



THE ROYAL CANADIAN
COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

**Vancouver Centre
Newsletter**



*Autumn Edition
October, 2019*



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★ President's Message

Dear organists and organ enthusiasts,

It's been a fun first few months as Centre president for me. I'm always surprised when fall hits, and this year was no exception! Our annual Halloween organ concert is fast approaching on Oct. 25 at 7:30 pm. We were worried this year that we wouldn't be able to find a venue for this popular concert, since St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church is under renovation. Thankfully St. John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church was able to step in with their newly renovated organ console. It will be my first time hearing and playing that organ in all its glory, and I'm looking forward to it!

Closely following that, RCCO visiting clinician Jean-Willy Kunz will be giving a workshop and concert in November. Dr. Kunz, currently the resident organist of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, is a young organist with an extraordinarily accomplished career, playing with well-known artists such as Branford Marsalis, and Rufus and Martha Wainwright. His workshop on Nov. 6 is one not to miss, as is his concert on Nov. 8, featuring Saint-Saëns' ever-popular Carnival of the Animals.

We're starting to plan out our activities for 2020, too. Along with our annual Spring Students' and Members' Recital, we also have an organ crawl in the works and one or two workshops. Be sure to look for our emails in the coming months!

If you are playing in any concerts featuring the organ, please send me an email at angelique_po@hotmail.com so that we can include it in our online concert calendar. I hope to see organ and choir music continue to thrive in our Vancouver Centre.

With thanks,
Angelique Po
President, RCCO Vancouver Centre

★ Memories of the 2019 RCCO Convention

By Gail Ovington

The **Changing Tides RCCO Festival 2019** in Halifax, Nova Scotia was a success from the moment we arrived to register on Sunday July 7 to the last note played on Thursday, July 11. From the Student Academy Recital to the afternoon concert in memory of David McDonald and to the final round of the National Organ Competition, all on Sunday, July 7, the Casavant organs we heard that day were enough to inspire us and to assure us that we had crossed Canada from coast to coast for a wonderful reason! What a joy to hear Peter Togni's improvisations and his "Elegy for David" on the Casavant at The Cathedral Church of All Saints.



Monday, July 8 began with a Historic Organ/wine tour to the Annapolis Valley. All instruments were in remarkable shape, thanks to the hours of maintenance and restoration work. We learned about their history and were privileged to hear a recital on each.

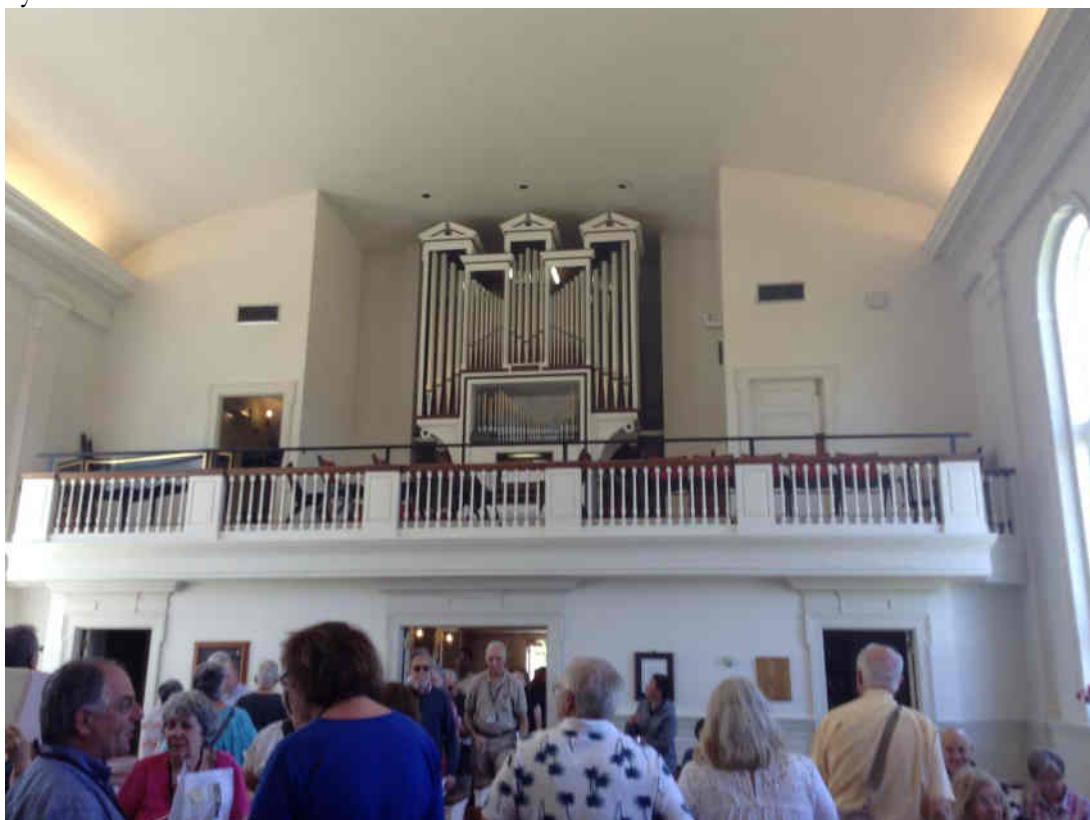
The one manual George Stevens, ca 1862, in St. Mary's Anglican at Auburn.



