

SPRING MEETING 2018

HASSELT

Belgium

The annual **Spring Meeting of the European Chapter of the American Guild of Organists** took place from April 2-6, the week after Easter, 2018. Members Johan Hermans and Ludo Vandersmissen organized an itinerary in Belgium and the Netherlands that met all of the high expectations. The 46 participants of 9 different nationalities (including Austria and China) came from 12 countries including Germany (13), USA (8), England and Wales (5), Holland (5), Belgium (3), France (2), Switzerland (2), Italy (2), Finland (2), Poland (2), Denmark (1) and Australia (1). The purpose of these Spring Meetings is not only the exploration of historical and/or exceptional organs through demonstrations, concerts, and the possibility of trying them out and visiting historical places or unique locations. It is also a time for young, promising performers to gain experience and test their mettle and especially a time for all European Chapter Spring Meeting participants to exchange professionally and to get to know each other better.

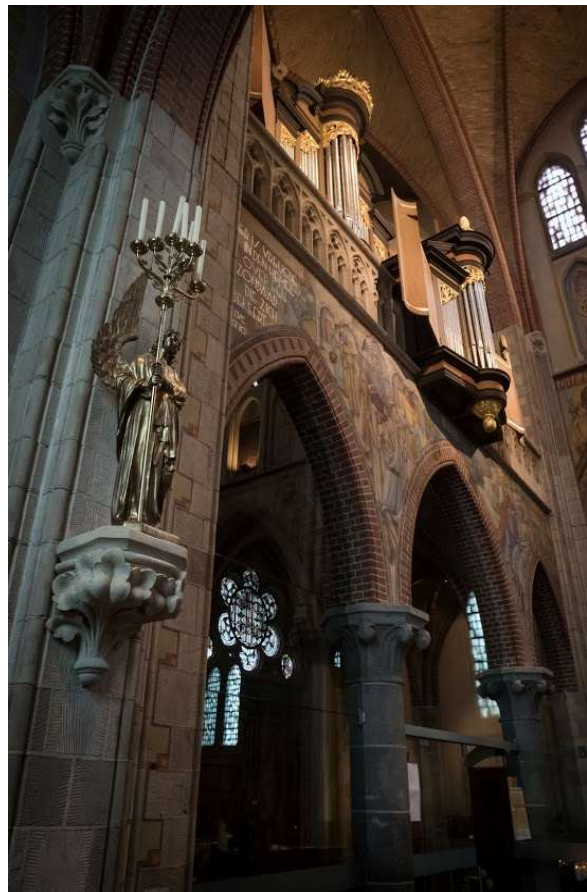
Emanating from the central point of Hasselt, Belgium, excursions to notable historic and modern organs in the surrounding area were undertaken. Many of the meals were organized beforehand in fine restaurants near the venues.



The opening dinner on Monday night for example was catered to the historic venue "Salon van de Smaak" not far from the Hotel. After a good night's sleep (for most to recover from the strains of the Easter celebration and the journey) everyone boarded the bus Tuesday morning, April 3rd, for an excursion to nearby Maastricht, Holland, where a marvellous organ from about 1650 (III/P/41/) awaited us in the St. Servaas Basilica. Although the original builder is unknown, modifications were made in the 18th century by Le Picard (an organ builder based in Liège) and Joseph Binvignat, who worked as an organ builder in Maastricht

from 1777 until well into the 19th century. This organ builder, who combined the French classical tradition with elements of the Rhineland style, was frequently encountered over the next several days. The restoration going back to the Binvignat condition of 1835-45 was completed by the organ building company Verschueren in 1990. The house organist Marcel Verheggen demonstrated the wonderful colors and the tonal flexibility in an improvisation utilizing typical French classical combinations all the way to reminiscences of Tournemire. This kaleidoscope was taken further with renderings by the participants: Ian Pattinson played Couperin (*Chromorne sur la taille*), Giorgio Parolini and Christopher Holman performed de Grigny (*Dialogue sur les grands jeux* from *Veni Creator* and *Gloria* from the *Mass* respectively). The romantic period was represented by Boëllmann (*Prière à Notre Dame*, Meredith Baker), Mendelssohn (*Sonata c-minor*, Yao Yue), and Jean Bouvard (*Variations sur un Noël Bretonne*, Jennifer Chou). Improvisations by Michał Szostak and Barry Jordan took the style out of the romantic into the contemporary. A coffee break was taken amidst ruins from the Roman period in the basement of a nearby hotel. A short bus ride brought us to the Convent of St. Gerlach, once a Premonstratensian Abbey, in nearby Houthem. Aside from an early organ of

