



## American Guild of Organists

Chartered 1896

## European Chapter

Chartered 1979

*Newsletter July 2008*

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### *The Dean's Corner*

Dear Members,

Summer greetings from Holland. Are you enjoying some vacation time? I hope so. I'm sure we can all use a good break about now.

I have **two important items** to which I want to call your attention at this time:

- 1) European Chapter Membership Renewal for 2008-2009 and
- 2) European Chapter Organ Spectacular week-end, October 17-19

First: Thank you to those of you who were able to tell me which renewal method you will be using by the requested deadline of 15 July. For those of you who perhaps didn't receive my mailing or were on vacation or simply didn't get to write to me yet, **PLEASE** do so as soon as possible. If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask. It's important that I send off the last mailing to AGO HQ by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, members who want to start receiving their magazines for the next AGO year 2008-2009 without a break (magazines begin with the December issue each year) need to write to me **NOW**. Thank you!

Second: I have **exciting news** about our European Chapter Organ Spectacular weekend in October. Contrary to earlier information, our October meeting will take place in **Munich, Germany**. **Your board members hope you will all mark your calendars and plan to attend**. We are

offering this special October meeting of the European Chapter to support the AGO Year of the Organ and especially to participate in the Organ Spectacular concerts being held around the world on the weekend of 17-19 October. **ALL members of the European Chapter are invited! We hope you will come to meet each other and your board members, make new friends and enjoy the feeling of true colleague support for which the American Guild of Organists is well known.**

Six of our members have graciously agreed to play on two concerts. On Friday evening the performers will be Christoph Keggenhoff (Speyer, Germany), Ann Elise Smoot (London, England) and Hannfried Lucke (Salzburg, Austria). Saturday evening's concert will feature Bernard Sanders (Mühlheim/Stetten, Germany), Barry Jordan (Magdeburg, Germany) and Richard Pilliner (Surrey, England). Read more details about this event in this newsletter. Any questions? Ask!

With best wishes for a great summer,

*Judy*

### *The Secretary's Voice*

Dear Members,

For the first time I was privileged to attend an AGO National Convention this Summer. It was nothing I had set my mind to, the circumstances dictated it. For starters my "Ornament of Grace", which

won the AGO Composition Competition for Organ and C-Instrument, was to be played and of course I wanted to be there! Then, too, our Dean was not able to go this time, so as Secretary I was able to represent our Chapter. Several good friends of mine live in the Minneapolis area and it was a good opportunity to visit them and of course see many friends and colleagues at the Convention itself.

At the outset it's a humbling experience. You are just one out of approximately one thousand eight hundred (!) organists including lots of daunting figures in the field. But up close you get to realize that, hey, they're real people too, and personable and friendly just like you and me. All of us took in concerts, lectures, and workshops from Sunday until Thursday, made new acquaintances and friends, and generally had a good time! I can warmly recommend the experience to anyone who hasn't tried it yet.

As Judy mentioned, the Organ Spectacular is casting its shadow in the US and abroad. Our very own Spectacular Concerts are planned for Munich. Although the Repertoire for the concerts is not yet available I can tell you that the prize winning "Ornament of Grace" will be given its European premier with the composer at the organ (Bernd Schoch, Violin). See below for more details! Hope to see you there!

In the meantime just sit right down and have a good read!

*Bernard*

**Please submit your items for the next  
Newsletter before Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> !  
Look ahead and inform your friends and  
colleagues about important events!**

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**News from the Board**

*Support your Board! Be an active member!*

Current Board Members

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*Web-Master:*

Tanja Hermans

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Dear Members,

As Judy mentioned in her Dean's Corner, here are some details for the Organ Spectacular in Munich:

Friday, 17 October

5:30 Meet at Hotel Astor

6:00 Dinner at a restaurant near St.  
Gabriel's Church

8:00 Organ Spectacular Concert #1 at  
St. Gabriel's Church  
Prinzregentenstr. 102, Munich

European Chapter performers:

Ann Elise Smoot (London)

Christoph Keggenhoff (Speyer)

Hannfried Lucke (Salzburg)

Saturday, 18 October

10:00 General meeting of the European  
Chapter

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Excursion by train to Fürstenfeld-  
Abbey. Guided tour through the  
baroque abbey-church and  
presentation of the historic organ  
(Johann Georg Fux, 1736, II/27) by  
organist Roland Muhr

6:00 Dinner

8:00 Organ Spectacular Concert #2  
at St. Gabriel's Church.