The Samuel Warren and Son, ca 1867, in the First Cornwallis Baptist Church in Upper Canada.



We were also delighted to hear a recital on the Casavant (1963) at the chapel at Acadia University.



Another major highlight on July 7 was our winery tour in the Annapolis Valley. Our delicious lunch was in the basement wine cellar - bit of a "Harry Potter" kind of magic as we laughed, drank wine and ate together in this "underground dining hall" - chandeliers over our heads and wine barrels by our side. (Could a wizard, or perhaps a troll, be appearing in the shadows?).

We arrived back to the Lord Nelson Hotel just in time to load the buses heading over to St. Matthew's United Church. On the Casavant our very own Denis Bédard performed works by such composers as Frescobaldi and Briggs as well as five of his own compositions such as his *Contrastes and Variations on "Christus Vincit"*. Denis received a thunderous standing ovation, followed by a near stampede to get to the Exhibit Room where most of his music was sold out within minutes that evening. After all the playing, there were autographs to sign!



Tuesday, July 9 featured both a workshop and a hymn festival on the "changing tides" of hymns in the last 100 years by Fred Graham. Fred's wealth of knowledge and manner of presentation was appealing to all.

The full day also included a recital by Stephen Candow and Alan Klaus (trumpet) with thought provoking works such as *The Hollow Men* by Vincent Persichetti and *The Seventh Trumpet* by Charles Ore. The recital workshop by Stillman Matheson was magical and inspiring. Then to add to the events we were so blessed with the beautiful Choral Evensong at St. George's Anglican (Round) Church.



The Festival Luncheon was a great way to have the time to renew friendships and review our ideas.



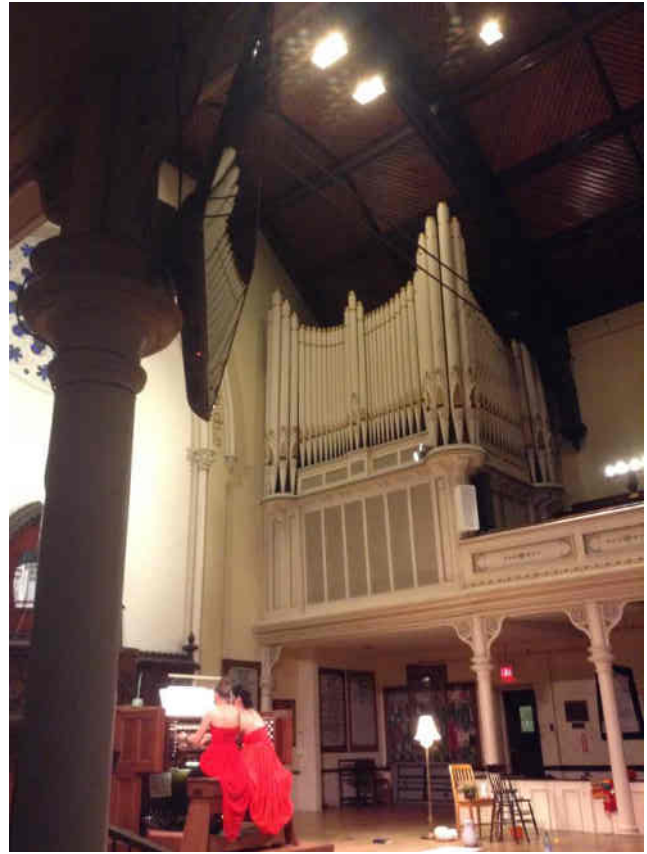
Wednesday, July 10 began with an improvisation workshop by Rachel Laurin followed by a masterclass with Denis Bédard.

