



The Royal Canadian College of Organists
Le Collège royal canadien des organistes

KINGSTON CENTRE NEWSLETTER

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<http://www.rcco-kingston.org>

Christmas Reflection I: Truly “Baroque” Art

Much of our organ literature arises from the Christian liturgy—and a large proportion of that music was written for Christmas. As John’s Gospel reports it:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. *May that light shine in our work, our homes, and our hearts!*



The Birth of Christ, Federico Barocco, 1597

For your listening: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z24EMr1DKNE>

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From the Editors

Les grands orgues symphoniques de Québec

David Cameron

Shortly before we went to press, there came word that another Kingston church—Bay Park Baptist, home to a playable Rodgers two-manual, and until last spring to an effective choir directed by Centre member Andrew Fraser—has now decided to abandon traditional church music, and instead to move entirely to the Praise Band format. Though there are many churches here with less radical agendas, including several with major refurbishings of pipe organs underway, it's understandable that some who love the instrument fear that it may be in process of disappearing.

If this is indeed a trend, it's one being bucked effectively by university and particularly by symphonic concert halls. A visit to the Casavant website <http://www.casavant.ca/english> (click on "Our Instruments" and then on "In Concert Halls") reveals that concert halls all over the world are once again installing significant pipe organs (other organ builders have similar projects). Almost next door to us, Québec has two new, major symphonic organs: to the right, the three-manual, 50-stop tracker organ (with electro-mechanical alternative console) of the Salle Montcalm in Quebec City. It was inaugurated on September 11 last.



Salle Montcalm, Québec

Below it, the much larger Casavant for the new Maison Symphonique de Montréal (four manuals, 84 stops, 117 ranks), as visualized by the designer. It will be inaugurated in the New Year, on May 14. Like the Québec organ, it is primarily a tracker, with a second moveable console using an alternative electro-mechanical action.

So let us not despair. The splendid sound of large organs built to the highest standards is being presented in the most notable concert venues, in Québec and many other places around the world. And this is true of existing instruments as well as new ones: London's Royal festival Hall has just restored its mighty and historically important Harrison & Harrison at a cost of £2.3 million.



Maison symphonique, Montréal

It remains for us to build upon the presence of such high-profile new or restored organs, to renew our commitment to strong, musical playing, and to remind churches as well as others that the organ has unique qualities which fit especially well with liturgical music and congregational song, and not just in great concert halls. And in the meantime – vive le Québec!

Michael Capon writes in this issue about the uses of different harmonic textures in playing hymns. It's notable that he relates these expressive devices to the words being sung. Do you make similar connections when you choose hymn registrations? Even with quite a small instrument, we organists have enormous opportunities to enrich and express the poems our congregations sing. Samuel Foote wrote of someone that "he is not only dull in himself, but the cause of dullness in others"; don't let that be the effect of your hymn playing! Do take Michael's advice, and practise the hymns.

The Exam Committee of the College takes this matter so seriously that in our lower diplomas (Colleague and Associate) hymn playing now stands as an independent section, which must be passed with at least 70%. Candidates are expected to use the resources of registration and textural variation, but also – and most importantly – all the skills of articulation, and rhythm and accent, and of phrasing, which we expect in the playing of repertoire. Indeed, the apparently simple task of playing for congregational singing demands the highest skills our musicianship can muster.

It's a challenge worth meeting.

Christmas Reflection II

The Holy Night

We sate among the stalls at Bethlehem;
 The dumb kine from their fodder turning them,
 Softened their horned faces
 To almost human gazes
 Toward the newly Born:
 The simple shepherds from the star-lit brooks
 Brought their visionary looks,
 As yet in their astonished hearing rung
 The strange sweet angel-tongue:
 The magi of the East, in sandals worn,
 Knelt reverent, sweeping round,
 With long pale beards, their gifts upon the ground,
 The incense, myrrh, and gold
 These baby hands were impotent to hold:
 So let all earthlies and celestials wait
 Upon thy royal state.
 Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 - 1861)

Utterly Uttley

Fr. John Uttley

About 20 years ago I served as a choral accompanist for an event called 'Quinte Summer Music' in Picton. The guest conductor was Wayne Riddell, a well-known choral clinician from Montreal. He had very high standards, and insisted that choristers keep an eye on him at all times. He had a motto, "Look and Live." (Bill Maddox, originally from Picton, used this motto, too.) It sounds like something you might teach your schoolchildren, as they approached a busy street.