Binvignat (II/P/25) from 1784, this edifice has splendid frescoes from 1751 on the walls and the ceiling. For his demonstration of the organ, member Axel Wilberg chose mostly works of (lesser-known) Belgian composers from this epoch [see *Footnote 1*]: Prelude and Fuge in G-Major by Abraham van den Kerckhoven, Récit and Cornet by Lambert Chaumont, Fantaisie pour la trompette by Thomas Babou and Prélude (Grand jeu) by Hubert Renotte. The Rhein influence was underlined by anonymous pieces (Aria 2 in C, Concerto in C) from the Schlehbusch Organbook, (Cologne 1745). The instrument lent itself well to other selections by Couperin (Agnes Goerke, Christoph Holman, Ian Pattinson) and to an improvisation in classical style by Michał Szostak. Another Belgian composer discovery was Josse-Francois-Joseph Bénaut played by Alissa Duryee. After lunch in the historic centre of Maastricht the group gathered at the Roman church, Basilica of Our Lady. The organ there (III/P/37) was originally built by Andries Séverin in 1652. Séverin, from Maastricht, had an organ workshop in Liège from 1626. He built in Walloon 17th-century style, combining elements of French, southern Netherlands, and Rhineland style. This instrument was modified by Binvignat in 1830 but the Flentrop company restored the Séverin organ in 1963/1984. In his introduction, titular organist Hans Leenders mentioned that this instrument was originally one and a half steps lower than a = 440 because the foot measure in Maastricht was longer than the common foot of the time, in Liège or Paris for example. His demonstration highlighted the early baroque qualities and the variety of Cornet and Reed stops, which include a Chalumeau 8! Next to Couperin (played by Jennifer Chou, Agnes Goerke and Christoph Holman), the French school was represented by Jacques Boyvin, selections from the Ire Livre played by Alissa Duryee. In spite of the historic pedal board Yao Yue braved the Bach Trio on "Allein Gott in der Höh" and Barry Jordan even the Tunder "Jesus Christus unser Heiland" with double pedal. Improvisations by Michał Szostak and Margreeth de Jong (Prelude in Bach-style) rounded out the participants' usage before moving on to the second organ in the church, a one-manual organ (I/P/14) from 1765 with an interesting non-equal temperament after Lambert-Rousseau from about 1774, builder not known. After Hans Leenders' demonstration of the exquisite single stop colors and combinations Agnes Goerke continued in this vein with a set of Variations by Heinrich Scheidemann. After Duetto I from Bach's Clavierübung (Jennifer Chou) and the Ire Kyrie from Couperin's Mass for the Convents (Christopher Holman), Alissa Duryee introduced us to the Dutch composer Antoni von Noordt (1619-1675) with his setting of Psalm 50.



Upon the occasion of the AGO European Chapter's visit to Hasselt, the deputy mayor for Culture and Tourism, Karolien Mondelaers invited the group to city hall for an official greeting. After welcoming the group in all 12 languages (see above) to the historic plenary hall she gave some general information about the city: approx. 77,000 inhabitants plus over 30,000 students, five museums (including one for "Jenever", a specialty Belgian gin), the largest Japanese Garden in Europe, and the Cistercian abbey Herkenrode from the 12th century. She then expounded upon how the city supports the arts in general and the organ in particular, including references to Johan Hermans as Civic Organist, and to the Cavallé-Coll organ which has been relocated to the Church of the Sacred Heart and is regularly used for

public concerts. She also expounded on the organ as being "exalted, mysterious and popular" before taking time for conversation and serving a round of Jenever and/or orange juice for all.