How wonderful to watch the master performers and composers working with students on the beautiful Casavant. Opus 1879 at St. Matthew's United. Convocation that day, as always, was a time to recognize the achievements of many members across Canada.

The Festival Banquet with choice of lobster or chicken was indeed an eastern Canadian treat!

We then returned by bus, all on time as usual, to St. Matthew's United to see and hear the hilarious dramatic concert by Sarah Svendsen and Rachel Mahon in their perfectly timed Organized Crime Duo. My, how we laughed and were so amazed at their technique as they moved through their comedy.





Yes, Sarah is playing the Fugue from the Toccata and Fugue in d minor BWV 565.

Thursday, July 11 offered the College service, two outstanding workshops (including a very well presented and informative one, “Ow, It Hurts!” on the reduction and prevention of instrument related musculoskeletal injuries for organist and keyboardists, by Sarah Svendson), and three recitals - Donald Hunt on the Casavant at The Cathedral Church of All Saints, Craig Humber on the Letourneau at St. James Anglican, and the amazing final - Rachel Laurin who concluded her concert with her Fantasia for Organ and Harp, opus 52 on the Casavant at the Cathedral Church for All Saints.



I will personally never forget the raucous and thunderous 16' and 32' pedals of that Casavant, the absolute fine articulation to "the nth degree" of organist, Craig Humber, the powerful performance by Donald Hunt in his rendering of Kenneth Leighton's Fantasy on St. Columba, the amazing interweaving of the melody, "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah" by Denis Bédard in his Fantasia on Two Hymn Tunes, and the those driving dramatic phrases for organ in the 4th movement of the Fantasia for Organ and Harp by virtuoso and composer, Rachel Laurin.

The festival will hold well within all of our memories and we look forward to Victoria 2020!



The BC delegation: RCCO Vancouver Centre members and BC Regional director

★ Sleuthing a Saint

By Susan Ohannesian

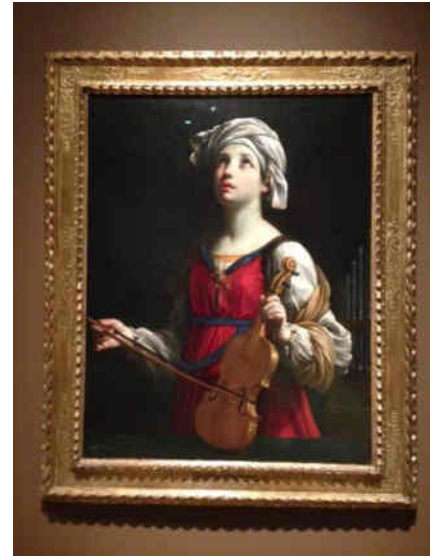
When I joined the RCCO in 1969 and in many years that followed, there was always a commemoration of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music and musicians and especially of organs and organists. Her date of commemoration is November 22 and every year the RCCO Vancouver centre would have a church service on or near that date with many choirs and organists taking part.

I have always loved Benjamin Britten's Hymn to St. Cecilia which begins with these words by W. H. Auden

In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

In art St. Cecilia is usually pictured playing an organ.

Last May, I was visiting Pasadena and went to the Norton Simon Museum. I was struck by a painting which looked like St. Cecilia and upon closer inspection discovered I was correct. However, I was surprised that she was depicted playing a stringed instrument. So I looked even closer and there in the background, very dark and almost invisible, was a keyboard and organ pipes. I felt happy and content. St. Cecilia, Patron Saint of Organs and Organists.

