

January 26, 2012

FROM THE DEAN



Dean Jim Riggs

The organ world lost a bright shining star last week with the passing of Gerre Hancock. Dr. Hancock was one of America's most highly acclaimed concert organists and choral directors. I recall my first time attending choral evensong at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York City. I was still in college and was attending my first National AGO Organ

Convention. The convention was divided into groups and each day we would visit a different venue. I was lucky on day one to visit Saint Thomas. After hearing Dr. Hancock and the choir I skipped the remaining venues and went back each day to Saint Thomas to hear him play and to hear the choir.

In May of 2007, a chapter meeting was held at The Church of the Covenant featuring a program of "The Music of Gerre Hancock." Dr. Hancock was present at the dinner following the program where he shared amusing stories. The last I saw Dr. Hancock was in June of 2011, when he was in Hudson for the Festival of the Liturgical Arts Conference.

Many of our Cleveland members have strong ties to Dr. Hancock. John McElliott, President of Karen McFarlane Artists writes, *We are all incredibly saddened by the loss of our dear Gerre Hancock who was a beloved friend, colleague and mentor to so many. Somehow, Gerre managed to find room for thousands of people in his life, and he knew each of their stories, their struggles and their triumphs. Most importantly, he encouraged and strengthened them at every opportunity and set an impeccable example. It is not surprising then that so many around the country, and indeed around the world, now feel that they have lost a member of their own family with his passing. He was a towering figure in our world and he will be greatly missed.*

A Requiem Eucharist will be held on Saturday, February 4 at Saint Thomas Church. Thank you Dr. Hancock for being an inspiration to many, for promoting the organ, and for your work with the



Dear AGO Cleveland Colleague,

Welcome to the Weekly Update from the Cleveland Chapter of the American Guild of Organists! Each week on Thursday, we publish this email newsletter to help you stay informed about activities and programs of the Cleveland AGO Chapter. Questions or comments? Please let us know: admin@agocleveland.org Have a news item for a future issue? Send to: newsletter@agocleveland.org. The deadline each week is Wednesday at noon for Thursday publication.

IN THIS ISSUE

[From the Dean](#)

[In Memoriam Gerre Hancock](#)

[Upcoming Cleveland Events](#)

[Handbell Festival](#)

[Congratulations](#)

[Concerts](#)

[AGO National Convention 2012](#)

[About Job Postings](#)

AGO. May you now rest in peace.

In Memoriam



Gerre Hancock

GERRE EDWARD HANCOCK
February 21, 1934 - January 21, 2012

Gerre Hancock, one of America's most highly acclaimed concert organists and choral directors, passed away peacefully on January 21st, surrounded by his family, in Austin, Texas. The cause was coronary artery disease. A gifted artist, teacher and composer, he was considered by many to be a giant figure in twentieth to twenty-first century American sacred music. He was known not only for his artistry, but also for his energy, optimism and love of the people he taught and for whom he performed.

At the time of his death, Dr. Hancock was Professor of Organ and Sacred Music at The University of Texas at Austin, where he taught along with his wife of fifty years, Dr. Judith Hancock. Prior to this appointment in 2004, he held the position of Organist and Master of the Choristers at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York City, where for over thirty years he set a new standard for church music in America. Previous to his time at Saint Thomas, he held positions as Organist and Choirmaster of Christ Church Cathedral in Cincinnati, where he also served on the Artist Faculty of the College-Conservatory of

Music, University of Cincinnati, and as Assistant Organist at St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City.

A native of Lubbock, Texas, Gerre Hancock began to hone his legendary skills as a child, taking piano and organ lessons in Lubbock and playing in a local church. He went on to study at the University of Texas at Austin, where he received his Bachelor of Music degree, and from there to Union Theological Seminary in New York for his Master of Sacred Music degree, from which he received the Unitas Distinguished Alumnus Award. A recipient of a Rotary Foundation Fellowship, he continued his study in Paris during which time he was a finalist at the Munich International Music Competitions. His organ study was with E. William Doty, Robert Baker, Jean Langlais, Nadia Boulanger, and Marie-Claire Alain.