The Church of the Sacred Heart was then the final stop of the day with a public Candlelight Concert by Chapter members. The organ there (II/P/14) was built by Aristide Cavallé-Coll in 1878 for a convent in Brussels. It was a series organ, not customized, which accounts for the unusual appearance of the Pédale de tonnerre (thunder) stop. When the decision was made to close this convent in the early 1980's, the organ was bought by the mayor of Hasselt for the Hasselt conservatory of music. Because it didn't fit in the allotted space, when the organ was moved from Brussels to



Hasselt in 1985 it was placed in the Sacred Heart Church. The instrument is still owned by the city of Hasselt, not by the church. Except for minor changes in the voicing the instrument has always been kept in its original condition. The four Pedal stops are transmissions from the Grand Orgue. Two more pedal stops were planned by Cavallé-Coll but unfortunately never built. Christopher Holman and his wife Cynthia are members of the European chapter due to the fact that they currently reside in Basel, Switzerland. With the evening sun streaming in through the

leaded stained glass windows they opened the concert with works by Lili Boulanger (*Piè Jesu*), Louis Vierne (*Ave verum corpus*, op. 15), Maurice Ravel (*L'énigme éternelle*), Olivier Messiaen (*O sacrum convivium*), and Charles Gounod (*Repentir*) after a prelude so-to-speak of the second movement of the *Symphonie gothique*, op. 70, by Charles-Marie Widor. Johan Hermans set forth with an "Ave Maria" by Marco Enrico Bossi and Chorale Preludes on WEDLOCK (dedicated to European Chapter Subdean Johan Hermans) and WONDROUS LOVE (dedicated to European Chapter Dean Judy Riefel-Lindel) from 'An American Hymn Tune Sampler' by Bernard Wayne Sanders. Ian Pattinson concluded the concert with three pieces from 'Le Tombeau de Titelouze' by Marcel Dupré, the Andantino from 'Pièces de Fantaisie' by Louis Vierne, and "Pièce heroïque" by César Franck. During the wine reception afterwards other members were able to play on the organ. It was an appropriate conclusion for artists and audience alike. Margreeth de Jong performed one of her own Dance compositions, while Yao Yue and Jennifer Chou did more César Franck (*Prière*, op. 20, and *Prélude*, op. 18). "In paradisum" by Théodor Dubois (Alissa Duryee) fit the organ perfectly but George Thalben-Balls "Elegy" (John Falkingham) also sounded right at home. Michał Szostak and Barry Jordan took the opportunity to improvise.

Tuesday having been spent in Dutch Limburg, Wednesday, April 4th, was programmed for North Brabant, the first stop being the St. Martinus Church in Cuijk. The original organ (III/P/32, 1625-1650) was built by Andries Séverin, with whom we had already made acquaintance in Maastricht. Although this organ is an even earlier example of his art, it has all of the stylistic characteristics: variety of Cornets (four different Tierce possibilities on only 3 manuals) and reed stops (six), plus two bird calls and a Tambour (drum)! Much original substance was lost through changes in the course of time. In two reconstruction phases (1955 and 1992) the organ company Verschueren brought the instrument back to the 17th century condition as well as possible. In his introduction to the instrument Dr. Pieter Dirksen gave other interesting and valuable information. Originally built for a monastery church in Liège (possibly St. Laurent), the organ was later moved to Cuijk. Unusual for an instrument from around 1648 is the chromatic bass in the manuals and pedal, not the 'short octave' which was still widespread. The sonic demonstration revealed that the late Renaissance characteristic of the foundation stops are organically complemented by the plethora of mixtures and reeds. In spite of the unaccustomed historical pedal board three members accepted the challenge and played works by Bach: Giorgio

Parolini acquitted "Wachet auf" with aplomb and Agnes Goerke did no less with the Trio on "Auf meinen lieben Gott", Ian Pattinson stood by with "Christe, Du Lamm Gottes" from the Orgelbüchlein. Period literature was heard from Kerckhoven (Johan Hermans and Alissa Duryee), d'Angelbert (Yao Yue), Couperin (Christoph Holman), and Anonymous from a Manuscript collection from Liège, the "Liber Fratrum Cruciferorum Leodiensium" (Axel Wilberg). More exotic items were Buxtehude's "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland" (Jennifer Chou) an improvisation by Michał Szostak and a Fantasia chromatica by Trabaci interpreted with four hands by Ruth Ahrend and Edeltraud Bode. Leaving the epoch but still convincing were the Saltarello composed and played by Margreet de Jong and 4 Regers "Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit" (Stefan Pollock).

