

BEST BET



The restored Hook organ at Mechanics Hall will be played in two concerts — Wednesday and Thursday, June 30 — as part of the American Guild of Organists Convention.

Entertainment and the Arts

8 The Evening Gazette

Worcester, Mon., June 27, 1983

Survey Concert Kicks Off Convention for Organists

By LILY S. OWYANG

Gazette Music Critic

Six hundred organists and friends convened in Worcester yesterday for the beginning of the combined 28th annual convention of the National Organ Historical Society and the convention of the American Guild of Organists, Region I.

With headquarters at Assumption College, the convention concludes with a festival concert Thursday evening at Mechanics Hall. In the meantime, there are workshops, lectures, demonstrations, and of course, concerts.

The Gazette Reviews/

Music

Last night's concert by James David Christie, showcased the organ at Trinity Lutheran Church. Tonight, it will be the organ at the Memorial Auditorium.

Handbook of Organs

Reflecting the packed convention schedule is an equally packed 1983 organ handbook of information. Each organ featured in concert is listed, along with information on its builder, the history of the building it is housed in and the number of keys, stops and action of each instrument.

Needless to say, performers appearing in concert would select a judicious program. Last night, Christie offered the traditional chronological sampling.

The program began with a 16th century Dutch composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. Then, the short *Canzona Francese Terza* by Giovanni Salvatore.

The centerpiece of the program was the *Chorale Fantasy* on a hymn tune by Dietrich Buxtehude, German 17th composer, and influenced J. S. Bach. That was followed by a fun piece, by Claude-Benigne Balbastre, complete with its own tale, variations on the *Marseillaise* and clichés of effects.

After intermission, came the portion of the program where Christie

excelled. There were two contemporary works for organ, separated by the more traditional *Paysages Euskariens* by Ermend Bonnal.

Fresh Approach

Six Variations sur un Psaume Huguenot written in 1974 by Andre Isoir and *Proverbs* written in 1979-80 by Boston composer Daniel Pinkham stood out for its fresh approach and treatment of instrumental color.

In the Isoir piece, alternating sections of the theme plainly stated, and the different organ variations created high contrast and excitement. There was drama and abundant color.

The Pinkham work, less obvious in composition, had a sense of momentum and form. Christie showed a definite knack and feeling for those two works.

By contrast, the Buxtehude and Sweelinck pieces in the first half were not as convincingly played.

In both works, sections tended to tumble into each other without sufficient definition. Perhaps it was getting used to the instrument. But keyboard technique remained impressive throughout.

Organists generally play to the backs of the audience. So it was refreshing to see the audience turn around to greet the performer up in the organ loft with a healthy round of applause. And the practice continued after each piece.

Range, Registration, Stops

It is sometimes easy to forget what organists deal with. Choices in range, selection of registrations and stops, the organist has enough to handle with just fingers. Then there are the pedals for the feet with its own choice and selection of colors.

While true, instruments like the harpsichord and piano share a similar keyboard, there the similarity stops. Much of early keyboard literature was written originally for organ.

Another tradition of the Organ Historical Society convention is the joint singing of a hymn, which the audience did with enthusiasm. If the camaraderie and spirit last night is any indication, this convention is already on its way to success.

Hook Organ Takes Center Stage

By LILY S. OWYANG

Gazette Music Critic

The restored Hook organ at Mechanics Hall provided a most eloquent statement in last night's concluding concert of the convention of organists and organ historians in the city.

It was a night of many stars. Catherine Crozier, internationally known organist, and soloist for the Organ Concerto of Franz Joseph Haydn, and Francis Poulenc, shone the brightest.

The Gazette Reviews/

Music

The Worcester Chorus under the direction of Gerald Mack occupied a major portion of the program itself. There were works by Tomas Luis Victoria, Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner and the *Mass in Time of War* by Haydn.

A new work commissioned by the convention, *A Festival Cantata on the Hymn Tune Worcester* by J. Gerals Phillips was joyous, effective and well received. Even the audience became performers in the last verse of the Phillips' work.