European Chapter performers:  
Bernard Sanders (Tuttlingen)  
Barry Jordan (Magdeburg)  
Richard Pilliner (Croyden)  
Axel Wilberg (Bonn)

Sunday, 19 October

10:00 High Mass at St. Gabriel's Church  
Feast of the Dedication of the church  
W.A.Mozart:  
Missa brevis in B-flat KV 275  
Church Sonata D-Major KV 245  
"Sub tuum praesidium" KV 198  
"Alma Dei creatoris" KV 277  
Soloists, St.Gabriel Church-Choir,  
St.Gabriel Church orchestra  
Conductor: Elmar Jahn

Hotel information: We have selected the Hotel Astor as our Munich Organ Spectacular weekend hotel of choice. **Everyone should make his/her own reservation!!** (Notice particularly the weekend special that is advertised on the Hotel Astor web page!) Naturally you are free to choose your own accommodations. In either case please let Judy know that you are planning on coming. She will keep up a list of participants.

Hotel Astor Munich  
Schillerstr. 24 / 80336 München  
Tel.: +49 89 54837

*Tips for making your hotel reservation on the internet:*

*Go to Google and type in Hotel Astor Munich then hit "search." You will see many entries for Hotel Astor. Notice the different web sites for each entry, such as: [www.Hotels.Germany-Bookings.com](http://www.Hotels.Germany-Bookings.com) or [www.venere.com](http://www.venere.com) Click on them and compare prices. The hotel offers both "Comfort" and "Superior" rooms. There is quite a difference in price. Make your own internet reservation using the site that meets your needs. At the hotel site itself, you will see that they offer a week-end special for 120 euros; [www.hotel-astor.de](http://www.hotel-astor.de)*

The chapter web page has been updated. Have a look and write to Tania Hermans at

[tania.hermans@skynet.be](mailto:tania.hermans@skynet.be) if you'd like to add information to it!

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*Members' News*

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**Jennifer Chou** writes from Australia:

Hi European Chapter,

Since leaving Europe for Australia in 2004, I have finally arrived at a point that I think I can write something about Australia that might interest you. Sorry for the huge delay.

Organs

Australia is vast: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth are the main cities that most active organists live in. [Going from Brisbane to Perth would be very much like going from New York City to Los Angeles in the US.] There is no lack of Cathedrals in Australia and most of them have fine pipe organs. Besides the cathedrals, there are some good instruments here and there, naturally no match for Europe! Since coming here, I have had the opportunity to do recitals on large instruments in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne (where I live), Newcastle, and Sydney. The types of organs that I have performed on vary from typical cathedral organs in English style to Létourneau (St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney), Rieger (Scots Church, Melbourne) and Beckerath (Sydney University) organs, huge town hall organs by Schantz (Melbourne Town Hall) and Walker (Adelaide Town Hall). There are many small to medium sized instruments built by fine Australian builders including Anderson, George Fincham, Albert Fuller, Roger Pogson, Knud Smegen, just to name a few.

I have also briefly played instruments by Ahrend and Casavant in venues that are quite inaccessible due to hall bookings and administration issues. There also are some small French romantic instruments around that came with the French long ago, and I am still waiting to explore them. The best and large instruments are mostly very far away from each other, one does need to travel many hundreds to thousands of kilometres in order to play them.

I personally absolutely adore the Ahrend 4-manual instrument in Blackwood Hall at Monash University in Melbourne. Despite the rather dry acoustics, the instrument is perfect for North German stuff, and some French baroque works really well, too. Accessibility to that hall has always been an issue, too many things going on non-stop in there. I felt at home playing that organ, but so far I've only been there twice in four years and I'm getting quite desperate.

