

The convention programming was clearly tailored to the specialized audience of 1,400 organists. E. Power Biggs played 18th- and 19th-century American repertoire, concluding with Charles Ives's *Variations on "America"*—pieces he later recorded on period instruments for Columbia, issued as *The Organ in America*. Noehren played the same all-Bach program Mendelssohn had given in Leipzig in 1840. Viderø played Danish music—Buxtehude and Nielsen—and Zuniga's two programs were heavily laced with his own pieces, interspersed with music by Buxtehude, Bach, Borowski, and Bedell. Virgil Fox played Bach and the Jongen *Symphonie Concertante* with the Detroit Symphony.

In keeping with yet another convention tradition, a number of new pieces were heard, some in their premier performances and none in an especially advanced idiom. Two major choral works were given: Gordon Young's *The Resurrection* and Frederick Marriott's *The Greatest of These*. David Craighead played Thomas Canning's *Sonata* and Gardner Read's *Passacaglia and Fugue*. Marilyn Mason introduced Kabeláč's *Sinfonia* for organ, brass, and timpani, and Claire Coci played Bjister, Badings, and Monnikendam with strings and timpani.

John Challis, pioneer American harpsichordmaker, talked about performance practice in Bach's music, with Philip Steinhaus demonstrating at the organ. Seth Bingham's

lecture, entitled "The American Music Scene and the AGO—Past, Present, and Future," saw a "notable advance" and "a bright and shining future." He credited the Guild, "primarily as an examining body," for raising church music standards. "If our church music repertory shows a slow but steady gain in excellence, so also, with some exceptions, do the standards of church performance."

The 1962 convention, held in Los Angeles County, began to crack the mold. There were more lectures and they covered a good bit of territory. Family illness prevented Joseph Blanton from speaking on organ placement as planned, and Harold Gleason filled in with a talk on early American composers of church music. Lawrence Phelps held forth on "rational" organ design. Three of the visiting organists gave talks as well as recitals: Heiller on Part III of Bach's *Clavierübung*, Tagliavini on early Italian organ tone, and Zeoli on new trends in organ composition. From outside the world of organists, theologian Harland Hogue spoke on worship in American free churches, and Howard Swan on "A New Program for Church Music."

At the same time, there were fewer organ recitals. Catharine Crozier, Robert Glasgow, Clarence Ledbetter, Orpha Ochse, Irene Robertson, and Charles Shaffer were supplemented by pre-convention performers Lowell Enoch, Marcia Hannah, Robert Prichard, and Ladd Thomas. Four distinguished visitors, Anton Heiller from Vienna, Hugh McLean from Vancouver, B.C., Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini from Bologna, and Hector Zeoli from Buenos Aires, gave the gathering its subtitle, the "International National."

Predictably, Tagliavini played a program of Italian music, from Gabrieli to his own work, and Heiller's program, half Bach and half Germanic neo-classic, included his own *In festo Corporis Christi*, and David's partita on the "Reaper called Death." Less predictably, Zeoli chose the eleven chorale preludes of Brahms as the core of his recital; his

Argentine repertoire consisted of Ginastera's *Toccata, Villancico y Fuga* and his own sonata. Among the American organists, 20th-century music was well represented as usual but, as in the 1960 convention, nothing especially avant-garde was programmed. Crozier played Messiaen's *Messe de la Pentecôte* and the Sowerby *Symphony in G Major*. Ledbetter's program included Doppelbauer, Distler, Oncley, and Reger. Irene Robertson, assisted by a contralto and violinist, programmed Rayner Brown, Karl Holler, and Henk Badings. Orpha Ochse and Charles Shaffer shared a program for organ and ensemble of horns, which included a set of variations by Russell García.

If the Guild Service itself, held on Monday at the First Congregational Church in Los Angeles and highlighted by a performance of the Poulenc *Gloria*, was unexceptionably traditional—as was the final concert of the Roger Wagner Chorale, with its premiere of Flor Peeters's *Magnificat*—the so-called "Frontiers of Worship" service, presented on Thursday at the Church of Religious Science, was a foretaste of things to come. Programmed as an "experiment in jazz," the event involved choreography and speech: the first real convention departure from the time-hallowed, Guild-endorsed service music tradition. *The Diapason* reported, "No single program of the week was so controversial, so much discussed, and so misunderstood." Strangely, it was not the jazz but rather the spoken text that offended many: the maudlin prayers and "dramatic writing" in place of the sermon.