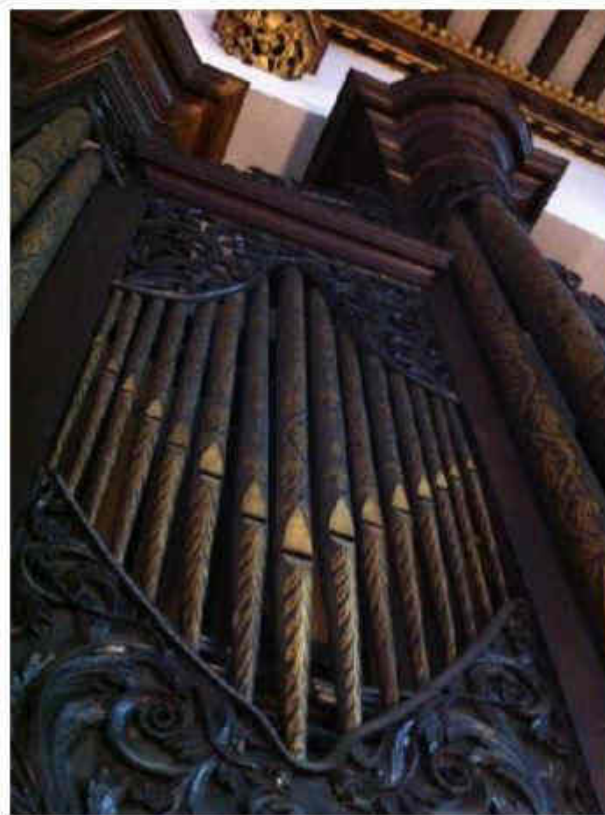


★ Pipe Organ Spotlight – Four Organs in Cambridge

The second in the series “Some Organs I Have Tried” by **Susan Ohannesian**

In the summer of 2015 Paul and I had a month long holiday in England and Scotland. We were in Christ Church Cambridge for a few days rehearsing with the Cathedral Singers of Ontario conducted by Ian Sadler. I knew I would be able to try out that organ, and before we left Vancouver, I made arrangements to try out the organs in Trinity Hall and Jesus College.

After our first rehearsal at Christ College a few of us (singers who were also organists) climbed the ancient stone stairs to the organ loft and tried out the organ which was first supplied to the college in 1705, built by “Father” Bernard Smith. Over the centuries the tracker organ has been rebuilt many times and finally restored in 1983 by Bishop and Son of Ipswich, with two manuals and pedal and using old cases and pipework.

