

ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY

Annual Newsletter

JUNE 2018

ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH | 207 YORK STREET, BANGOR, MAINE 04401 | WWW.HOOKOPUS288.ORG



Kevin Birch, Executive Director

Director's Message

As we embark on a new season of concerts and community outreach I would like to pay tribute to my teacher and mentor, and great friend of St. John's Organ Society, Yuko Hayashi (1929-2018).

Shortly after accepting the position of Music Director & Organist at St. John's in 1992 I met with Yuko to share my enthusiasm for E. & G. G. Hook's sublime Opus 288 and my hope to cultivate an organization that would serve to promote the instrument.

Yuko, by that time, in addition to her brilliant career as a teacher and performer, had served for decades as Executive Director of the Old West Organ Society, an organization dedicated to the promotion of C. B. Fisk's celebrated Opus 55 at the Old West Church in Boston's West End. Thanks to her leadership the Old West Organ Society enjoys a position of international prominence. Old West Organ Society has maintained

a long tradition of concerts and masterclasses of the highest calibre and has inspired a generation of organ students in the process.

Yuko encouraged me to lay the groundwork for a similar effort on behalf of E. & G.G. Hook's Opus 288 in Bangor and generously offered advice and support as we took steps to form what we now know as St. John's Organ Society.

I will always treasure the memory of Yuko's visit to Bangor in August 2001. Yuko brought two outstanding young Japanese organists (Yukiko Jojima and Naoko Tateishi) to spend a few days of study culminating in a performance for our Summer Organ Series. Yuko took great delight in coaching works of Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Franck, Vierne, Brahms and a newly-composed work by Japanese composer T. Yamanouchi and conveyed remarkable insights into matters of registration, articulation and performance. I'll long remember the joy of sitting with Yuko as that magnificent concert unfolded - enjoying the sublime beauty of Opus 288 and the fruits of her masterful teaching.

Read on to discover more about our 2018 Summer Organ Concerts and enjoy a review of our recent Maine Historic Organ Institute by Stephen Pinel. You will also find information on how to participate in our Annual Giving Program. Many thanks, in advance, for your support.

My thanks to Fr. Frank J. Murray, Pastor, and members of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, for their encouragement and support. Thanks to our superb Board of Directors, to our many volunteers, to our performers, and to the Andover Organ Company for their expertise in caring so well for this cultural treasure.

Kevin Birch

St. John's Organ Society Summer Organ Concerts 2018 26th Annual Series Thursday Evenings at 7:30

July 19

Wolfgang Reisinger
(Vienna, Austria)

July 26

Francien Janse-Balzer
(Weener, Germany)

August 2

Abraham Ross
(Oberlin, Ohio)

August 9

Susan Ferré
(Gorham, New Hampshire)

August 16

Sarah Johnson
(Boston, Massachusetts)

August 23

William Porter
(Rochester, New York)

August 30

Season Finale - Opus 288 & Friends
Anatole Wieck - violin
Anna Maria Baeza - clarinet
Joachim Weitun - violoncello
Kevin Birch - organ

E. & G. G. Hook Organ, Opus 288 (1860)
St. John's Catholic Church
207 York Street, Bangor, Maine 04401

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RECITALS, JULY 2017 – MAY 2018: AN OVERVIEW

by Carlton T. Russell

The climactic event of the St. John's Organ Society's 25th anniversary year was the Maine Historic Organ Institute in October; but that glorious celebration was preceded by Dana Robinson's June 6 International Concert (see the 2017 *Annual Newsletter*) and a full



Choeur d'Enfants of the Ile de France

summer series of seven Thursday evening programs, beginning on July 20 with The Children's Choir (*Choeur d'Enfants*) of the Ile de France, conducted by Francis Bardot, an ensemble that had performed in the 2013 summer series. This program comprised music of French composers.

July 27 saw the first and the youngest of three newcomers to the series, 19-year-old Mike Logtenberg, a Luxembourg native, playing music of Buxtehude, Sweelinck, Bach, Mendelssohn, Vierne, and Widor, as well as a concerto by Christoph Wolfgang Druckenmüller (1687-1741).



Mike Logtenberg



Permelia Sears

Permelia Sears, an active Organ Historical Society member who specializes in playing and promoting 19th-century American organs, made her first appearance at St. John's on August 3. Her program featured music of American composers Paine, Chadwick, Barber, and Buck, and also included a sonata by her husband, David Sears. She was joined by her daughter, violinist Rebecca Sears, in the Cantilena, Op. 71 by Arthur Foote.