The controversy set alight in the shirt-sleeve ambience of southern California in 1962 came to a rolling boil in the shirt-and-tie atmosphere of the 1964 Philadelphia convention. Earlier that Monday, Marilyn Mason had been heard, along with instruments, in premieres of pieces by John Cook and Kevin Norris, a work by John Beck (replacing a planned premiere of a piece by Norman Dello Joio that had not been completed in time), and Sowerby's *Classical Concerto*. With the sounds of the Sowerby still in their ears, conventioners moved to Holy Trinity for the Guild Service.

They were unprepared for what awaited them, and afterwards their dissatisfaction was palpable. Instead of a work like the Poulenc *Gloria* that had been performed in Los Angeles two years earlier, the major work was a cantata, *Ascendit Deus*, by the Australian composer Malcolm Williamson. The piece seemed repetitious, clichéd, full of commercial devices, and clearly aimed at mass tastes. As if to compound the controversy, the recessional hymn was sung to a similarly styled tune by Williamson.

Looking back from beyond the years of the folk-music movement and the post-Vatican II and Episcopal liturgical revisions, the Philadelphia Guild Service probably stands as the first attempt to gain professional respectability for vernacular styles in formal church services. But such respectability was far from the minds of most delegates. They had looked forward on that hot Monday afternoon to the best in service music from the combined boys and men of St. John the Divine in New York and St. Mark's and St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Philadelphia, under the direction of the Guild's newly elected president, Alec Wyton. If anything, the Williamson seemed more like a betrayal than a beginning. "Banal" and "bawdy" were among the epithets heard. *The American*

Organist called the Williamson "a cheap imitation of the so-called [Geoffrey Beaumont] Folk Mass," and in a clear allusion to the "Frontiers of Worship" service of two years earlier, "not jazz, just honky-tonk." A minority, *The Diapason* reported, found the piece "refreshing" and "communicative." "I wonder," mused Guild historian-librarian S. Lewis Elmer, "what our founders would have thought."

Choral programs during the rest of the convention were structured along more-or-less customary lines. Elaine Brown's Singing City choirs presented the Verdi *Requiem* in memory of President Kennedy, assassinated the previous November. The Philadelphia Oratorio Choir under Earl Ness sang a stunning performance of Honegger's *King David*, even though the accompaniment was limited to organ, harp, and timpani. The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, directed by Ifor Jones, sang a program of two cantatas, a motet, and the B-minor Mass "Gloria"; and the closing concert of the Collegiate Chorale of New York, under the direction of Abraham Kaplan, presented a program of pieces from Gibbons and Tallis to Bartók and Persichetti.

Lecturers included Robert Baker and Lee Hastings Bristol on the education of church musicians, Mildred Andrews on practicing, Leo Beranek on acoustics, Lilian Murtagh on a concert career, Allan Wicks on "modern trends in music and the liturgy," Arthur Poister on teaching, Eleanor Thompson on handbells, and John Hose and Adolph Zajic on pipe voicing.

The younger generation of organ recitalists shared billing alongside established artists. One fine recital after another was played by Robert Anderson, David Craighead, Jerald Hamilton, Calvin Hampton, Gerre Hancock, Clyde Holloway (winner of the competition), Wilma Jensen (with instruments), Ladd Thomas, and Andrea Toth. But the older generation, in the person of Robert Elmore, yielded not an inch. Playing twice (once on the great Wanamaker department store organ), he demonstrated the real meaning of virtuosity.

International visitors included Allan Wicks of Canterbury Cathedral, and Maurice and Marie-Madeleine Duruflé. Her hair-raising recital brought the Academy of Music to its feet. Wicks played at Girard College Chapel (from which clergy of all denominations were banned by the conditions of the benefactor's will). His lengthy program included yet another essay by Williamson (tactfully passed over by *The Diapason*, but termed "a cluster of notes looking for a composer" by *The American Organist*), *Résurgence du Feu Paschale*, evidently meant to complement the program's closing work, the complete Messiaen *Messe de la Pentecôte*.