The titular organist from Hilvarenbeek Ad van Sleuwen accompanied us through the afternoon and demonstrated the next three instruments for us. In the St. Peters church in Hilvarenbeek is an organ (II/P/29) built from 1840-1843 by Bernard Petrus van Hirtum, restored and partially reconstructed in 1969 by the Vermeulen company. Another tonal restoration in 2005 and a restoration of the action in 2015 were carried out by Hans van Rossum. As might be expected from the middle of the 19th century there are fewer Cornets, Mixtures and Reeds, but the pitch is a whole tone lower and the



temperament is after Valotti. The demonstration consisted of five movements from the Suite du Premier Ton (Second Livre d'Orgue, 1700) by Jacques Boyvin, Poco largo in d-minor from the 3rd Sonate (1761) by Johann Gottlieb Janitsch and Allegro pomposo from the Sonate in D-Major (1790) by Johann Carl Friedrich Rellstab. In spite of somewhat limited time members played a movement from a Sonata by J.C. Bach, a movement from de Jongs "Jesu, meine Freude" (de Jong) and a movement by de Grigny (Giorgio Parolini). In the nearby church of St. Willibrord in Diessen is another organ (II/P/17) by the same builder. This being his last organ from 1860, the style is Rococo (late Baroque) but not yet Romantic. It has only one Mixture, one Reed and one Cornet. The Pedal consists solely of draw down from the Great and the pitch is here again one whole tone lower. The organ was restored and partially reconstructed in 1976 but restored again in 2011 by Hans van Rossum. Immediately striking are the magnificent wood carvings: trombone, serpent, recorder, oboe, lute and Putti (cherubs) with traverse flutes adorn the case. The demonstration consisted of four movements from "Fasciculus Musicus" (1711) by Elias Brunnenmüller, and the Kyrie Versets from the "Messe des Solennels Majeur" (1840) by François-Joseph Fétis. For the latter he was assisted by an *ad hoc* schola of men for the chanted parts. After the demonstration members Georg Wagner, Christoph Holman and Axel Wilberg performed respectively Dances by Valentin Rathgeber, a Voluntary by William Selby and a Sonate from the Schleibusch Organ Book.

In 1972 the organ (III/P/45) built from 1843-1847 by Franciscus Cornelius Smits for a church in Den Bosch ('s Hertogenbosch) was moved to the St. Petrus Basilica in Oirschot. It was restored in 1976 by Verschueren with further restoration taking place in 2000 and 2014. It reflects the Brabant Romantic. In addition to the expected reed stops there is a free reed (Harmonica, Ophikleid, Serpent) and a tremulant on each manual. Ad van Sleuwen demonstrated this instrument with a Chorale Prelude on "Nun ruhen alle Wälder" by Jan Albert van Eyken and all three movements of the Fantasie-Sonate Nr. 3 in g-minor by Samuel de Lange, sometimes referred to as "the Dutch Mendelssohn". After

his convincing performance members were able to put the instrument to the test themselves with a variety of literature: Mendelssohn Sonate in f-minor (first mvmt., Christoph Holman), Rheinberger Sonate in f-minor (first mvmt., Barry Jordan), Dubois "In paradisum" (Alissa Duryee), Duruflé Prelude sur le nom d'Alain (Yao Yue), John Stanley Trumpet Tune (Mike Irvine), de Jong Capriccio in Jazz (Margreeth de Jong), and Sanders (dedicated to European Chapter member Steve Gentile) Eclogue in A-flat (Bernard Sanders). After a short bus ride and dinner in Helmond the group gathered at the St. Lambertus church for a fabulous organ (III/P/45) built in 1772 by Guillaume Robustelly, the successor to Jean-Baptiste Le Picard in Liège. Originally built in the French classic style for the abbey church of Averbode in Belgium, it was moved in 1862 to Helmond and placed (with some changes) in the present church by Smits. The restoration in 1975-76 by Verschueren gained international acclaim. A further 5 restoration took place in 2015-16. The city organist of Helmond Jan van de Laar gave a brief account of the organ before his wonderful demonstration of the instrument. The typical French classic elements all came to play in the six movement of the Magnificat Suite in a-minor of Jean Francois Dandrieu followed by a hauntingly beautiful Cornet for the Récit du Chant de L'Hymne Pange Lingua by Nicolas de Grigny. A wonderful baroque plenum served Bachs Prelude in C-Major (BWV 547/1) well and yet another Sesquialtera registration Bachs "Liebster Jesu" (BWV 731). He closed with a rousing rendition of the "Pièce heroïque" by César Franck, but the tonal palette demanded a lot of - perhaps too many - compromises. Members also performed French classic [de Grigny (G. Parolini), du Mage (Chr. Holman)] and Bach [Praeludium in b-minor (B. Jordan), Christ ist erstanden (Orgelbüchlein, Christian Michel), Erschienen ist der herrlich Tag (A. Goerke), Christ lag in Todesbanden (J. Falkingham) and even the famous „Air" (Michał Szostak)] before moving on to more adventurous fare [DETROIT from 'A Sampler of American Hymn Tunes' by Bernard Sanders dedicated to and played by Christa Rakich].