Worcester Orchestra

Accompanying the chorus and soloist was the Worcester Orchestra, conducted by Henry Hokans.

There were certainly enough variety to suit many tastes. Still, the most memorable part of the evening was in hearing the Hook organ featured as solo instrument with orchestra.

The distinctive reed-like sounds featured in the Haydn added crispness to the musical texture. The orchestra gave wonderful support and lift to the phrases.

Miss Crozier's performance of the second movement was lovely in its reflective quality. The Poulenc work written in 1938 asked for a different approach.

Miss Crozier's command of the many textures, colors and possibilities of the organ was masterful. The standing ovation from the audience of experts was spontaneous and deemed a high honor.

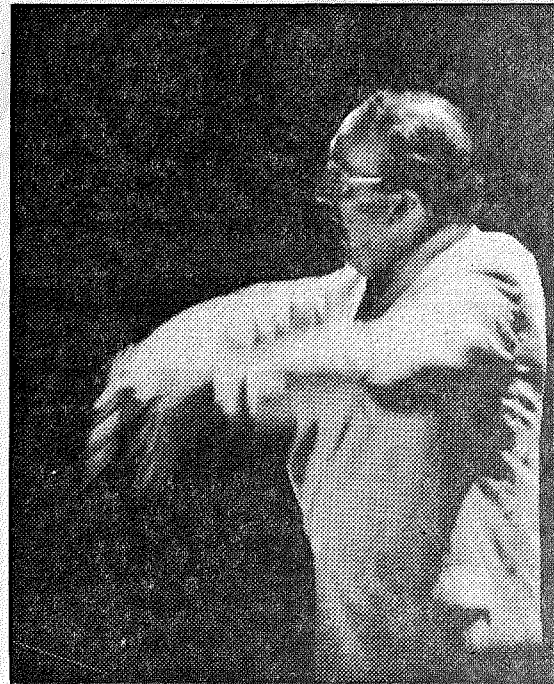
It is not overstated to say that the sound of the Mechanics Hall organ rings true. The possibilities of tonal colors are genuinely rich in its variety and shades.

In its firmament, the Worcester Chorus shone as bright. The chorus's new sense of security shows especially in the way it shifts from style to style.

Last night, the chorus began with a 16th century work. As the group progressed to the Bruckner late 19th century Motets, the sound transformed into a fuller, more muscular quality.

In *Ecce Sacerdos*, the articulation came across as biting and adamant. It was convincingly performed.

Haydn's *Mass* featured soloists Brenda Thompson, soprano, Carol Sanderson, alto, Donald Caldwell, tenor, and Stephen Hermes, bass.



Gerald Mack.

The performance sounded more relaxed, perhaps because the work is more familiar to the group.

A plaque from the Organ Historical Society recognizing the importance of the Hook organ was presented in a ceremony last night. The plaque had been awarded in 1975, but was never formally presented. Two historically important organs acclaimed worthy of preservation are here in this city. They need to be heard more often.

Concert to Close 5-Day Organ Convention

By Peter P. Donker
Of the Telegram Staff

Since her debut in the spring of 1941 in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., organist Catharine Crozier has appeared as soloist throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

And while her music career led her to concerts in Boston, Methuen, Springfield and Pittsfield, she somehow never made it to Worcester.

One of the nation's most respected performers, Mrs. Crozier today will make up for the oversight when she appears as soloist in the closing concert of the joint convention of organists and organ historians in Worcester.

The concert by the Worcester Orchestra and Worcester Chorus will be at 8 p.m. in Mechanics Hall. Worcester organist Joseph R. Policelli will be the other soloist.

Mrs. Crozier was 27 when she gave that first public organ performance at the national convention of the American Guild of Organists. A New York artists manager was in the audience and signed her up. She has been giving organ recitals since.

She has performed in just about every state and in many European countries, she has been heard on radio and has been seen on television and has appeared with many symphony orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic.

First the Piano

Mrs. Crozier, a daughter of a Presbyterian minister, was born in Oklahoma and at an early age began to study the violin, piano and organ. She made her first recital appearance as a pianist when she was 6, but dropped the violin because she did not care for the way she was playing. She gradually moved to the organ with the instrument becoming her first interest. She continues to play the piano, though, to practice her organ pieces.