The two biggest names in the American organ world opened the 1966 Atlanta Convention week with back-to-back Sunday pre-convention recitals, each in his inimitable style. E. Power Biggs played a new Flentrop tracker at St. Anne's Church and then Virgil Fox held forth at the Temple, both to predictable reviews.

The week's pace in Atlanta was easier than usual, with plenty of leisure time. The recitalists included a mix of young talent and seasoned artists: Kathryn Eskey, Roberta Gary, Will Headlee (with a string ensemble), Edgar Hilliar, Donald McDonald, Thomas Murray (the competition winner), Robert Noehren, Mary Frances Ross, Robert Triplett, John Weaver, and Grady Wilson

(with brass). Because of the seating capacity of many of the churches, several recitals had to be given three times to accommodate registrants. In general, the programs contained a broader sampling of the literature from varied periods than had been customary in other conventions.

Lecturers included Mildred Andrews on organ technique, Mabel Boyter on children's choirs, Willis James on black folk song, and Madeleine Marshall on diction. Robert Noehren gave a three-day series on Schnitger, Clicquot, and Cavallé-Coll; and Hugh Ross conducted a three-day workshop on choral literature.

Among the special programs were the Atlanta Festival Chorus's performance of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, a concert of chamber music with harpsichordist Egbert Ennulat, assisted by flute and cello, and Billy Nalle at the Fox Theatre.

The Guild Service at Second-Ponce de Léon Baptist Church, near the end of the week, was unexceptionably traditional compared to the Philadelphia "experiment." *The American Organist* called it "the best Guild Service at a National Convention yet." Frederick Swann played a preludial recital and the service. Two pieces commissioned for the event were premiered by Hugh Ross and the Schola Cantorum, with players from the Atlanta Symphony: Gunther Schuller's *Sacred Cantata* and Zoltan Kodály's *Laudes Organi*. If the latter was accessible, the former was most certainly not. Its speaking parts and accompaniment engendered comment; both *The American Organist* and *The Diapason* suggested that its effect would improve with repeated hearings (which, of course, it never got; as with most of the music composed for Guild conventions over the years, the piece went under without leaving so much as a dimple on the surface of the musical stream). But at least there was no disagreement about its artistic integrity or appropriateness for a convention service.

In retrospect, there is a sort of cognitive dissonance between the placidly lovely 1968 Denver convention and the American tragedy and tumult of that year, especially its summer of national discontent. In the month between the Poor People's March on Washington and the riots at the Democratic convention in Chicago, the Guild gathered for its "Convention in the Rockies." Early arrivals heard a pre-convention program of 18th- and 19th-century American music played by Jon Spong, and concerts by the Boys Town Choir under the direction of Msgr. Francis Schmitt and the bell ringers of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Like Atlanta, Denver's roster of recitalists was heavily American; the only non-United States organist was a Canadian, Kenneth Gilbert. Besides the Austrian harpsichordist Isolde Ahlgrimm, the other performers included Herman Berlinski, Paul Callaway, Catharine Crozier, Clyde Holloway, Lindsay Lafford (carillon), Aldis Lagzdins (the competition winner), Karel Paukert (improvisation), Roland Pomerat (carillon), Carl Staplin, Kathleen Thomerson, James Tallis, Marianne Webb, and Richard Westenburg. Holloway played Messiaen's *Les Corps glorieux* and Reubke's *94th Psalm* and Crozier presented one of her spectacular trademark concerts of contemporary music; but for the most part, the repertoire spanned the literature, as had been the case in Atlanta. Among the lecturers were Paul Hume (the historical

use of organ in Catholic worship), Herman Berlinski (synagogue music), Paul Lindsley Thomas (liturgical drama), Milford Myhre (the carillon), and most thought-provoking and even controversial, Charles Wuorinen on electronic music.

As in the previous conventions, new music was featured. An ecumenical service written by Daniel Moe, commissioned by the convention and sung by the Lakewood Methodist Church choir with Charles Shaffer at the organ, constituted the main part of the Guild Service at the Air Force Academy Chapel. Ladd Thomas accompanied yet another commissioned work, Cecil Effinger's *Paul of Tarsus*, parts of which had been completed so late as to test even Thomas's prodigious sight-reading skills. Normand Lockwood's choreographed cantata on five Lutheran chorales, scored for choir, percussion, organ, and dance troupe, commissioned for the convention by the Reuter Organ Company, was greeted tepidly by *The American Organist*: "a pleasant experience, but not exciting."