The first two days having been spent mostly in the Netherlands, for Thursday, April 5th, the location was the French speaking part of Belgium. It began with a visit to the organ building workshop of Schumacher in Eupen. The head of the company himself, Guido Schumacher, gave us a brief history of the company, which he took over from his father after first doing a degree in organ performance! He then did a guided tour through the building and the various departments, explaining what was done in each; also what the various components were and where they are from/where they are going. There was ample time to try out various instruments: a practice organ of II/P with only a few stops (for Trio Sonatas!), a Regal with resonators of Ceramic (!), and the unique Pedalion by Louis Debierre from the 19th century. During the hour drive to Liège, lunch was (once again) taken on the bus to save time for wonderful organs. The first of these was the Merklin & Schütze organ in the St. Barthélémy Collegiate Church. Not only the organ is noteworthy, both the church and a beautiful Baptismal Font of Renier from Huy date from the 12th century and were explained in a guided tour of the church. The organ was originally built in 1847 by Joseph Merklin, an organ builder from Baden, Germany, who later became a French citizen. He had workshops in Paris and Brussels in the 19th century and mainly built organs for France and Belgium. (Some participants may remember that we visited one of his instruments in the Temple Neuf in Strasbourg in 2014.) The organ underwent some adaptations in 1887 by the Belgian organ builder Pierre Schyven and was restored and partially reconstructed in 2014 by Guido Schumacher. The instrument was demonstrated by Jennifer Chou with a delightful set of late romantic Variations sur un Noël by Jean Bouvard and by Barry Jordan with the Andantino in g-minor by César Franck and the Prelude in E-flat by Camille Saint-Saëns. The church resounded in romantic atmosphere with a "best-of" series: C. Franck, Prélude, op. 18 (Michał Szostak), Boëllmann Minuet Gothique (Giorgio Parolini), Rheinberger "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" (Agnes Goerke), Brahms "Herzlich tut mich verlangen (Francine Maté), Schumann Fugue B-A-C-H (Yao Yue), Lemmens Fanfare (Meredith Baker), and the 1st mvmt. of Widors 6th Symphony (Chr. Holman); but the most engaging piece

was played at the end by the house organist Lambert Demez, that was a Petite Prélude by Joseph Jongen. The impressionistic harmonies were certainly forerunners for Litaize and Duruflé.



During the walk through the historic centre to the Benedictine abbey of "Paix de la Nôtre-Dame" the group took special note of a plaque remembering the birth place of Liéges perhaps most famous (musical) son: César Franck and also passed the Opéra Royal de Wallonie (cultural heritage). Once in the abbey the group was first treated

to coffee, tea and cookies before going to the chapel housing a splendid organ (III/P/29) from 1737 in 18th century French-Walloon classical style by Jean-Baptiste Le Picard. This instrument is the oldest of his hand that is preserved. It was restored in 1980 by Manufacture Westenfelder from Luxemburg. The organ demonstration consisted of two sets of pieces. First Christa Rakich played her Variations on LAUDA ANIMA.

Each Variation showcased a stop or combination with a different setting of the Hymn-Tune. Agnes Goerke continued with five movements from the Livre d'Orgue by Pierre du Mage, whereby the registrations were given in the titles: Tièrce en taille, Basse de Trompette, Flûtes, Duo (Tièrce and Cromorne), Grands jeux. More French classic played by the participants followed: Couperin (Francine Maté), Clérambault (Chr. Holman); but also the Prelude in F-Major by Buxtehude (Mike Irvine) and even the Aria by Bernard Sanders (B. Sanders) worked nicely on the uneven temperament. A highly chromatic Fantasy in c-minor unfortunately did neither the piece nor the organ justice.