#### Concerts

Organizing recitals in Australia is somewhat difficult due to the lack of funds in most churches and among organ societies. The best places to play and get paid are the town halls!

Speaking about performing in town halls, it depends upon which city one wants to attempt. In Brisbane, I was told that they only have a few organ recitals a year. In Sydney, the town hall is about to close (or already closed) for a year or so for refurbishing. In Adelaide, the town hall has a beautiful Walker organ and the queue is very long, and even they have a problem with budget! (Fortunately the mayor supports the lunchtime organ recital series and thus organ recitals are spared from being cut). In Melbourne at the moment one has to get through a strange filtering system which is not very friendly to anyone who doesn't play loads of typical English music (e.g. Stanley, Elgar, Howells, etc.), popular stuff and transcriptions. I might be making comments that are not entirely fair, so don't take it too literally, but certainly this attitude prevails and many organists who do not come from that particular background of English cathedral music tradition (including myself) stand little chance. I have yet to find out how things work in Western Australia and Tasmania.

In terms of organ concerts, (I can only speak of Melbourne where I live), there are many around, almost every Saturday and Sunday one can find an organ concert to go to somewhere in metropolitan Melbourne. However, there are too few recitals by first

rate international artists. Having spent my life in Asia where I grew up, in the US and Europe where I studied, travelled and worked, I am basically starving in Australia, if you see what I mean.

#### Education

The general trend in Melbourne is similar to many places around the world in that very few young people are interested in playing the pipe organ. Many instruments are in poor condition because of the lack of money. There is a big need of reviving the pipe organ and to encourage young people to learn to play it. In Adelaide, there is a superb Casavant organ in the Elder Conservatorium where Christa Rumsey teaches, but I was told that there are no organ students there. In Melbourne, there was a church music programme offered by the Australian Catholic University, but it never attracted enough students and it is now closed due to zero enrollment. Sydney is in a much better position with a relatively large organ class at the Sydney Conservatorium where Philip Swanton teaches. Similarly in Canberra (ACT), the Wesley Uniting Church founded a Music Centre several years ago. They offer organ studies as the "ACT Organ School" and attract about a dozen students of all ages per year. These study with Philip Swanton who commuted regularly between Sydney and Canberra until recently.

There are occasional POEs run in Sydney, and in Melbourne the education sub-committee of the Society of Organists will be considering the Wayne Leopold organ demonstration programmes in order to trigger interest in the pipe organ among younger generations.

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### **Schwebungs, Sperrventiles and Schiebekoppels**

*By Alexia Tye*

"Registration is the least important thing in the performance of a piece"; "You can change dynamics without changing any registrations or closing boxes. Just by thinking "*p*" you will be playing less loud."

Such were the words of instruction from Ton Koopman, during a 4-day masterclass which I attended in June 2008 in Freiberg, Saxony, in “Mitteldeutschland”.

These were grueling, 8 hours per day classes where Ton Koopman gave all of his energy, inspiration and erudition, to a group of organists from all over Europe. He would tell us about Baroque articulations, tiny breaks of varying but precise length in the middle of a musical phrase. One should trill wherever possible, he also said – but never with the thumb – “it sounds too heavy”. He would also tell us that certain pedal parts in Buxtehude’s works were not intended for the pedal - indeed it is never clear from the “tabulatur” which parts were pedal parts - and that one can transfer these parts to the left hand. Or even vice versa.

The masterclass took place on the historic Silbermann organ of the Petrikerche in Freiberg, a little town where the organ builder lived. Gottfried Silbermann (1683 -1753) was a contemporary of J.S. Bach and his name signifies the pinnacle of German organ building. There are more than 30 surviving Silbermann instruments in Central Germany, including 4 in the town of Freiberg alone.

Central Germany, the heartland of the Baroque, spawning great masters like Bach, Handel, Schutz, Telemann . . .