Actually, the words originate in an animal story from Numbers, chapter 21 in the Bible. The motto is striking because it is loaded with Biblical resonance, the subject of the last "Utterly Uttley". Jesus made use of Biblical resonance when he made reference to this animal story while addressing Nicodemus in John chapter 3, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

In his oratorio "The Crucifixion", John Stainer uses these words as a recitative, to introduce what must be his most famous anthem, "God So Loved The World." The anthem is dated now, but as a fifteen - year - old, trying to understand the basics of theology, I thought that this was the most beautiful anthem I had ever encountered*. Particularly I liked the suspensions in the concluding bars. They spoke to me of the yearning of man for God, and of the yearning of God for mankind.

At Christ Church, Belleville, where I was an assistant minister back in the 1970's, a grotesque picture of a serpent upon a pole, together with a picture of Christ on the cross, adorned the door of the Sunday School office for the longest time. Perhaps we thought it would gross kids out, or even shock them into faith. After all, kids are fascinated with animals, and enjoy stories about them. I have observed that the biblical writers often use animal expressions when they are emotionally worked up. A famous example is the solo by Mendelssohn from Psalm 55, *O For The Wings Of A Dove*.

The serpent story goes like this. In their journey through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, the people of Israel grumbled against God and Moses, and God punished them by sending poisonous snakes among them, so that `much people died`. Repenting, the survivors pleaded that Moses would intercede on their behalf. In reply, God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent, raise it up on a pole, and tell the people, ``Anyone who is bitten, let him look at the serpent, and he will live". Hence the motto, `Look and Live`

In a manger scene you will find, along with Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child, an ox, an ass, and sheep. It is fitting that they be there, for the ox and the ass, beasts of burden, represent Christ who came not to be served, but to serve. The shepherds of Bethlehem were likely tending sheep that were destined for slaughter in the Temple of Jerusalem. So Jesus, the Lamb of God, gave his life as a sacrifice for many, being lifted up on the pole of the Cross.

The Gospel narratives make no direct mention of the animals that were present at the divine birth in Bethlehem. Certainly they are present in a number of Christmas carols. How did they get there? One suggestion is that the ox and ass are a reference to Isaiah 1:3 where the prophet says,

*Ed. note: *The Stainer's dated, of course; but it shows remarkable powers of recovery all the same, and we'd suggest that it may finally have crossed the divide between historical footnotes and classics. Reach your own conclusion by listening at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5Akz6J8Rw0>*

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people doth not consider.

It is a comment, not so much on the humility of the animals, as on the stubborn blindness of human beings.

Well, rather than close on a sad note, I will end with a joke. The coming of Christ is good news, you are reading a newsletter, and the joke is a newspaper joke. And it ties in with the serpent story.

In a certain village there was a church that invited a well-known preacher to visit them, and to orate on such-and-such a topic. The pastor called the local newspaper, and asked if they would send someone to cover the event, and write an article for the paper, so that the whole community might benefit from the wisdom of the preacher. The editor assigned a young reporter to go.



Giotto di Bondone (1267-1337), *Nativity*
Cappella Scrovegni, Padua

Unfortunately, the young man had an inadequate appreciation both of the value of religion, and of its significance for the local populace. Besides, he had other things he wanted to do that Sunday, so he didn't bother showing up for the service. However he realized that his boss expected a report, so being a bright and resourceful fellow, he got to work the next day composing a sermon of his own.

On the Thursday morning the editor received a phone call. It was from the church pastor.

"That was a wonderful article in yesterday's newspaper, Mr. Editor."

"Why, thank you!" the editor replied, already feeling the warm glow of satisfaction.

"Only one problem."

"What's that?"

"The article had nothing whatsoever to do with our guest preacher's sermon."

"Oh? The sin of gambling - right?"

"Wrong! The sin of GRUMBLING!"

No talent, no self-dental, no brains, no character is required to set up in the grumblng bustness; but those who are moved by a genuine desire to do good have little time for murmuring or complaint.
(Robert West)



Grumblng?

Presumably this gesture and facial expression imply some internalized grumblng, on the lines of "Dammit, make it *forte* this time!", or "If I ever catch your eyes, I'll cue this entry!" Note left hand ready to play, *but not playing* a chord on the Swell . . . and that despite the extravagant gesture, there's only one stop drawn . . . this is an organist having one of Those Days!

Varying textures in organ hymn accompaniment

Michael Capon

A friend once quoted Frederick Swann as saying that church organists should spend at least as much time preparing hymns as they do repertoire. Do you? Many of us neglect practicing the hymns because we can play most of them at sight. All we have to do is change some registrations between verses, and we're done.

Or are we? Is there more we can do? How can we continue to challenge ourselves to play the hymns more creatively?