Abraham Ross, who began his career as a prize student of Dr. Birch and was halfway through his Master of Music in Historical Performance program at Oberlin, returned on August 10 to the St. John's organ he plays so well. Abe again gifted us with a stellar performance. Music of Franck and Widor was framed by that of American composers Chadwick and Ives; and the recital ended with the demanding and rarely-played Sonata in E-flat Minor of Horatio Parker.



Abraham Ross

However often George Bozeman has played in the St. John's summer series, his programs are unfailingly interesting. His August 17 recital, on an organ he restored and knows intimately, consisted of music by Bach, beginning and ending with youthful free (non-chorale-based) works: the Toccata and Fugue in C Major, BWV 531 and the *Pièce d'Orgue*, BWV 572. Between these were twelve chorale preludes and a transcription from a cantata, for which George provided imaginative program notes interpreting Bach's "tone painting" in extramusical terms.



George Bozeman

Kevin Birch, to whose vision, dedication, and experience we owe the substance and nationally-recognized excellence of the performances and other events that support Hook Op. 288, was the solo performer on the August 24 program. Beginning and



Kevin Birch

ending with compositions written for the organ -- including Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster*, a signature piece for Kevin -- the recital included three transcriptions, among them the opening sinfonia of Bach's Cantata 106 and "The Swan" from Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals", as well as a first local performance of the "Little Organ Mass (Reformed)" by James Woodman, a work dedicated to Dr. Birch.

Before serving as a faculty member for the October organ institute, Margaret Harper introduced herself to St. John's audiences in an August 31 recital of great stylistic variety, including a voluntary by Matthew Locke; music of Bach and his teacher, Böhm, Franck, and Saint-Saëns; and a provocatively programmatic piece by Serge Arcuri (b. 1954), *Les espaces infinis*.



Margaret Harper



Jacques Boucher & Anne Robert

The 2018 International Concert on May 8 brought back Canadian organist Jacques Boucher for his fourth performance on Opus 288, this time again with his wife, the brilliant violinist Anne Robert, in a contemplative concert including two audience favorites: the haunting Adagio of Albinoni and Gounod's Ave Maria, based on the first prelude in Bach's Well-tempered Clavier.

The 2018 International Concert on May 8 brought back Canadian organist Jacques Boucher for his fourth performance on Opus 288, this time again with his wife, the brilliant violinist Anne Robert, in a contemplative concert including two audience favorites: the haunting Adagio of Albinoni and Gounod's Ave Maria, based on the first prelude in Bach's Well-tempered Clavier.

OPUS 288 - OUTREACH & EDUCATION



Sketch inspired by Opus 288 by organ student Johan Halvorsen (age 17)



Photo by Jeff Kirlin

Maine Historic Organ Institute - Final Concert



ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY ANNUAL FUND 2018

It is through the generous support of our donors that we are able to share the beauties of E. & G. G. Hook's Opus 288 through public concerts (Summer Organ Concert Series and an annual International Artist Concert), education, and community outreach.

Your tax-deductible donation will enable us to continue and expand our efforts, and maintain the historic Opus 288. Donors will be listed by category in all concert programs.

Giving levels are:

Benefactor (\$500+)

Patron (\$250-\$499)

Sponsor (\$150-\$249)

Contributor (\$100-\$149)

Friend (\$50-\$99)

Supporter (\$20-\$49)

For a donation of \$250, Concert Sponsors (business or individual) will be recognized in one of the weekly summer concert programs. Please note with your donation if you wish to be a concert sponsor.

Gifts may be sent to: St. John's Organ Society, 207 York Street, Bangor, Maine 04401. Please include your name, address, and email address if you have one.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for considering a donation to St. John's Organ Society!

ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Birch - Executive Director

Catherine Bruno - Secretary

Jason Gould - Treasurer

Ruth Nelligan - Director

Carlton Russell - Director

Winnie Murray-Higgins - Director

YOU CAN FIND THE ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK!

Stay on top of all that's going on with the Hook Opus 288, concerts, and more by searching and liking HOOKOPUS288 or ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY.

MAINE HISTORIC ORGAN INSTITUTE

The St. John's Organ Society celebrated its 25th anniversary year by hosting the Maine Historic Organ Institute in October 2017 attended by organists and organ enthusiasts from all over the country.