This organ encounter was the prelude to a week-long tour of central German organs, ranging from those of Silbermann and his followers (eg Oehme) to modern instruments by present day *orgelbauer* such as Sauer, Schuke and Kern. This voyage took us through tiny villages, where many of Silbermann’s instruments are installed and whose main role was hymn playing and accompaniment of the loud-singing congregation. This was the reason for the loud and often shrill sounds of his organs, as was explained to us. The heavy action of the keyboard was so that it would be so sturdy that Silbermann would therefore never have to come back for repairs. And for someone used to the

French cathedral sound (living in Paris), I personally found the acoustics of the churches quite dry. In addition we had the “inconvenience” of Silbermann’s short pedal compass – mostly going up to only c’, and lacking C# at the bottom. But how can one play J.S.Bach’s works on such instruments, we lamented? “But Silbermann’s organs were not meant for playing Bach – they were arch rivals!”

The Silbermann organs were however good for showcasing composers such as Georg Muffat, Johann Ludwig Krebs, Matthias Weckmann, Gottfried Homilius etc.

In Dresden I had the thrill of playing on the Dresden cathedral (Hofkirche) organ. We heard but were not allowed to go anywhere near the recently installed Kern (a major organ builder in Strasburg, France) organ at the newly reconstructed Frauenkirche in Dresden. This is a massive 68-stop organ built in 2005, when the Frauenkirche was literally resurrected, brick by brick, from the ruins of the Second World War bombardment. In addition to the classic German Hauptwerk, Brustwerk and Oberwerk, parts of which aim to replicate Silbermann ideas, there was a 4<sup>th</sup> manual called the “Récit Expressif”, which is entirely French in style.

I must have tried about 10 different organs. We finally ended up in Berlin, where we were treated to a further 5 organs, including one belonging to a Prussian princess in 1755, and the 113 stop Sauer organ in the Berlin Dom.

Breathtaking experiences, where one felt transported back to history, not just 18<sup>th</sup> century Prussia, but also the more recent events of the separation of East and West Berlin and the reunification of communist and federal Germany. Churches have re-emerged from the ruins, conserving amidst their ultra modern glass and steel structures the vestiges of the destroyed historic monument.

**Schwebungs, Sperrventiles and Schiebekoppels?** Ah, German organ terminology – strange and wonderful terms

that I tried to imagine in their French or English equivalents. To get to know more, I invite you all to embark on the adventure of an *orgeltour*.

Alexia Tye Wai-Chun  
15.07.2008

Alexia Tye Wai-Chun, a Singaporean organist, lives and works in Paris, France. She plays organ in several churches in Paris.

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The Organbuilding Firm of **Jaeger & Brommer** sent news about their new organ in China. It's a fantastic Church with great acoustics. On the website you can see something about the history of the instrument and pictures from the installation.

<http://www.orgel-qingdao.de>

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This Summer **Heather Hernandez** toured Canada with the Phoenix Girls Chorus as their accompanist. The Tour choir travelled to Toronto, Ontario, June 16th to 25<sup>th</sup>. This tour included a concert with the Toronto Children's Chorus and an extension tour to St. James, Kitchner, Stratford, and Niagara Falls. The Cantabile choir travelled to Powell River, British Columbia, to participate in the XIII International Choral Kathaumixw Festival from June 29th to July 7<sup>th</sup>. The Festival included 12 choirs from Canada, 8 choirs from the USA, 2 choirs from Taiwan, and choirs from Ghana, Ukraine, Benin, Estonia, Denmark, Japan, France, South Africa, and Slovakia. The choirs participated in competitions, rehearsals, concerts, and a common singing concert directed by Gunnel Sjöberg. The Phoenix Girls Chorus visited Butchart Gardens and Victoria before their return home.

