



THE ROYAL CANADIAN
COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

**Vancouver Centre
Newsletter**



*Winter Edition
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★ 2017

By Michael Molnar

This year features an interesting collision of a remarkable Anniversary, Celebration, and Commemoration and each one has an organ connection:

500-year Commemoration of the Reformation.

It was in 1517 that Martin Luther's *95 Theses* triggered a cultural rift, the magnitude and consequences of which nobody predicted or expected. What began as an honest and justifiable attack primarily on corruption (not mainly on doctrine or theology, as many believe...Luther was a Catholic, just as Jesus was a Jew!) led to a fundamental shift away from relying on ecclesiastical authority. This ruptured Christendom, and thus the very core of Western Civilization, opening wide the door for early liberalism and ultimately the individualist secular society we have today.



Many of the great musical and literary masters from the past few centuries arose from Protestant cultures. Here in Vancouver, expect some exciting activity in many churches, highlighting the good that came from this enormously significant event. For example, St. Mark's Lutheran Church is planning to present a series of short organ concerts with a Reformation theme (on April 29th, May 20th, and June 17th). Details are still being sorted out, so if interested in performing, now is the time to practice your Bach and contact Dubravko Pajalic at dpajalic@outlook.com!

As we hear from other churches, and when we get closer to event dates, we will let members and friends know about upcoming activities.

150-year Celebration of the Dominion of Canada.



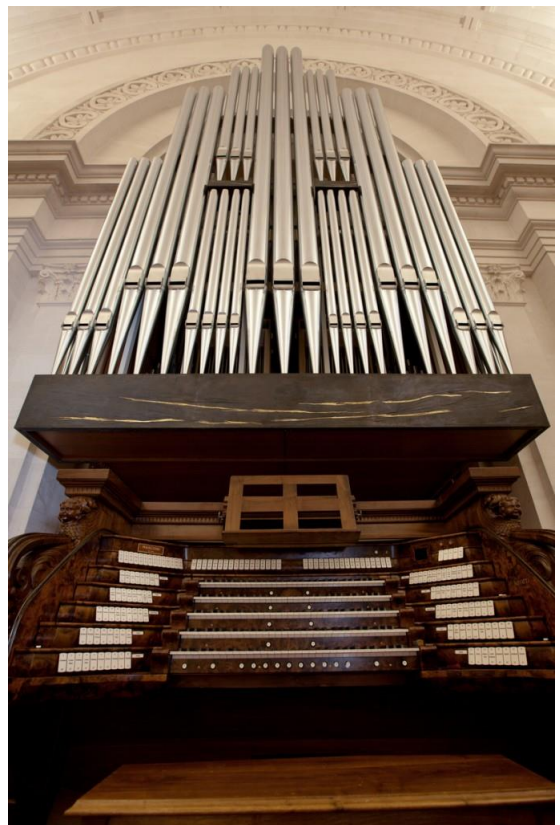
It was in 1867 that a handful of sparsely populated regions, covering a significant amount of geographic territory, banded together and officially became the country of Canada, which still remains a part of the commonwealth of the British Empire. Far from being only English, the influence of France over the centuries has ensured that a vibrant French culture is a big part of our Canadian identity. This year, Canada will be having perhaps its biggest National Organ Convention (held in connection with the American Guild of Organists) in the cosmopolitan centre of Montreal, a true blend of all things francophone and anglophone.

Anticipate some extraordinary performances, hundreds of organists, dozens of amazing instruments, and some excellent food. If you haven't registered, yet...there is still time, and this will definitely be a good convention to attend.

100-year Anniversary of the Apparition at Fatima.

Like Guadalupe in the 1500's, or the miraculous medal in the 1800's, the apparition at Fatima was the most celebrated Marian vision for the 1900's. How does this connect to organs? In Portugal, in honour of this centenary, the Mascioni organ building company will be renovating the biggest organ in all of Portugal (which had fallen into disrepair and has been silent for some time). It is located in the church dedicated to "Our Lady of Fatima". To give a sense of what this will entail, they are going to be downsizing it to "only" a little over 6500 pipes (to focus on quality instead of quantity).

So, the lesson to take from this is that if you want to ensure your organ won't be left to rot, make sure it is attached to something that will be having an historic anniversary, and you might be able to inspire interest in giving it a renovation and new life!