Photo by Jeff Kirlin

Maine Historic Organ Institute Faculty—Margaret Harper, Christian Lane, Kevin Birch, Dana Robinson, & Jonathan Moyer



Photo by Jeff Kirlin

David and Nick Wallace with their Opus 73 (2014)



Photo by Jeff Kirlin

Jonathan Moyer assisting Margaret Harper



Carlton and Lorna Russell at 1847 E. & G. G. Hook Organ (Stockton Springs)



Institute Faculty with Barbara Owen—Kevin Birch, Barbara Owen, Margaret Harper, Dana Robinson, & Jonathan Moyer



Kevin Birch & Barbara Owen



James Woodman



Student Recital - E. & G. G. Hook, Opus 288



George Bozeman at the 1856 George Stevens Organ (Belfast)



Photo by Jeff Kirlin

A. David Moore Continuo Organ (interior)

A report from Maine: The 2017 Historic Organ Institute

October 24–28, 2017

By Stephen L. Pinel

The St. John's Organ Society of Bangor, Maine, reached a noteworthy milestone this fall with its "silver" anniversary! The organization was established a quarter of a century ago to maintain, promote, and foster public interest in E. & G. G. Hook Opus 288 (1860), an illustrious, three-manual pipe organ in the back gallery of St. John's Catholic Church. The society has sponsored a considerable number of cultural events surrounding this instrument, including concerts, symposia, and teaching institutes. The organ is a large, fully American Romantic organ, equal in grandeur to anything comparable in Europe, and is situated in a reverberant 1855 Gothic-revival building. The instrument has had work, especially in 1980 when it was restored by George Bozeman & Co., and more recently by Robert C. Newton and the Andover Organ Company. The society is directed by **Kevin Birch**, the organist and music director at St. John's; **Catherine Bruno**, an advocate known for her infectious enthusiasm and organizational skills; and a loyal coterie of volunteers. The fact that this society has flourished through several pastoral changes at the church is in itself a notable accomplishment.

The Maine Historic Organ Institute

To celebrate this anniversary, the society sponsored the Maine Historic Organ Institute this fall between October 24 and 28. The institute featured concerts, lectures, masterclasses, and organ tours using St. John's Hook and a number of historic instruments nearby. Most of those were built by the Hooks (or their successors), but we also saw an important 1849 instrument by George Stevens in First Parish Church, Belfast. What made the institute memorable was the diverse cross-section of the participants—organbuilders, performers, scholars, students, and five well-respected American teachers. The gathering provided an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas, hear and visit organs, interact, study, and consider the organ from a variety of contrasting but complimentary perspectives. A surprising guest among the registrants was the great American soprano, Phyllis Bryn-Julson, universally recognized for her iconic interpretation of atonal and twelve-tone music. Bryn-Julson happens to like organ music!

Central to the institute were a series of four evening performances by the teaching faculty: **Kevin Birch**, **Margaret Harper**, **Christian Lane**, **Jonathan Moyer**, and **Dana Robinson**. The repertoire varied, but one evening each was devoted to American, French, and German compositions, and the final evening was given dedicated to "Masterworks for the Organ." The quality of the playing was impeccable, but a few of the highlights included Birch's exquisite reading of "Andante sostenuto" from *Symphonie Gothique*, op. 70, of Charles-Marie Widor, and Harper's elegant performance of "Vater unser im Himmelreich" (BWV 682) from the *Clavierübung* of Johann Sebastian Bach, surely one of the hardest pieces in the repertoire. To my ears, the performance honors went to the remarkable Dana Robinson from the University of Illinois at Champaign. His performance of Felix Mendelssohn's *Sonata No. 1 in F*, op. 65, no. 1, and the *Choral in E Major* by César Franck were among the finest interpretations of those works I recall hearing. A few at the institute referred to Robinson as an "organists' organist," and his faultless accuracy, rhythmic drive, and musical sensitivity were astounding. Regardless of the literature, Opus 288 was convincing. Put simply, it is a really good organ; it was a privilege to hear it played so well day after day.

Students, teachers, scholars, and organbuilders

A feature of the institute was a series of masterclasses. While many of the participants opted to visit the region's historic organs instead, the students worked with the faculty daily on old and new literature. Andrew Scanlon, organ professor from East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina (and a distinguished player in his own right), brought a number of his students. They were excited to study with the faculty, and a Friday-morning program featuring them was enthusiastically applauded.

Significant elements of new scholarship were offered. **Barbara Owen's** book, *Hook Organs in the State of Maine*, recently published by the Organ Historical Society Press (ISBN 978-0-913499-80-1), reinforced the topic of her lecture. **David E. Wallace**, noted organbuilder from Gorham, Maine, gave a detailed account of current organ work in the state. He also produced a detailed handout on the known work of George Stevens in Maine. **George Bozeman** presented an admirable presentation-recital on the English voluntary. The Stevens organ at First Parish Church in Belfast—an organ Bozeman beautifully restored in 1975—served the purposes of this genre with distinction and



1860 E. & G. G. Hook Opus 288, St. John's Catholic Church, Bangor, Maine (photo credit: Len Levasseur)



1847 E. & G. G. Hook, Universalist (now the Community) Church of Stockton Springs, Maine (photo credit: Len Levasseur)



1909 Hook & Hastings Opus 2223, Hampden Highlands United Methodist Church, Hampden, Maine (photo credit: Len Levasseur)

was well-received. **James Woodman**, a composer of some note, spoke on the attributes of small organs. Vermont's remarkable organbuilder, **A. David Moore**, shared some of the challenges he faced recently restoring a Hook organ, Opus 304 (1861), for Bangor's Hammond Street Congregational Church. His discussion was illustrated, and Moore showed us different types of organ pipes, explaining how their physical characteristics influenced the sound they produced.