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*Introducing Our Members*

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*In each issue we'd like to introduce another member. Send us your resumé for inclusion!*

### *News from HQ*

#### **FREDERICK SWANN HONORED AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES**

Celebration of Brilliant Performer and  
Friend Raised \$50,000 Benefitting AGO  
Endowment Fund

**New York.** The AGO presented its fifth annual recital and gala benefit reception on Sunday, April 13, at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. An estimated audience of 500 colleagues, students, and friends came together to celebrate the many accomplishments and distinguished service that Frederick Swann has brought to the organ profession. The recital, played by Mr. Swann on one of the largest church organs in the world, included works by Paul de Maleingreau, Searle Wright, J.S. Bach, H. Walford Davies, John Cook, George Akerley, Jehan Alain, and C. Hubert H. Parry. He was joined by actress Kathie Freeman, who narrated the award winning *A Sweet for Mother Goose* by George Akerley. The gala benefit reception following was attended by 150.

The gala was sponsored by the AGO National Council and its Development Committee, Bruce P. Bengtson, AAGO, director. Major funding was provided by Fifield Manors Inc., the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, Roy F. Kehl, FAGO, and Pemcor Inc. of Lancaster, Pa. Additional support was provided by Casavant Frères, and by the following individuals: Bruce P. Bengtson, AAGO, Nancy Ruyle Dodge, and Morgan and Mary Simmons. Program book design was contributed by Len Levasseur.

Donors unable to attend the gala will receive a copy of the souvenir program book with their contribution of \$25 or more to the Endowment Fund. Contributions in honor of Frederick Swann

can be made online at [www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org) or by mailing a check to: AGO Endowment Fund, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260, New York, NY 10115. All gifts will be acknowledged in The American Organist Magazine. For information, please call 212-870-2311 (ext. 4308) or e-mail [gala@agohq.org](mailto:gala@agohq.org).

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**AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS  
ELECTS 2008–2010 NATIONAL  
COUNCIL**

**Election Results Announced in  
Minneapolis, Minn.**

**New York City.** The AGO is pleased to announce a newly elected National Council for a term of two years, July 1, 2008–June 30, 2010. Election results were announced on Wednesday, June 25, 2008, at the AGO Annual Meeting, held in conjunction with the AGO National Convention in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn. Members of the National Council, which includes eight national councillors, nine regional councillors drawn from across the country, and the non-voting AGO Executive Director are:

**PRESIDENT**

**Eileen Guenther**, DMA  
Washington, D.C.

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**John Walker**, FAGO, DMA  
Baltimore, Md.

**SECRETARY**

**Lois Z. Toepfner**, MM  
Westborough, Mass.

**TREASURER / COUNCILLOR FOR  
FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Calvert Johnson**, DM  
Decatur, Ga.

**COUNCILLOR FOR EDUCATION**

**Joyce Shupe Kull**, FAGO, CHM, DMA  
Arvada, Colo.

**COUNCILLOR FOR COMPETITIONS  
AND NEW MUSIC**

**David Vogels**, CAGO, MM  
Greenwood Village, Colo.

**COUNCILLOR FOR CONVENTIONS**

**Dennis Elwell**, BMUS  
Philadelphia, Pa.

**COUNCILLOR FOR PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

**W. James Owen**, JD, BA  
Dayton, Ohio

**REGION II COUNCILLOR (New  
York—New Jersey)**

**David S. Macfarlane**, AGO, DMA  
Bogota, N.J.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (*Ex-officio*)**

**James E. Thomashower**, CAE, BA  
New York, N.Y.

**AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION**

*European News*

**Isaac Lean**, a member of the Standing Committee (Newsletter Editor) of the Singapore Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (S-AGO), will be visiting Germany (Erlangen, Berlin and Munich) from the 21st of June to the 7th of July.

For this trip, he has contacted a few organists - among them the organist at St Sebaldus. During his stop at Erlangen, he will be exploring the possibility of visiting Thuringen in the hope of playing the wonderful organs there. His organ teacher, Dr. Evelyn Lim, who is also the Dean of the Singapore-AGO Chapter, impressed upon him the beauty of the German pipe organ and he is really eager to experience the beauty for himself.

A little bit about him - he stayed in Germany for a while when he was very young and is currently still taking lessons from Goethe-Institut in the hope that he may study in Germany next year. He would probably try reading both Mathematics and Music.