Mrs. Crozier studied organ at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and from 1938 to 1953 she served on the school's organ faculty. She became head of the organ department in 1953, staying until 1955 when she moved to Florida where she taught organ at Rollins College in Winter Park.

She currently lives in Whittier, Calif., where she gives classes in organ literature and performance at Whittier College. She also remains active conducting master classes and by giving recitals, about 10 a year.

Recognized on many occasions for her performing and her teaching, Mrs. Crozier holds several honorary degrees, has appeared as recitalist at international organ festivals and has served as jury member at international competitions in Belgium, England and France.

Starting out on her music career at a time when women were not always fully accepted as equals to men, Mrs. Crozier says that



Telegram Photo by STEPHEN T. LANAVA

Catharine Crozier rehearses at Mechanics Hall.

she experienced some but not too much resistance.

"A woman recitalist was not the thing but being a woman never held her back either," Mrs. Crozier says.

Renewed Interest

During her more than 40 years on the concert circuit — she is 69 — Mrs. Crozier has seen a renewed interest develop in the organ as a concert instrument. There has been a move away from electrical aids and towards a purer sound, to let the instrument speak in its own right, she says. Before, many organs were built to present imitations of orchestras.

She has praise for the way the Hook organ in Mechanics Hall was restored. She describes the organ, known locally also as "The Worcester Organ" and "The Great Organ," as one of a limited number of 19th century organs of this type in the country.

"Other instruments do not always receive such good treatment," says Mrs. Crozier, who adds that "the local enthusiasm about the organ is warranted."

The organ, she says, has a tone with an appealing brightness; the instrument's voicing is lively without being oppressive.

At tonight's concert, Mrs. Crozier will be the soloist in Franz Joseph Haydn's Concerto in C Major, a piece that she describes as charming and as one that goes along well with orchestra, and Concerto in G minor by Francis Poulenc, a work she says is more often performed in the United States than in Europe.

The concert will be the closing event of a five-day convention sponsored jointly by the New England Chapter, American Guild of Organists, and the Organ Historical Society. About 600 organists and organ historians are taking part in the convention.

Craighead Gets the Best Out of Hook Organ

By John Cox

The world of organ playing is perhaps as far removed from the ordinary every day world as is that of chamber music or lied singing. But when one is faced with an audience of 500 standing and cheering organists, it is then that one realizes how much is taken for granted by those of us who attend church regularly, but talk through the organist's prelude and postlude.

David Craighead, dean of American Organists, demonstrated this point only too clearly yesterday morning at Mechanics Hall in his recital which was sponsored by the New England chapter, American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society's national convention.

Craighead, a former professor of organ at Occidental College and Westminster Choir College, is now head of the organ department at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and is known as a champion of new organ music. He has premiered

Music Review

Program

Sonata No. III in A Major Felix Mendelssohn
Zwölf Stücke, Op. 59 (Twelve Pieces) Max Reger
Prelude and Fugue in C Major (BWV547) Johann Sebastian Bach
Grande Piece Symphonique, Op. 17 Cesar Franck
David Craighead, organist

many new works throughout the United States and abroad.

Yesterday's program, however, diverged from his usual in that it was made up of 19th century music and included as the only contrasting item a Prelude and Fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach. The program must obviously have been chosen to demonstrate the virtues of the Hook organ at Mechanics Hall which has been carefully restored so as to sound as near as it did in 1864 when it was built.

Some organists are of the opinion that this particular Hook organ is at its best as an accompanying instrument, and it is true that in this concert the general tenor of the program was rather reserved. This may be attributed not only to the organ itself, but also to Craighead's own impeccable taste and sense of registration. He invariably resisted the oft used and hackneyed temptation to "shake the floor" and "lift the roof," and he varied his registration in such a way as to add unusual variety of tone which practically eliminated the pall so often experienced in concerts by lesser organists.