A short walk over to the Liège Philharmonic Concert Hall (19th century, cultural heritage) brought on something completely different! Staff member of the Concert Hall Eric Mairlot, being an organist himself, introduced us to the organ originally built in 1888 by Pierre Schyven from Brussels in the romantic-symphonic tradition. Adaptations and electrification of the instrument were done from 1952 to 1956 by organ builder Georges Delmotte of Tournai, Belgium for a total of 62 stops. Jeanne Demessieux from Paris taught on this instrument from 1952 to 1968. From 2002 to 2005 the Belgian organ builder 'Manufacture d'orgues Thomas' did a reconstruction of the original Schyven instrument enlarged by 9 stops. The organ now has 55 stops on III/P with a modern combination action and contemporary, movable console on stage. The organ was introduced to us briefly by a staff member of the Concert Hall. He also made us aware of the four great composers from the city of Liège: André Gretry (18th century master of the French comic opera), Eugène Ysaÿe (19th century Violin Virtuoso), César Franck and Joseph Jongen (both organists and composers). The sonic demonstration consisted of Michał Szostak playing first the Franck Prière and then improvising a Toccata in French romantic style, followed by Meredith Baker performing Francks Chorale in a-minor. Following well-earned applause other members played a variety of literature: Cantilena from Five Miniatures by Andrew Fletcher (Giorgio Parolini), Fantasy and Fugue on BACH by Franz Liszt (complete! – hats off!, Alissa Duryee), Fanfare by Kenneth

Leighton (John Falkingham), Pastorale by Lefebvre-Wely (Ian Pattinson), "Christ is laid in the tomb" from the Stations of the Cross by Dupré (Barry Jordan), "Rapsodia" from Sonata da camera by Bernard Sanders (Bernard Sanders).

After dinner at a restaurant in the historical town center the group reformed at the St. Jacques Collegiate Church. This 16th century church is a gem of flamboyant gothic architecture. Beautiful stained-glass windows, gothic stalls and a rich collection of furniture make this church one of Belgium's wonders and a cultural heritage. The so-called 'Niehoff' Organ, 1600, was originally a monumental Renaissance instrument, III/P/34, possibly built by Florent Hocquet I or Bernard Spiering in 1600-1602 and rebuilt in 1669 by Andries Séverin, whose epitaph is placed under this organ. The reconstruction in 1993-1999 after Renaissance models (Niehoff, Van Covelens) with blockwerk disposition, meantone temperament, and short octaves was done by Belgian organ builder Guido Schumacher to international acclaim. The organ demonstration by titular organist Pierre Thimus emphasized the origin and style of the instrument and began with a Fantasia Upon La-Mi-Re from the English School followed by "Mit ganzem Willen" and "Questa fanciulla" by Konrad Paumann and four Renaissance Dances. After an Echo Fantasie by Gherardus Scronx and an anonymous Récit de Tièrce (both from the "Liber Fratrum Cruciferorum Leodiensium") came two later pieces from Germany, Heinrich Scheidemanns "O lieber Gott" and the "Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne in C" by Dietrich Buxtehude. Several participants followed up with more Buxtehude ["Gelobet seist Du" (Jennifer Chou), Fugue in F (Mike Irvine)] while others chose the Belgian school with Kerckhoven (Alissa Duryee) or an improvisation more-or-less in Renaissance style (Michał Szostak). Very fitting were the "Pavane Lachrymae" by Sweelinck (Christian Michel) and also his Chromatic Fantasy in a compelling interpretation by Christoph Holman. Although the day began with catching the bus at 8 AM and ended with arrival at the hotel at 11 PM, there wasn't a moment that one would have wanted to miss!