Below is a series of techniques for varying the texture of hymn accompaniments using only the notes printed on the page. The textures are varied by doubling and changing octaves in various ways. With some steady practice, these techniques can become second nature, and can provide a great deal of variety to inspire the singers in the congregation.

1a. Four-part

This texture simply reproduces the notes on the printed page. The right hand plays the Soprano and Alto, and the left hand plays the Tenor.

Ex.1b

RH
LH
Ped

1b. Four-part, melody doubled

This technique is the same as 1a, except that the left hand also plays the melody an octave lower, resulting in a richer texture. Doubling the melody also helps to support the men singing in the congregation.

Ex.1a

RH
LH
Ped

2a. Soprano Solo

This technique also reproduces the notes on the printed page, with a different distribution of the parts. The right hand plays the Soprano on a solo manual, and the left hand plays the Alto and Tenor. If the melody is less familiar to the congregation, soloing the melody can help support them.

Ex.2a (Solo)

RH
LH
Ped

2b. Soprano Solo, melody doubled

This technique is the same as 2a, except the left hand adds the melody an octave lower, resulting in a richer 3-part texture in the left hand. This is easier to play than it seems since the melody note more often than not simply completes the three-note chord in the left hand, as it does in this example. This technique is excellent for developing a "chord sense" in the left hand.

Ex.2b (Solo)

RH
LH
Ped

3a. Alto Descant

This technique creates a descant by transposing the Alto up an octave, played by the right hand along with the Soprano as written, while the left hand plays the Tenor. This technique is useful for achieving a brighter sound, especially when the melody is well-known by the congregation. I use this technique for verses that refer to light, fire, angels, heaven, etc.

Ex.3a

RH
LH
Ped

3b. Alto Descant, melody doubled

This technique is the same as 3a, except the left hand adds the melody an octave lower. Note that the left hand part is the same as 1b.

Ex. 3b

The musical notation for Ex. 3b consists of three staves: RH (Right Hand), LH (Left Hand), and Ped (Pedal). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The RH staff contains a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The LH staff contains a melody of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. The Ped staff contains a bass line of quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2.

4. Tenor Solo

This technique, probably the most challenging, presents the melody in the tenor only, played on a solo manual by the left hand (usually a strong reed), while the right hand accompanies playing the tenor an octave higher, and the alto as written. This might also be referred to as a Faux-Bourdon texture, which your choir can duplicate by having the Tenors sing the melody and the Sopranos sing the Tenor line an octave higher. I use this dramatic texture for verses that refer to power, darkness, Satan, hell, earthquakes, etc.

Ex. 4

The musical notation for Ex. 4 consists of three staves: RH (Right Hand), LH (Left Hand), and Ped (Pedal). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The RH staff contains a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The LH staff contains a melody of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, with the word "(Solo)" written above the first few notes. The Ped staff contains a bass line of quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2.

Because some of the techniques share some commonalities, all seven can be prepared by practicing only three of them (assuming 1a is secure): 2b (which gets the left hand filling the texture), 3b (which gets the right hand thinking creatively), and 4 (which gets the brain working!).

Even though you won't necessarily use each technique for every hymn, or even for a complete verse, it is worthwhile practicing all three of the above techniques for every hymn so that you can gain proficiency over time. As you begin to become more comfortable with the techniques, you can start using them in performance. I worked on 4 for a while, and first used it in a service when I found a hymn that I could play securely. Now I can mostly play it at sight, and do use it frequently.

Once you are comfortable with the techniques, you can begin to allow yourself to interpret them less strictly. For example, once you become proficient in technique 3, you might like to allow your descant to stray a little from the printed Alto line, especially if it's a particularly monotonous one. Or you may let the descant come and go as you play.

You will need to be prepared to vary a technique in situations where it doesn't work well with the printed voicing. For example, doubling the melody an octave lower in the left hand may not always work all the way through every hymn. Be prepared to omit the left hand melody note from time to time if it is particularly awkward to reach, or use a different chord tone instead. Likewise, when the Tenor doubles the melody note, you might like to add another chord tone to the left hand to keep a consistent five-part texture.

Another way to enrich the texture is to drop the pedal down an octave from time to time. For instance, any of the above examples could begin with the pedal on low G.

Finally, a note about music theory. I don't worry about the parallel 5ths that result from some of the octave changes. To my ear, the delight of hearing new textures overrides any theoretical concerns that might get in the way of creative and expressive accompaniments.*

I encourage you to practice the hymns each week, and continue to find new ways to accompany them creatively.