But the major event—perplexing for some, fascinating for others—was a performance of Dave Brubeck's lengthy oratorio, *The Light in the Forest*. In the years since 1968, the work has become a classic; but to many in Denver in 1968, it came as a revelation of sorts that in the hands of a Brubeck, different styles, idioms, and performance media could be combined into a masterpiece. According to reports, the performance suffered from the lack of full orchestra, such as it had had at its premiere.

In the tumultuous summer of 1970—the summer following the killings at Kent State and Jackson State and peace strikes on 451 campuses; the summer when thousands of women took to the streets of major cities in quest of equal rights; the summer of war in Cambodia; and the last summer of life for Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin—the Guild convened in Buffalo. In what was beginning to seem like a tradition (one viewed wearily and warily by many delegates), yet another "celebration" was floated, this one a 54-minute affair entitled "Bless This World," commissioned by the convention and written by Ed Summerlin and Roger Ortmyer. The piece combined slides, jazz-rock band, singers, and audience participation. Response was cool; as one reviewer put it in *MUSIC*, "Most of us have had it as far as disintegrative music is concerned." A second reviewer dismissed the whole affair as a "sad and disappointing afternoon." But it was the third *MUSIC* reviewer who made perhaps the most profound observation. Said Alan H. Cowle, "It is weak in spiritual depth and, thereby, is contemporary in a way its poet and composer likely never intended."

But there were also some major works from the contemporary repertoire. Benjamin Britten's *Abraham and Isaac* far overmatched its companion piece on the program, Carl Orff's *Comedia de Christi Resurrectione*. Britten's "parable" for church, *Curlew River*, was nicely performed under the direction of Frederick Burgomaster at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Marilyn Mason and Leonard Raver shared a concerto concert with members of the Buffalo Philharmonic. Raver played the solo part in the premiere of Daniel Pinkham's *Organ Concerto*, commissioned by the convention and conducted by the composer. Mason was soloist in Dello Joio's *Antiphonal Fantasy on a Theme of Albrici*. Norberto Guinaldo's *Laudes Tonales*, winner of the

convention committee's organ and brass competition, was given its first performance in yet another program, along with music by Vaclav Nelhybel.

The recitalists included George Baker (competition winner), Allan and Ann Birney, David Craighead, George Markey (who stepped in on six hours' notice and brought the convention to its feet with a stunning recital), Robert Noehren, Cherry Rhodes, Patrick Wedd (1969 RCOO competition winner), and Gillian Weir. Among the lecturers were Robert French, Paul Manz, and Vaclav Nelhybel. Featured guests were Rosalyn Tureck, who played a Bach recital on the piano, and the choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, directed by George Guest, with Stephen Cleobury, organist. Their program at St. Joseph's Old Cathedral, with its resonant acoustics, was, as the reviewer put it in *MUSIC*, "one of the highlights of the convention, and it alone would have justified the whole enterprise."

America seemed quieter in the summer of 1972 than it had been two years earlier. Few if any conventioners, gathering in Dallas, had paid much attention to a small news item a few days earlier reporting a Washington break-in at the Democratic Party offices in the Watergate. Rather, most were contemplating a roster of recitalists that included George Baker, David Craighead, Catharine Crozier, Clyde Holloway (who replaced Fred Tulan at the last moment), Marilyn Keiser, competition winner Douglas Marshall, and three distinguished visiting artists: Marie-Claire Alain, Anton Heiller, and Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini.

Michael Collins of North Texas State lectured on Baroque performance practice and on the *concertato* concept, and Paul Henry Lang on Catholic church music. Sparks flew during the two panel sessions. Alec Wyton moderated a discussion by Sr. Theophane Hytrek, Larry King, Carl Schalk, and Carlton R. Young on contemporary church music trends; and John Ferris moderated a give-and-take by Walter Holtkamp, Fritz Noack, John Schantz, and Robert Sipe on trends in American organbuilding.

Schalk was especially blunt on the subject of congregational singing. Said he, "We have pandered to those who view church music as entertainment"; and King, although supporting popular and vernacular idioms, cautioned about the dismal quality of "98% of the pop, folk, and light music published for use in the church." Wyton observed, "The great past is with us, but we must all clean house"; and Young sensibly advised that each church look to its own heritage, rather than attempt to imitate someone else's.