The final day, Friday, April 6th, began with an excursion to Genk where a new II/P/36, tracker organ by Guido Schumacher (2010, completion of the pedal division in 2015) stands in the Neo-Gothic St Martinus Church church, which was built after the original Gothic church was destroyed by friendly fire in 1944. The instrument is built in middle German baroque style after examples of the König family. It has 36 stops with an open 16' principal in the pedal towers. The surprisingly contemporary organ case forms a bridge between the 18th style organ and the neo-Gothic architecture of the building. The demonstration by house organist Jeroen Follon included the Bruhns G-Major, pieces by Clérambault and a modern but very accessible set of variations on Veni Creator by Gent composer Gabriël Verschraegen (1919-1981). Even if the organ was very present (if not to say too loud) in the space, it had some very nice sounds. These were given ample opportunity to speak for themselves in participants' musical offerings: Vater unser (ornamented) by G. Böhm (G. Parolini), Prelude in E-flat by J.S. Bach (Yao Yue), "Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn" and "Liebster Jesu" by J.S. Bach (Ian Pattinson) an improvisation on "Morning has Broken" (Michał Szostak), "Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem" from the Stations of the Cross by Marcel Dupré (Barry Jordan) and "Ricercare" from Sonata da camera by Bernard Sanders (Bernard Sanders).

Upon returning to Hasselt the group was invited to the private auditorium of the Bol & Orchestra piano store for a private recital by Simon Voets. His rendition of Schuberts Sonate in a-minor and of an Etude by György Ligeti were convincing and left no doubt that his career is only just beginning. There was then time to visit the piano collection and the piano restoration workshop.

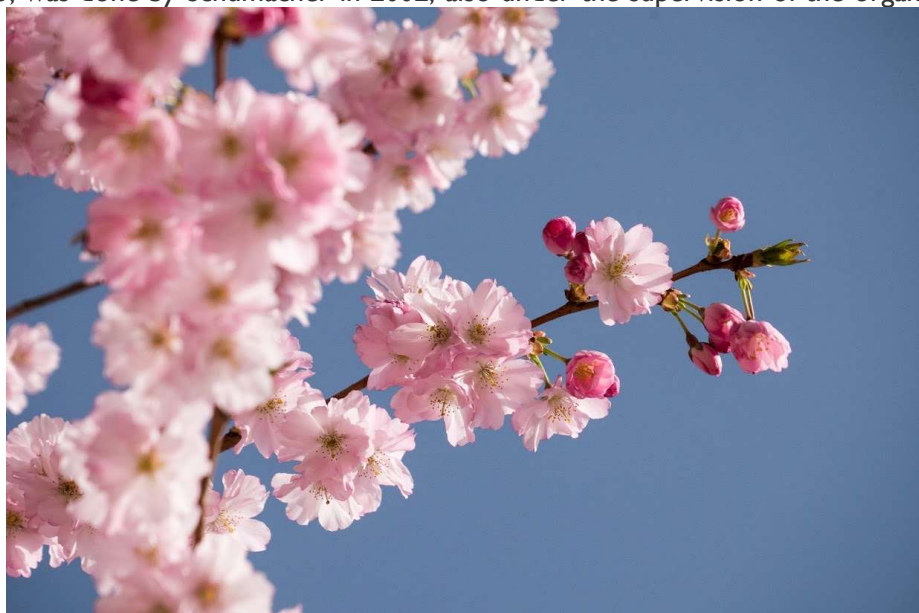
The rest of the day was spent in Hasselt with a rejuvenating mix of events starting with an afternoon organ recital in the Virga Jesse basilica, a church from the late Baroque - early Classicism. The interior was entirely restored in 2017 and houses, next to the organ from the 1860's (II/P/23) built by Arnold Clerinx from Sint-Truiden, a marble altar by

the 17th century sculptor Maurice del Cour, the "Bernini from Liège", and a gothic statue of the Virga Jesse. Clerinx is the most well-known 19th-century organ builder of the Belgian Limburg and Liège. His instruments blend elements of classical and romantic organ building. He also patented a system to use stops on two different manuals without a coupler. This organ was restored/reconstructed by Guido Schumacher in 2003 after other instruments from Clerinx under the supervision of the organ consultant Michel Lemmens from Kortesseem. The noontime concert began with Margreeth de Jong, composer from the Netherlands, playing her own music. She mesmerized the audience with Prelude, Scherzo and Rondo from the "Lyric Suite", op. 84, and delighted them with the Fandango from "Seven Dances", op. 60. Michael König, born in Austria, currently living and working in Denmark, relied on more standard fare to demonstrate the instrument: a Fugue on "Christ ist erstanden" by Albrechtsberger, Sonate in A-Major (Allegro non molto) by Franz Xaver Schnizer, Andante with Variations in D-Major by Felix Mendelssohn, and the Offertoire in D-Major by Jean François Dandrieu didn't fail to hit the mark. Giorgio Parolini mixed the parameters by first playing GWALCHMAI and CWM RHONDDA from A Welsh Hymn-Tune Sampler by Bernard Sanders and closing with two pieces by Jacques Nicolas Lemmens, the Prelude in E-flat Major and the inimitable Fanfare to bring down the house.