* Ed. note: Do people still worry about fifths? But this is perfectly in line with the practice of all good orchestrators from Haydn onward. Reinforcing a line by doubling it at the octave is never regarded as producing consecutives or other grammatical infelicities – provided of course that the original line was correct! It's like the "octaves" produced by 4' or 2' organ stops – they're heard as a colouring of the original line, not as separate voices.

For great use of varied textures, in Sir John Goss' *Lauda anima*, and paced for the acoustic of Westminster Abbey, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx1eMwIDFb8>

Patrick Wedd at St. George's
Robert Hunter Bell shares a letter with our readers

12.XII.13

My dear Patrick,

It is almost half a century since I first heard you play at St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, where you were Norman Hurrle's assistant, and while you also pursued undergraduate studies in music at the University of Toronto. (As Archie Bunker's wife used to sing, "Those were the days!"). You were obviously very gifted and one to watch, which I have done ever since, having heard your exquisitely and deeply felt musical performances from time to time to my great delight.

On Tuesday, 10 December at St. George's Cathedral, you gave a definitive performance of Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur*, a precocious, yet mature work he composed when he was only 27.

Your thoughtful introductory remarks did not dwell on his Catholic theology, which was aptly presented in his own notes in French with English translation for us poor folk whose high school French is now fragmentary. But your remarks were a revelation! Having either played or taught most movements of *La Nativité*, I still learned from your exposition and demonstration of themes. The influence of plainsong and the relationship to d'Aquin's *Noëls* and other classical French organ music supplemented my recognition of modes of limited transposition, birdsong, and the influence of jazz. Your demonstrations were most helpful to us all and especially to those who are unfamiliar with Messiaen's unique musical language.

Most exciting of all was your brilliant technical mastery and your impeccable musicality. To make an hour of Messiaen musically arresting for everyone present, professional or lay, is no mean feat.

Registration was pure Messiaen and a tribute to the versatility of the newly refurbished Cathedral organ. Timing was just right. We had time to breathe but not enough to lose the sequential thread of the work as a whole – a tribute to your musical subtlety. Management of registration was masterful and seemingly easy, although those of us who play the organ know how art disguises technique. This was an hour of the most subtle and magical musicianship one rarely hears apart from the likes of Yo Yo Ma and his few peers.

Patrick Wedd, you are a superb musician!

Sincerely,
 Robert Hunter Bell

Ed. note: It's moving and humbling when events in our private lives become, by their nature, public as well – which is what happened with our decision to retire from our long roles with the Melos Choir and Chamber Orchestra. The decision to make it a public celebration – a celebration of our joint total of 53 years with Melos, a celebration of the now mature change from general choral group known for oratorio performances, to a specialized choir and orchestra playing early music with all the fidelity Kingston resources allow; and last but not least a celebration of the arrival in Kingston and with Melos, of Holly Gwynne-Timothy as the new director – this decision made our private decision a public one. For the musicality and energy, for the support and enthusiasm of our colleagues in choir and orchestra and our many friends who attended that day, we can only say 'Thank you'. Two of our colleagues have been kind enough to write the following notes about the event. Fran and David, the Editors.

Melos: A Celebration in the music of Mozart and Haydn

A Report by Carol Ramer

Melos celebrates Dave Cameron and Fran Harkness

On Sunday November 17th, the choir Melos performed the *Missa in Augustiis* (Lord Nelson Mass) along with the Melos Chamber Orchestra at St. George's Cathedral. The first part of the programme was devoted to Mozart and included the solo *Exsultate Jubilate* sung by the incoming Director of Melos, Holly Gwynne-Timothy, and the Keyboard Concerto in C (K 246) played by Fran Harkness.

Ms. Gwynne-Timothy exhibited a fine vocal technique and her presentation was unaffected and clear. This was particularly impressive to me when Dave acknowledged to me that she had had laryngitis just the day before. The orchestra was ably conducted by Dave. This group presents early repertoire as it should be heard.

Fran has been Melos' accompanist for many years, and has successfully partnered with Dave in support of the choir. Her Mozart was lovely. What is always said about Mozart is that it sounds easy, but definitely is not. Fran's treatment of the trills and rapid passages was elegant and lively and natural. John Hall (Canadian Piano Museum) enabled the loan of an early instrument.

The Lord Nelson Mass featured Ms. Gwynne-Timothy, Janice Coles, Tim Stiff and Phil Rogers as soloists. The choir was well-balanced and on top of the music, ably directed by Dave and supported by the orchestra.

As a Melos alumna, I was really glad to hear this programme, and to see my friends Dave and Fran celebrated by the large and appreciative audience.