Among the organbuilders, Holtkamp raised hackles with his assertion that it was possible to "use up" the whole literature of early keyboard music. The atmosphere became especially charged when Schantz opined, "We have pretty much saturated the Baroque field," bringing an agitated Ferris into the fray. Noack spoke in support of flexible winding, to which Schantz retorted, "[U]nsteady wind is propagating defects."

The American Kantorei under the direction of Robert Bergt sang two concerts, primarily made up of music by Schütz and Bach. The Schola Cantorum of Fort Worth, directed by Bev R. Henson, also sang two concerts, the first of Italian sacred repertoire from Viadana to Scarlatti, and the other of Hindemith, Debussy, and Ravel *Chansons*, and Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*.

As in prior years, contemporary music was very much in evidence. Crozier, with a brass ensemble, gave one of her all-20th-century concerts. Keiser's program included a *Prelude* for organ and tape by Richard Stewart and one of Malcolm Williamson's *Peace Pieces*. Tagliavini played one of his own works, and Heiller one of his. Alain graciously programmed still more Heiller, and the closing concert premiered Heiller's *Concerto for Positive, Harpsichord, and Chamber Orchestra*, commissioned for the convention, with Alain at the organ, Tagliavini at the harpsichord, and Heiller on the podium. Craighead played Persichetti's *Parable VI*, also commissioned by the Dallas Chapter. The major commissioned work was a "sacred opera," *The Wrestler*, composed and conducted by Samuel Adler and staged by the Music-Drama Guild of St. Michael's Church.

Of all the AGO conventions to date, the Cleveland gathering of 1974 probably departed farthest from what was in any event a very elastic format by now. At one level, Cleveland 1974 was a courageous attempt to address the musical idioms and technologies that seemed likely to define music, in and out of the church, for the last quarter of the 20th century. Inevitably, it became a parable for its own time: an era when the Moog synthesizer was cutting-edge musical technology; when tossing black-lighted, fluorescent-painted ping-pong balls at the audience was an avant-garde compositional device; and when one listened with respect—or at least a straight face—to a motet for a cappella choir and bongo drums.

Cleveland was about the avant-garde of the 1970s: Matthias Bamert's *Daniel's Visions* for chorus, orchestra, and spoken voice in both structured and aleatoric ways, the major piece in the Guild Service, termed by *MUSIC*'s reviewer, "impressionistic and programmatic, and thoroughly enjoyable"; Jean Guillou and Cherry Rhodes performing two of Guillou's *Colloques* or "conversations" for organ and piano and his 45-minute *Symphonie Initiatique* for three organs, two of them prerecorded. It was about technology: Donald Erb lecturing on contemporary notation and performance practice and later demonstrating the electronic music laboratory at the Cleveland Institute; William Albright lecturing on the electronic modification of organ sounds and later performing his own music and that of other similarly advanced composers.

Cleveland was about the juxtaposition of contrasts: Gerd Zacher lecturing on new techniques in performance practice and later illustrating his thesis with a recital interpreting *Contrapunctus I* of Bach's *The Art of Fugue* in ten different ways as "homage" to ten composers, from Bach to Ligeti; Gregg Smith lecturing on Charles Ives's choral music and then conducting his Gregg Smith Singers in a program that set Ned Rorem's *Missa Brevis* (commissioned for the convention) alongside "parlor" songs by Stephen Foster and his contemporaries. It was about the unexpected: William Albright, avatar of technology and the avant-garde, in a concert of ragtime and Chicago blues.

In such a context, Marilyn Mason's lecture-performance of Schoenberg's *Variations on a Recitativ* must have seemed almost archaic; and one can understand how the Ohio Chamber Orchestra's performance of Ernst Bloch's *Concerto Grosso No. 1* of 1924 for string orchestra and piano, as exquisitely wrought a piece of neo-classicism as ever

there was, could have been so casually dismissed by one reviewer as "historically interesting."