He would really hope to meet with members to discuss tie-ups between both chapters - Dr. Lim would be really happy if more German organists could come and perform at their organ concert series titled Pipe Works. He would be glad to give further details and make references.

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Anyone interested in contacting Mr. Lean can do so at:

[isaac.lean@gmail.com](mailto:isaac.lean@gmail.com)

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**Seeking employment:**

**Debbie Staley** is interested in a full time church musician position in Germany or England. She is an organist/ choir director, has a Masters degree in Church Music and

is working on a DMA degree in sacred music. She has studied with Dr. Jack Mitchener at Salem College in Winston Salem NC and with Dr. James Good at Southeastern Seminary. She is currently living in North Carolina. If anyone can be of assistance, please contact her directly at:

[<rscmcantor@yahoo.com>](mailto:rscmcantor@yahoo.com)

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*Recitals Past and Present*

*You can advertise here for your concert engagements to come as well as report those past.*

*Please submit items for the next Newsletter !*

June 1 <sup>st</sup>	4 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Eglise Notre Dame. Chatou (F)
		J.S. Bach, Sanders, German, Franck, Bossi, Rogg, Alain	
July 13 <sup>th</sup>	8 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Vor Frue Kirke, Assens (DK)
		Buxtehude, Boyce, J.S. Bach, Martini, Rogg, Sanders, Alain	
July 14 <sup>th</sup>	8 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Sct. Peders Kirke, Naestved (DK)
		Buxtehude, Boyce, J.S. Bach, Martini, Rogg, Sanders, Alain	
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	11 AM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Sct. Nicolai Kirke, Kolding (DK)
		J.S. Bach, Sanders, Franck, Messiaen, Alain	
Aug. 1 <sup>st</sup>	9:30 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Chiesa San Michele Arcangelo, Rocca Massima (I)
		Jimenez, de Sola, Buxtehude, Martini, Boyce, Sanders, J.S. Bach,	
Aug. 3 <sup>rd</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	Besigheim near Stuttgart (D)
Aug. 5 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Cathédrale St. André, Bordeaux (F)
		Franck, Messiaen, Alain, Rogg, Reger, Vierne	
Aug. 10 <sup>th</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	Virga-Jessebasiliek, Hasselt (B)
		International Organ Festival Hasselt with R. Bovend'aerde (Soprano) and H. van den Borre (Harp)	
Aug. 13 <sup>th</sup>	7 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston, MA (USA)
Aug. 17 <sup>th</sup>	4:45 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Cathedral of St. Patrick, New York City (USA)
Aug. 20 <sup>th</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	Adelaide Town Hall (Australia)
		Adelaide Town Hall Organ Recital Series	
Aug. 22 <sup>nd</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	St. Andrews Episcopal Church, Sydney (Australia)
Aug. 24 <sup>th</sup>	4 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Cathedral, Magdeburg (D)
Aug. 27 <sup>th</sup>	8 PM	Giorgio Parolini, Organ	Pauluskirche Darmstadt (D)
Sept. 13 <sup>th</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	St. Mary's Church, Neuss (D)
Sept. 20 <sup>th</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	Valoires Abbey, Argoule, Nord - Pas de Calais (F)
Sept. 28 <sup>th</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	St. Lambertuskerk, Wouw (B)
Sept. 21 <sup>st</sup>		Jennifer Chou, Organ	St. John's Anglican Church Camberwell (Australia)
		Messiaen: Livre du Saint Sacrement (excerpts)	
Sept. 27 <sup>th</sup>		Jennifer Chou, Organ	Pilgrim's Church, Adelaide (Australia)
		Messiaen: Livre du Saint Sacrement (complete)	
Oct. 3 <sup>rd</sup>		Johan Hermans, Organ	Annakirche, Aachen (D)



Every Saturday (11:30) Organ Music at Market Time Marktkirche, Wiesbaden (D)  
Hans Uwe Hielscher and guest organists from around the world