An interesting and exciting item on the agenda was a demonstration of the Hasselt Carillon located on the tower of the St. Quintinus Cathedral. Three participants played pieces of very diverse origins. Ariane Toffel began with an original composition for carillon called "Toccata for 42 bells" by Robert Moore followed by an arrangement of Purple Rain by Prince, arranged by Mathieu D. Polak, and Verdis "Va pensiero" arranged by Leen t'Hart. Georg Wagner interpreted Hattem Grove by Kenneth Theunissen (one of the 2 city carilloneurs of Hasselt) and an arrangement by Mathieu D. Polak of Jerry Bocks "If I were a Rich Man" from the musical "Fiddler on the Roof". Not to be lumped Christian Michel began with the "Vocalise" by Rachmaninoff and the Handel Aria "Lascia ch'io pianga" and finished with the rousing Toccata by Georges Clément. The performance was met with frenetic applause from the ground which was acknowledged with hand-waving out the tower window.

The final organ on the agenda was a back-to-the-roots experience. The St. Quintinus Cathedral is a Gothic church built between the 11th and 15th century. The first organ was built in 1592-93 by Nicholas Niehoff. When it got partially destroyed in a fire in 1725, many of the Niehoff pipes were reused by Joseph Binvignat and L. Houdtappel (from Maastricht) in an organ built from 1791-93. They excellently managed to integrate these into an 18th century organ in French classical style while maintaining some of the older German/Dutch character. The reconstruction of the 1793 condition, including the pitch of a = 405, was done by Schumacher in 2002, also under the supervision of the organ

consultant Michel Lemmens. Our organizer for the week and Civic Organist of Hasselt is also Cathedral Organist here and knows the instrument intimately. To demonstrate it he chose the Adagio from Bach's Toccata, Adagio and Fugue, "Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend" (BWV 709) and a Prelude in C-Major composed in 2017 (in old style for Organo pleno) by Joost ter Mont. There was then time on this final organ for participants to pull out their scores one last time and



it seemed everyone had new things to play! One heard the first mvmt. of Bach's Trio Sonata in E-flat (Yao Yue), Prelude in C-Major (9/8) (Agnes Goerke), and Prelude in a-minor (Ian Pattinson), two Couperins (Axel Wilberg, Ian Pattinson), Passacaglia in d by Buxtehude (Mike Irvine), Eclogue in F by Bernard Sanders (Bernard Sanders) and something completely new, a Morceau fuguée by Matthias van den Gheyn (1721-1785) from Leuven (Alissa Duryee).

Even though this was the last organ it was still not the end of the Spring Meeting 2018. The final event is always the closing dinner. This is a very special event and it took place in a very special place, the 'Sky Lounge' Restaurant with a fabulous view over the city and as it happened, a spectacular sunset. Naturally the thank you speeches were almost endless – but all well-deserved. Our organizers Johan Hermans and Ludo Vandersmissen had done an incredible amount of work to get everything into place and it paid off because everything functioned without friction. The booklet for the week is not only bursting with information, it is practically a work of art with photos and maps and everything one could ever need. Each participant had brought along a little something personal and special for these two great guys. Many of the demonstrations were done by participants, these also deserved their thank you's, not to mention fearless leader and Dean Judy Riefel-Lindel who is always working along in the background doing what needs to be done and keeping a watchful eye on everything. And of course the spouses, and those who come from the farthest away, etc., etc. It was a very special week and not soon to be forgotten. It makes one curious in anticipation of the announcement of the venue for the Spring Meeting 2019, doesn't it?!

As an extra bonus European Chapter member Jennifer Chou from Hong Kong, now living in Melbourne, Australia, also played an Organ recital on Saturday afternoon in the St. Quintinus Cathedral in Hasselt. For those who could stay, certainly an additional pleasure!

Bernard Sanders