But the convention also offered a number of more traditional events. At the other end of the historical spectrum from Albright and Erb, Gustav Leonhardt conducted a seminar on early organ music and played a concert of the literature on two small organs by Brombaugh and Flentrop and a harpsichord by William Dowd. Helen Kemp lectured on children's choir techniques, Louis Lane on choral conductors and instrumentalists, and Burton Garlinghouse on basic voice for the choir rehearsal. Gerre Hancock lectured on improvisation (his own surpassing command of which he demonstrated with stunning effect at the Friday Festival Service); and Arthur Poister conducted a masterclass for organ students.

All things considered, organ recitals of the usual type took a distinct backseat in Cleveland. Robert Glasgow played Tournemire and Langlais; Robert Noehren played an all-Bach program. But not until Thursday did Peggy Marie Haas, the competition winner, play what—as the reviewer for *MUSIC* put it—"many in the audience welcomed as the first 'traditional' recital of the convention."

Where but Boston for the convention of 1976, the nation's bicentennial year? A staggering 2,300 registrants were divided into four groups, and several programs had to be given as many as four times—during one of the hottest weeks in memory and in churches without air-conditioning. Yet it all went smoothly and by the book: that is, the 88-page convention book, containing programs, program notes, stoplists, and notes on the organs and program participants.

In the spirit of the bicentennial, tradition made a strong comeback in 1976, especially in the Guild Service at Trinity Church, with its enthusiastic hymn singing and spectacular service playing and improvisation by Gerre Hancock. The new music, Nancy Plummer Faxon's Introit and the major work, Daniel Pinkham's *Fanfares*, which the composer conducted, was well received. Of the latter, the reviewer for *MUSIC* reported: "Each of the four short episodes shone with freshness."

Morning offered varied seminars and workshops: Martha Folts on contemporary repertoire, John Gibbons on continuo playing, Gerre Hancock on improvisation, André Isoir on early French music, James Nicholson on harpsichord maintenance, Fritz Noack on organ design, Lisa Parker on eurythmics, Arthur Poister on French repertoire, Robert Schuneman on German Romantic literature, Howard Swan on conducting, Julia Sutton on early dance, and Harald Vogel on 17th-century keyboard practice.

Boston was (and is) a center of the American tracker revival, and for the first time, an AGO national convention was able to hear a broad sampling of literature played on a variety of tracker organs, foreign and domestic, old and new. Even the avant-garde was accorded its place, if not so prominent a one as in Cleveland two years before. Martha Folts's recital on the Fisk at Pinkham's own King's Chapel involved both tape effects and voice parts for the organist. More typical were Margaret Mueller's program of Sweelinck, Distler, and Mozart on the Flentrop at Harvard's Busch-Reisinger Museum, Roberta Gary's of Pachelbel, Bach, Böhm, Cooper, and Messiaen on the Frobenius at First Church in Cambridge, Harald Vogel playing 17th-century

German literature on the Fisk at Old West Church, André Isoir performing French music from Titelouze to Duruflé on the Fisk at Harvard's Memorial Church, and competition winner Robert Kenneth Duerr playing Reger, Bach, Persichetti, and Vierne on the Casavant at First and Second Church.

But electric-action instruments did not go unheard. Thomas Murray's recital of Mendelssohn, Franck, and Elgar on the great 1863/1902 Hook at Immaculate Conception moved *MUSIC*'s reviewer to invoke poetry, and George Baker's concluding recital on the immense Aeolian-Skinner at the First Church of Christ, Scientist—especially his closing improvisation on a submitted theme—brought a standing ovation. And there were a number of surprises in a recital (via player roll) by Edwin H. Lemare, Lynnwood Farnam, and Clarence Eddy given on the 1929 Welte-Tripp at Church of the Covenant.

As scheduled, Yuko Hayashi shared the program at Old West with Vogel, playing the premiere of Gunther Schuller's *Tryptique*. So tardily had the score been delivered that Hayashi had but a week to learn it. In an imposing feat of musicianship, she gave the work a superb performance.

There was no dearth of concerts by choirs and ensembles at the 1976 convention. The Cecilia Society sang Pinkham and Harbison at Old North; and Alexander's Feast performed music from the time of Henry VIII and from early America at nearby St. Stephen's (the concert preceded by a brief recital of English and American music by George Bozeman on the church's Fisk rebuild of a c.1830 organ by an unknown builder). The Handel and Haydn Society presented music of Mabel Daniels, Amy Beach, and the Handel *Coronation Anthems*, along with a Handel Concerto with Barbara Bruhns as soloist, at Holy Cross Cathedral (unfortunately, the cathedral's massive Hook organ was so deteriorated that only a demonstration was possible). The King's College Choir of Cambridge, England, sang both a concert in St. Paul's in Cambridge and services of Matins and Evensong at Trinity Church.