Another report, by Robert Hunter Bell

Melos Choir & Chamber Orchestra *A Celebration in the music of Mozart and Haydn* was a tour de force, marking the retirement of David Cameron as the group's conductor, and Frances Harkness as rehearsal accompanist and solo organist, pianist, and harpsichordist. The concert took place in St. George's Cathedral, Kingston, on Sunday, 17 November 2013 with a large audience present.

Added to the lustre of the occasion was soprano Holly Gwynne-Timothy, who will now succeed Dr. Cameron as conductor of Melos, and who opened the concert singing Mozart's

solo motet, *Exsultate, jubilate* (K. 165) with the orchestra. Holly's beautiful soprano negotiated the technical difficulties of Mozart with her customary skill, musicianship, and ease.

Next, Frances Harkness played Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 8 in C (K. 246) with impressive skill and musicality. Mozart's limpid texture leaves both orchestra and soloist exposed to any possible flaws, but there were none! It was a fitting last solo performance with Melos for Fran. She performed on the historic Burlock-Decker Grand Piano of 19th century vintage, newly and lovingly restored by John Hall of the Canadian Piano Museum in Napanee. While not exactly a fortepiano, it helped to recapture an antique sound rarely heard in concert today.

After intermission, David conducted Haydn's *Missa in Augustiis* ("Lord Nelson" Mass) Hob. XXII: II. Soloists Gwynne-Timothy, Janice Coles, Tim Stiff and Phillip Rogers excelled themselves. I have never heard Janice Coles sing better; Phil Rogers was in excellent voice, with his customary stylish presentation of the music; Tim Stiff was superb vocally and musically as we have come to expect; and Holly was as professional and musical as she had been in the Mozart motet.

David could not have chosen a more monumental work in Melos' repertoire for his swansong. The "Lord Nelson" Mass is superb Haydn and it was conducted with the reliable musicianship we have come to expect of Dr. Cameron. All was clearly presented with no fuss nor muss, but was workmanlike in every way. Aurora Dokken provided discreet and reliable continuo playing on the newly refurbished Cathedral organ.

Melos has provided choral music for this community for decades under David Cameron's leadership. In recent years it has transformed itself into a more stylish vehicle for baroque and early classical music. Now, a new era begins under Holly Gwynne-Timothy, Melos' new conductor. What will the future bring? We await expectantly Holly's first concert as director on 9 February - "Eros & Agape" - passionate music of the 12th-17th centuries!



Two views of the 112-year old Burlock-Decker concert grand, first at an early stage of rebuilding, with the steel frame lifted to allow repair and refinishing of the soundboard, and then in St. George's Cathedral following its first public concert in a century, L to R, curator and restorer (and organist) John Hall, with past and present owners Irene Burlock of Virginia, and Warren Seale of Oakville, Ontario.

Supply Organists

Mark Sirett is available to play for church services. He can be reached at 542-6506 or 542-9616 ext. 24 or

msirett@cantabile.kingston.net

DON'T FORGET the annual Twelfth Night Party
SUNDAY, JAN. 5, AT 7:00 PM
St. Thomas' Church, Reddendale
Bring something sweet or savoury
for us all to enjoy. BYOB, or punch, tea &
coffee are provided.
As usual, volunteer entertainment is invited!

The Newsletter

The *Kingston Centre Newsletter* is edited by Fran Harkness and David Cameron, 40 Helen St., Kingston Ontario, K7L 4N9. They may be reached by telephone: 613-549-7125; or e-mail: charles.david.cameron@gmail.com or harknessfran@gmail.com. It is published four times a year, in September, December, March and June, and is sent free of charge to all members of the Kingston Centre of the RCCO and to current scholarship holders. It will be sent on request to others on payment of an annual subscription of \$10.00, which should be sent to the Treasurer, Joan Egnatoff, 82 Braemar Road, Kingston, ON, K7M 4B6. Cheques should be made payable to *RCCO Kingston Centre*.

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Advertisements

Commercial advertisements will be accepted as follows: the normal size will be business card (one eighth of a page) at \$15 for a single issue and \$50 for a year (four issues). If space allows, we will accept an occasional half-page advertisement at \$30 for one issue. Please send your requests to the Editor, enclosing a cheque for the appropriate amount made payable to *RCCO Kingston Centre*. *Positions Vacant, Jobs Wanted* and *Supply Organists* notices will continue to be published free of charge.

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PIPORG-L <https://www.google.com/webhp?hl=en&tab=mw#hl=en&client=psy-ab&q=piporg-l>

Canadian International Organ Competition <http://www.ciocm.org>

The Festival at the Forks, London ON July 6-8, 2014 <http://www.london2014.net/>

The Royal College of Organists <http://www.rco.org.uk/>

The American Guild of Organists <http://www.agohq.org/home.html>