To be renovated Fatima organ, Portugal

2017 may well be a vibrant and memorable year, and we look forward to many great concerts here in Vancouver.

Upcoming Concerts

Saturday, January 21 11:00am – 3:00pm, RCCO Organ Crawl
St. James' Anglican Church - Christ Church Anglican Cathedral
More info: www.rcco.bc.ca Upcoming Events

Friday, February 17, 8:00pm, Holy Rosary Cathedral
Cathedral Organist Denis Bédard in Concert.
Works by Couperin, Bach, Hielscher, Brahms, and Rheinberger.
Tickets \$20 adult, \$15 student/senior

Sunday, February 26, 3:00pm, Ryerson United Church
Sundays at 3, concert by organist Gerald Harder.
Works by Cook, Buxtehude, Hebble, Franck, and Tambling.
Tickets \$15 general, \$10 student, available at the door.

Saturday, March 4, 7:00pm, South Burnaby United Church
Organ and Piano, Duets and Solos, organist Marc D'Anjou and pianist Marcus Petrunia
Tickets \$10 adult, \$8 student/senior

Sunday, April 22 3:00pm, Ryerson United Church
Sundays at 3, concert by organist David Poon.
Works by Bach, Gibbons, Vierne, Mulet, Messiaen, Duruflé, and Cornelius-Bates.
Improvisation.
Tickets \$15 general, \$10 student, available at the door.

Sunday, May 7, 7:00pm, St. Mary's Kerrisdale
RCCO Members' Students' Recital
Free admission, donations accepted.

Friday, May 12, 8:00pm, Holy Rosary Cathedral
Hans Uwe Hielscher in Concert.
Works by French and German Romantic composers, as well as by Bédard and Hielscher.
Tickets \$20 adult, \$15 student/senior.

Saturday, May 27, 8:00pm, Shaughnessy Heights United Church
Vancouver Philharmonic Orchestra – St.-Saëns Organ Symphony
By donation.

★ Halloween Concert Report

Michael Molnar and Rachel Alflatt, with contributions from Sam Balden

Our 11th annual Halloween Concert featured RCCO members performing on the large St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church pipe organ, with Sam Balden (our Regional Director) acting as Master of Ceremonies. It attracted a much bigger audience than we had expected, mostly due to a six minute CBC Radio 'Early Edition' interview with four RCCO members, which took place earlier that week at St. Andrew's-Wesley, and aired at 8:20am on the morning of the event.

The interview:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/programs/theearlyedition/why-is-the-organ-such-a-spooky-instrument-1.3826235>

The CBC's follow-up article:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/why-the-organ-is-such-a-spooky-instrument-according-to-musicians-1.3825017>



More than 330 people turned out, and enjoyed a

programme ranging from the Bach D minor Toccata and Fugue to "Phantom of the Opera" and other spooky favourites, enhanced by MC Sam Balden's jokes, poems, and Halloween facts. The performers were in costume, the audience was enthusiastic, there were Halloween decorations galore, and the church's Gothic atmosphere added the finishing touch to a hugely successful concert. A splendid Halloween-themed



reception followed (with some hasty purchases required during the concert to plump up the refreshments, due to the unexpected size of the audience!).

★ Pipe Organ Spotlight

The feature for this newsletter is the organ at **St. James' Church**, Casavant Organ, Opus 1605. This is one of the organs on our upcoming organ crawl.



The organ at St. James' Church

In 1938, St. James' Church was ready for a new 3-manual, electro-pneumatic, 31-stop organ (1760 pipes).

The price for building it was just shy of \$10,000. At the time, and during the Great Depression, this was not an insignificant sum.

The congregation did enthusiastic fundraising, including a series of tea parties, and a production by the Players' Guild (and one generous anonymous congregant gave enough to cover about half the cost).

The contract was signed on April 28th, and the organ was installed that same year in November. The facade was designed by the same architect who had recently designed the new look of St. James' Church.

The 3-rank gallery division was added in the 1940s, and ideas for updating and modernizing were had in the 1960s, but remained only ideas until water damage in the 1980s forced a significant renovation and enabled some of the modifications to be put in place. In the early 2000s, the console was fully overhauled, and it has remained unchanged since then.

★ Useful Information

Vancouver Centre Teachers List:

Rachel ALFLATT (Queens Avenue United Church, New Westminster)

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