A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, Dr. Hancock was a member of its National Council, and was a founder and past president of the Association of Anglican Musicians. As a noted teacher, he served on the faculties of The Juilliard School, the Institute of Sacred Music of Yale University, and The Eastman School of Music.

Dr. Hancock was appointed a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music in 1981 and of the Royal College of Organists in 1995. He received honorary Doctor of Music degrees from Nashotah House Seminary and the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee. In 2004 he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree (Honoris causa) from the General Theological Seminary in New York, and was presented with the Medal of the Cross of St. Augustine by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a ceremony at Lambeth Palace, London. He is listed in Who's Who in America. His biography appears in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, second edition, and the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists named him International Distinguished Performer of 2010.

Gerre Hancock's consummate skill was clearly apparent in his concert appearances. Possessing a masterly interpretive style, he was an artist of taste, warmth, perception, and style-and a master of

virtuosity in his improvisations. Considered for decades to be the finest organ improviser in America, he was heard in recital in countless cities throughout the United States, Europe, South Africa, Japan, and Great Britain. He also performed on occasion with his wife, Judith, including a recital at Westminster Abbey.

Compositions for organ and chorus by Dr. Hancock are published by Oxford University Press, as is his textbook *Improvising: How to Master the Art*, which is used by musicians throughout the country. He recorded for Decca/Argo, Gothic Records, Koch International, Priory Records and Pro Organo, both as conductor of the Saint Thomas Choir and as a soloist. In addition, the American Guild of Organists produced a DVD about him, volume IV of *The Master Series*.

Gerre Hancock is survived by his wife, Dr. Judith Hancock of Austin, Texas, his daughters Deborah Hancock of Brooklyn, New York and Lisa Hancock of New York City, as well as his brother, the Reverend James Hancock, of Savannah, Texas. A Memorial Service is planned for February 4, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Thomas Church, New York City. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the University of Texas at Austin Organ Department with an emphasis on Sacred Music.

Upcoming Cleveland Chapter Events

Embracing the Past; Embracing the Future

Saturday, February 25, 2012, in the morning
St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Lakewood
Details to follow.

Upcoming Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, March 19, 2012, 7:30-9:00 PM
John Knox Presbyterian Church 25200 Lorain Road, North Olmsted, OH 44070

Monday, May 7, 2012, 7:30-9:00 PM
Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights

SUB-DEAN RESIGNATION

This week the Executive Committee was informed of the resignation of Sub-Dean, Cliff Hill. We are grateful for what Cliff has done for the chapter especially his financial commitments to this current program year. Running a business, basically by yourself, does not always leave time for other duties.

At the present time this position will not be filled since we are on the cusp of elections for the next year. The programming committee will see that the remaining events of this season will be carried out. Our next chapter event will take place on Saturday, February 25. Please reserve that date. Details will be available in next week's weekly email.

HANDBELL FESTIVAL



Handbell Festival to be held at St. Sebastian Church, Zwisler Hall, 500 Mull Avenue, Akron, Ohio 44320 on Sunday, April 15 with guest conductor Chuck Kobb (Summit Bells). Contact Lynn Frey-Steward, St. Sebastian, 330.836.2233 or 330.244.8808 for more information. Deadline for registration is coming soon.

CONGRATULATIONS

Leslie Adams. Leslie's ODE TO LIFE (Concert Overture) was performed by the Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra, Thomas W. Douglas, conductor; on Sunday, January 22, 2012. The 55th Season concert by the Orchestra, took place at Newton High School Auditorium, 900 West 12th Street; Newton, Kansas.

Concerts

Tuesdays at 12:00 p.m.: St. Paul's Episcopal Church 317 East Liberty Street, Medina, Ohio. Brown Bag Concert Bring your own lunch or brown bag lunches are available for \$5.00. Just call the church office 24 hours prior to the concert at 330-725-4131.