Among the special events were a lecture-recital by John Gibbons on three of the keyboard instruments from the Museum of Fine Arts collection, and a program of Renaissance dance and music by Julia Sutton's Elizabethan Dance Ensemble at Jordan Hall. Perhaps the only controversial program was that of the Ronald Ingraham Concert Choir at Old South Church. Some felt that the commercial style of the music and presentation was better suited to a night club act than to worship.

Seattle in 1978 seemed to be about the re-consideration and consolidation of the varied trends of past years, even as it focused on the Guild's mission of education in the many facets of worship and the arts by providing eight hours of classes and seminars. Each morning, Erik Routley lectured on "Church Music in the Late 20th Century," after which, delegates dispersed to a variety of seminars and classes, among them: William Albright on new music, Robert Anderson on pedagogy, Jon Bailey and John Cook on the church and the arts, Joan Benson on the clavichord and fortepiano, Guy Bovet on Spanish organ music, John Brombaugh on European organs, Douglas Butler on German Romantic music, David Calhoun on harpsichord construction, Joan Catoni Conlon on choral conducting, Gerard Farrell on Gregorian chant, John Hamilton on early French music, Clyde Holloway on Messiaen, Marion

Ireland on designing church art, Margaret Irwin-Brandon on early English keyboard music, Paul Manz on hymn improvisation, Mary McCleary on handbells, Ronald Nelson on children's choirs, Orpha Ochse on the American organ, John O'Donnell on South German Baroque organ music, William Porter on Baroque style and technique, Michael Radulescu (substituting for Anton Heiller) on Bach chorale preludes, Erik Routley on church music and the congregation, W. Thomas Smith on the creative use of hymns, and Gillian Weir on the organ and the performer. Roberta Bitgood and James Bryan led forums on Guild issues. Various publishers' representatives held anthem-reading sessions.

Albright, Anderson, Butler, Benson (clavichord and fortepiano), Bovet, Holloway, Irwin-Brandon (harpsichord), O'Donnell, and Porter followed up on their class sessions with convention recitals exemplifying their areas of expertise. Joan Lippincott played the all-Bach program originally scheduled to be given by Heiller, and John Chappell Stowe, the competition winner, played a program of music by Mendelssohn, Bach, du Mage, White, and Vierne.

Consistent with convention custom, ensemble programs were much in evidence. The convention premiere was Richard Proulx's chancel opera, *The Pilgrim*, for soloists, choir, handbells, and chamber orchestra. Based on three versions of a medieval Easter *visitatio* (the three Marys' visit to the tomb and encounter with the angel and with Christ), the work juxtaposed the chant-style modality and organum of its models with triadic textures.

Lawrence Moe, along with three violins and three male singers, performed a program of music from Frescobaldi and Monteverdi to Walther. The 16-voice Vancouver Chamber Choir, directed by Jon Washburn, presented a concert of sacred music from the Americas, Canada to Brazil: Ives, Franco, Somer, Villa-Lobos, Rorem, Willan, and Ginastera. The Western Wynde Consort performed songs and dances from the 14th-century *Libre Vermell*; and Gillian Weir played concerted music by Bixi, Petit, and Jongen with an ensemble of strings and percussion under the direction of Ronald Arnatt as the convention's closing event.

At some level, the 1978 Seattle convention succeeded in bringing a measure of closure to two decades of ferment in worship and the arts. The Guild Service at the First Presbyterian Church, designed by Erik Routley and with hymn accompaniments and improvisations by Paul Manz, contained a variety of readings on music and worship. Dr. Routley's commentary on them, by way of a sermon, had the effect of considering the innovations of the past two decades in the overall context of the history and purpose of church music; of reexamining the innovations and experiments, consolidating that which was good, and weeding out that which was not. In the years to come, that process would continue, even as diverse new streams from many cultures increasingly found their way into the ongoing flow of American church music.

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