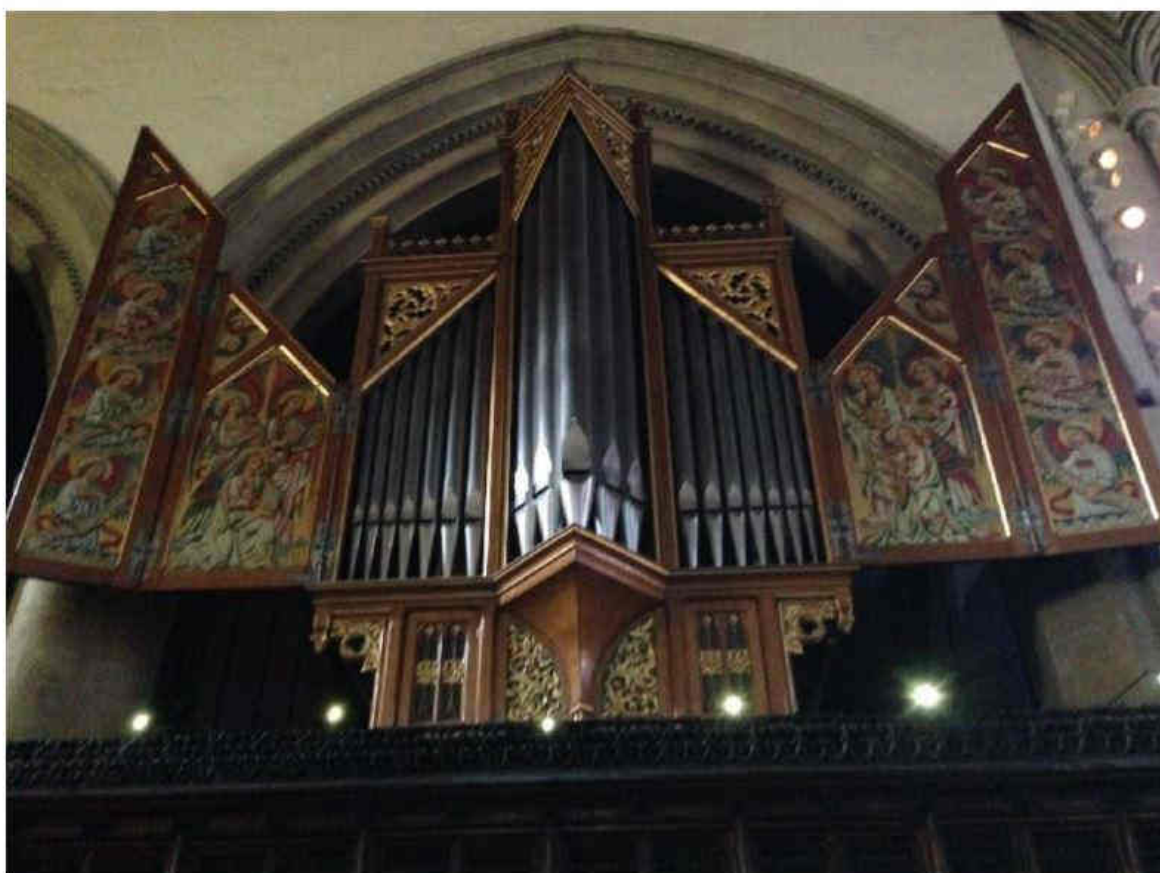




Later that day we walked over to Trinity Hall where I had arranged to have an hour on the tracker organ, an instrument built in 2006 by the Danish builder Carsten Lund. The specification is Great - Bordun 16, Principal 8, Rohrflute 8, Octave 4, Cone Flute 4, Quinte 2 2/3, Octav 2, Tierce 1 3/5. Swell - Gamba 8, Flat traverso 8, Fugara 4, Gedakt 4, Gemshorn 2, Mixtur III, Oboe 8. Pedal - Subbass 16, Bordun (from Great) 16, Principal (from Great) 8, Gedackt (ext. Subbass 8, Fagotto 16. The console and casework are beautiful and the sound is sweet and just the right size for the chapel.



The next day I had arranged to try the organs (yes, there are two) at Jesus College. The oldest organ dates from the mid 19th century. It served as the principal organ until 1971 and has recently been restored to its original 1849 state. It is a small tracker organ tuned to mean tone and has an incredibly beautiful case with painted doors which remind me of the inside of a harpsichord lid.



The second tracker organ I was able to play in Jesus College, situated in the same loft, replaced the Mander organ which was built in 1971. The new organ was built in 2007 by Orgelbau Kuhn of Switzerland. I really enjoyed playing all sorts of repertoire on this modern instrument with a comfortable console, beautiful casework and gorgeous sound. You can find the specifications on the Kuhn website where it is described as an orchestral organ in the English style. <https://www.orgelbau.ch/en/organ-details/114170.html>.



All the organs I played in Cambridge were tracker and all but the Kuhn organ had straight pedal boards which took a little getting used to. I am very grateful to Ian Sadler for giving me an hour on the Christ Church College organ and to Sarah McDonald for giving me the contacts to arrange to play the organs at Trinity Hall and Jesus College.



★ Upcoming Concerts

Friday, October 25, 7:30pm, St. John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church **RCCO Halloween Concert**

An evening of spooky music by various ghosts and ghouls!
Free admission, donations accepted.

Sunday, October 27, 7:00pm, St. Philip's Anglican Church
Halloween Concert featuring screening of 1925 "Phantom of the Opera"

With Organist Michael Murray.
Tickets \$25, Children under 10: \$5.



From Lowe's website

Saturday, November 2, 2:00pm, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Organist Frank Ezinga

Works by Dutch composers: Sweelinck, Zwart, Andriessen, Kee, Asma, K. J. Mulder, Hagen, J. Mulder.
By donation.

Wednesday, November 6, 7:30pm, St. John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church
Workshop with Montreal Symphony Orchestra Organist in Residence and RCCO Travelling Clinician Jean-Willy Kunz

Expanding the Possibilities of Organ Repertoire: Transcription, improvisation, jazz and non-classical music.
By donation.

Friday, November 8, 8:00pm, Holy Rosary Cathedral
Montreal Symphony Orchestra Organist in Residence Jean-Willy Kunz in Concert
A co-production by Holy Rosary Cathedral and the RCCO Travelling Clinician Programme, with the help of the CIOC.

Transcriptions for the organ of works by Vivaldi (by Bach), Debussy, Saint-Saëns (the Carnival of the Animals), and improvisation.
By donation.

Friday, November 29, 7:30pm, Holy Rosary Cathedral
Sacred Music for Advent

Performed by the Cathedral's own musicians: organist Denis Bédard and the Cathedral Choir, assistant organist Catherine Walsh and the Holy Rosary Women's Choir, the Contemporary Choir with director Chito Lacsina, and the Spanish Mass Choir.
Free admission, donations accepted.

Useful Information

Vancouver Centre Teachers List:

Rachel ALFLATT (Queens Avenue United Church, New Westminster)

Phone number: 604 322 5995

Email: cheldar@cheldar.com

Frank EZINGA (Canadian Reformed Church, Langley)

Phone number: 604 807 5246

Email: frank.ezinga@langleycanrc.org

Vancouver Centre Executive 2019-2020

President	Angelique Po
Vice-president	Michael Dirk
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Centre Membership Coordinator	Susan Ohannesian
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