Tuesdays at 12:10: Messiah Lutheran Church, 21485 Lorain Road, Fairview Park, Ohio 44126. 440.331.2405. www.messiahchurchfairview.org. Music for Tuesdays at 12:10 starts up again in February. This will be a wonderful series of programs-a lot of music that you'll not hear anywhere else this year! The programs are held in the sanctuary and are open to the public. Bring your brown bag lunch-we provide coffee, tea, and cookies. The programs conclude before 1:00 p.m. and are entirely informal...come when you can, and leave when you must. While a donation is not turned down, it's not obligatory.

Wednesdays: Music Near the Market at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2031 West 30th St., Cleveland. CONTACT: Florence Mustric: 216.321.1393. Featuring the world-famous von Beckerath organ. FREE concerts AT NOON on Wednesdays.

Wednesdays at 12:10 p.m.: Brownbag Concerts at Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115. 216.771.3630. www.trinitycleveland.org. Bring a lunch or purchase one for \$5.00. Concerts range from jazz to classical chamber music, big band, pipe organ with brass, vocal music of George Gershwin and much more. All programs take place in the beautiful Gothic nave of Trinity Cathedral. There is no admission fee - a freewill offering is taken at each concert. The Trinity Commons parking lot entrance is on Prospect Avenue at East 22nd Street (Free parking). Overflow parking is available in the Cleveland State University Prospect garage. Please join us this year as we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Brownbag Concert Series - a Music and Art at Trinity Cathedral tradition that began in 1976. Music and Art at Trinity Cathedral is offering the opportunity to sponsor a Brownbag Concert "in honor" or "in memory" of someone special. Sponsorship levels begin at \$500. For information, contact Todd Wilson, 216-774-0421.

February 1: Emerging Artists Series. Organ concert by Cleveland Institute of Music students. Solos, duets and music for two organs!

February 8: Emerging Artists Series. Vocal Arts Recital. An entertaining program by voice students from Case, Baldwin-Wallace and the Trinity Cathedral Choir

Thursdays at 12:15 p.m.: Old Stone Church, 91 Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio. Thursdays at Old Stone. Free brownbag concerts every Thursday from 12:15 p.m., lasting 30-40 minutes.

February 2: JR Fralick, tenor and Patrick Parker, piano. Schumann's Dichterliebe

Sunday, January 29 at 3:00 p.m.: Holy Family Church, 3179 Kent Rd. Stow, OH 44224. Dedication Concert on the new Johannus Organ. Timothy Claubaugh, Guest Organist.

Sunday, January 29 at 4:00 p.m.: Plymouth Church, 2860 Coventry Rd., Cleveland, OH; 216.921.3510 x 34. Les Delices, Debra Nagy, director. Caractères de la danse. Tickets at the door or at www.lesdelices.org. Plymouth members receive a 10% discount.

Monday, January 30 at 7:30 p.m.: Church of the Covenant, 11205 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. www.CovenantWeb.org. 216.421.0482. Jonathon Moyer, organist. "The Saint-Clotilde Legacy." Music by Franck, Pierné, Tournemire, Bonnal, and Langlais. Free Admission.

Wednesday, February 1 at 7:30 p.m.: Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard Cleveland, OH 44106. Gartner Auditorium. 216.707.2281. Theatre of Voices: Arvo Pärt-Creator Spiritus. With special guest Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, organ. "Everything Paul Hillier touches turns to choral gold." -New York Times. The serenely beautiful choral music of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt is at the heart of this program by Theatre of Voices, widely recognized as one of Europe's

foremost vocal groups. Pärt's spare and deeply moving sacred music appeared prominently in the west after the demise of the stifling Soviet state, and yet sounds like music we have known for centuries. Since the creation of Theatre of Voices twenty years ago, director Paul Hillier has championed Pärt's music, performing it globally. He was Principal Conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (2001-2007) and has been Chief Conductor of Ars Nova Copenhagen since 2003. In 2006 Hillier was awarded an OBE for services to choral music, and his hundreds of recordings have earned worldwide acclaim and numerous prizes. Program also includes choral music by Guillaume de Machaut, John Dunstable, Kevin Volans, and Pelle Gudmundsen Holmgren, and features organist Christopher Bowers-Broadbent. Info: www.clevelandart.org