The artist was assisted by two pages who turned for him and assisted with the stops. He was unfortunately handicapped by a TV cameraman who persisted in blinding the audience with his flood light and distracting the listeners no end.



Barbara Bruns gives organ recital at All Saints Church.



Members of the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School.

Telegram Photos by DENNIS VANDAL

Organ Recital Audience Packs All Saints Church

By William A. MacPherson

All Saints Church was the setting last night for the third major event in the organists' convention being held this week in the city.

The two-part program began with a

40-minute recital of French organ music by Barbara Bruns, and continued after an intermission with a concert of sacred choral music by the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School, directed by Theodore Marier.

Convention-goers, many of whom,

prior to the concert, had been scattered throughout the parish hall partaking of a buffet supper, began streaming into the church 20 minutes before concert time, and by 8 p.m. the church was filled, and extra chairs had to be brought in.

Mrs. Bruns, music director at St. Michael's Church, Marblehead, was introduced as an "organ virtuoso," and her recital more than proved it. Sureness of technique was evidenced again and again, as in the pedal counter melody at the beginning of the Roger-Ducasse "Pastorale," and in the scherzando flute melodies of the fifth and eighth variations of the Dupre, to say nothing of the more overtly virtuosic sections of all of her selections.

The program was a perfect match of instrument and music. The All Saints organ, built in 1933 by Aeolian-Skinner and enlarged several times since, is rich, warm, fiery and Romantic; and the two variation pieces in particular provided an ideal showcase especially for the organ's wealth of solo flute and reed colors.

The final selection, Alain's "Litanies," an extroverted, athletic piece, contrasted well with the more introspective Alain "Variations" and closed the recital on an exhilarating note. As the theme thundered from the antiphonal organ above the full main organ, the audience was literally surrounded with sound. Mrs. Bruns was recalled twice with a standing ovation.

The choral concert got off to a festive start as the processional pealed from the antiphonal trumpet. The audience joined in singing the hymn, which was embellished with descants and organ interludes.

In the first part of the concert, selected movements from two Renaissance masses, sung a capella, were sandwiched between two large anthems in the English cathedral tradition, Romantic in style, and accompanied by the organ. The choir excelled in the quiet, unaccompanied pieces. The sure control of the conductor and concentration of the singers was heard in the unison passages of chant, and later on in the concert, in the unison sections of the Poulenc, in which the many voices became as one.

The clear entrances in polyphonic sections and the shaping of phrases were also worthy of note.

The Elgar, which needed a more robust choral sound in the agitato sections, did not measure up to the excellence of the Palestrina, Victoria, and Poulenc. At times, the organ covered the choral sound.

The choral portion of the program

Music Review

Credits

Pastorale	Roger-Ducasse
Variations sur un Noel	Dupre
Variations	Alain
Litanies	Alain
	Barbara Bruns, organ
Processional Hymn: Tell His Praise Alleluia, Salvation, Glory	Emery
Missa de Beata Virgine	Palestrina
Missa Quarti toni	Victoria
Give unto the Lord	Elgar
Litanies a la Vierge Noire	Poulenc
Choral Vespers	Rachmaninoff
Messe Solennelle	Langlais
	Boston Archdiocesan Choir School, Theodore Marier, conductor; John Dunn, organ

had the slight misfortune to follow Mrs. Bruns' concise and well-structured recital, and the lateness of the hour, the restrained style of much of the music, and the warmth of the packed church caused some restlessness in the audience by the midpoint of the concert. The lateness even began to tell slightly in the choral sound. The Rachmaninoff, by nature a static piece, was a little tired-sounding, with drooping pitch here and there and a lack of energy in sustained chords.

Langlais' "Messe solennelle" provided one more chance to hear the full organ, and concluded the evening on an exciting note.

William A. MacPherson is a free-lance music reviewer.

Tickets for Z.Z. Top On Sale Tomorrow

Tickets for Z.Z. Top's July 28 concert at the Centrum are scheduled to go on sale tomorrow at the Centrum box office, Ticketron and the usual ticket outlets.

Tickets are priced at \$12.50 and \$11.50 for the end-stage concert which will seat about 11,800.

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