Tuesday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m.: Mary Queen of Peace, 4423 Pearl Road, Cleveland, Ohio. Great Music in a Great Space Concert Series. The St. Olaf Choir, under the direction of Dr. Anton Armstrong. The St. Olaf Choir, with 75 mixed voices, is the pioneer acappella choir in the United States. For nearly a century, the choir has set a standard of choral excellence and remained at the forefront of choral artistry. Conducted since 1990 by Anton Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir continues to develop the tradition that originated with its founder, F. Melius Christiansen. Since its founding in 1912, the St. Olaf Choir has set a standard in the choral art, serving as a model for choirs of all levels. The ensemble's annual tour brings its artistry and message to thousands of people across the nation and around the world. The St. Olaf Choir has taken 13 international tours and performed for capacity audiences in the major concert halls of Norway, France, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia, New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, and the Twin Cities. Tickets: \$30/Adult & Senior, \$20/Students (In person only, with ID). Group rates available. For tickets, visit <http://stolaftickets.universiticket.com> or call 1-800-363-5487.

Saturday, February 11 at 3:00 p.m.: Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115. St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Cleveland Heights (216.932.5815) is sponsoring TrebleFest 2012 for the Diocese of Ohio, to be held at Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115. Guest conductor will be Gerre Hancock. Rehearsals 9-3; Choral Evensong at 3:00. Music of Ridout, Sumsion, Lalouette, and Ireland.

Sunday, February 12 at 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Services: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44106. 216.932.5815. Gerre Hancock serves as organist and choirmaster for 9:00 and 11:15 services.

Sunday, February 12 at 1:15 p.m.: Fairmount Presbyterian Church, 2757 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, 216.321.5800. www.fairmountchurch.org. Brunch & The Almeda Trio-- "Tangos and more!" Cleveland's bright new trio of pianist Robert Cassidy, cellist Ida Mercer, and violinist Cara Tweed play an eclectic program for a February afternoon. Come warm your hearts as they perform music from their soon-to-be released CD featuring music by Astor Piazzolla, Paul Schoenfield, and Cleveland-based composer Paul Ferguson! Join us for brunch at 12:15.

Sunday, February 12 at 2:00 p.m.: First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland, 3630 Fairmount Boulevard at Eaton Road, Shaker Heights, Ohio. 216.531.8292. Dr. Robert Schneider, organ and Betty Meyers, piano. Duo Recital. Organ-Piano Recital, includes works for solo organ, solo piano, 4 hand organ, 4 hand piano, and piano and organ by Vierne, Rubinstein, Shostakovich, Bach, and featuring the Finale from Flor Peeter's Concerto for Organ and Piano.

Sunday, February 12 at 3:00 p.m.: Fairlawn Lutheran Church, 3415 W. Market St., Akron, Ohio 44333. A Concert with Organ and Brass. Music by Gigout, Curnow, Mussorgsky, Karg-Elert, Holst, Schickele, Conley, Bach, Westenkuhler, and Bridge. Free admission. Refreshments following.

Sunday, February 12 at 5:00 p.m.: Church of the Covenant, 11205 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. www.CovenantWeb.org. 216.421.0482. Candlelight Vespers. Taizé Vespers.



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About Us

The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members.

Contact Us

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2860 Coventry Road
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120
216-921-3510

A Note About Job Postings

Gerry Mass, our Cleveland Chapter Placement Officer collects and updates job openings in the area. Although they are not listed in the weekly updates, there is a link in the "Quick Links" section every week that will take you to the updated list on the chapter website. Questions or need help finding a position? Email: placement@agocleveland.org



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