Other well-known organ builders were present and added immeasurably to the discussions; among them were **William F. Czelusniak**, **Scot L. Huntington**, and the great-granddaddy, the honorable

Robert C. Newton. While three organbuilders brought chamber instruments to the institute, it was the superb wood-working skills of **Nicholas Wallace** (a member of THE DIAPASON's 20 Under 30 Class of 2015) that most impressed attendees. Expect to hear much more from this young organbuilder in the future.

The Organ Historical Society was much in evidence; no less than three former presidents, several former members of its national council and staff, and a considerable number of current members were present. A few "extras" at the event, such as an old-fashioned, New England chicken-pie supper, and a visit to the award-winning Young's Lobster





A stereograph of 1863 E. & G. G. Hook Opus 283 in the back of First Congregational Church, Bucksport, Maine, photographed about 1870 by A. G. Webster, stereographer

Pound in Belfast, were enjoyed. And Lorna and Carlton Russell's fine and carefully planned demonstration on the elegant 1847 Hook organ in Stockton Springs was greatly appreciated.

We left the institute on Saturday wanting more. Bangor is certainly not on the ordinary traveling routes of most people, and getting there was a challenge for anyone outside northern New England. Some seventy participants came from as far away as Colorado, Georgia, and Texas. St. John's Organ Society brought a varied group of people together for an extraordinary event that was as enjoyable as it was informative. Putting an event like this together is a lot of work. Sincere thanks and a warm salute were extended to Kevin Birch, Cathy Bruno, and the members of St. John's Organ Society for a satisfying experience. ■

**E. & G. G. Hook Opus 288 (1860)
St. John's Catholic Church, Bangor, Maine**

Great (Manual II)

- 16' Bourdon (wood, 56 pipes)
- 8' Op. Diapason (metal, 56 pipes)
- 8' Melodia (TC, wood, 44 pipes)
- 8' Std Diapason Bass (wood, 12 pipes)
- 4' Principal (metal, 56 pipes)
- 4' Flute (wood, 56 pipes)
- 2 1/2' Twelfth (metal, 56 pipes)
- 2' Fifteenth (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 3 ranks Sesquialtra (metal, 165 pipes)
- 8' Trumpet (metal, 56 pipes)
- 4' Clarion (metal, 56 pipes)

Swell (Manual III, enclosed, balanced Swell pedal, originally hitch-down)

- 16' Bourdon (TC, wood, 56 pipes)
- 8' Op. Diapason (TC, metal, 44 pipes)*
- 8' Viol di Gamba (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 8' Stopped Diapason (wood and metal, 56 pipes)
- 4' Principal (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 4' Flute Harmonique (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 2' Fifteenth (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 3 ranks Dulciana Cornet (metal, 161 pipes)
- 8' Trumpet (metal, 56 pipes)
- 8' Oboe (TC, metal, 44 pipes)*
- Tremulant

Choir

- 16' Eolina (TC, metal, 44 pipes)
- 8' Open Diapason (metal, 56 pipes)
- 8' Dulciana (TC, metal, 44 pipes)*
- 8' Viola d'Amour (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 8' Stopped Diapason (wood, 56 pipes)
- 4' Celestina (metal, 56 pipes)*
- 4' Flute a' Chiminee (metal, 56 pipes)
- 2' Picolo (metal, 56 pipes)
- 8' Cremona (TC, metal, 44 pipes)
- 8' Corno di Basetto (CC-C, 12 pipes)

Pedal

- 16' Dble. Op. Diapn (wood, 27 pipes)
- 16' Dble. Dulciana (wood, 27 pipes)
- 16' Grand Posaine (wood, 27 pipes, new, 1981)*
- Pedal Check*

Couplers and Mechanicals:

- Sw. to Gr.
- Sw. to Ch.
- Ch. to Gr. Sub 8va.
- Gr. to Ped.
- Ch. to Ped.
- Sw. to Ped.
- Bellows Signal*

CHURCH ORGANS.—The Unitarian Society of this town have placed in their Church a new organ, from the manufactory of Mr. Geo. Stevens, of Cambridge, Mass. Mr. S. manufactured the organ for the Universalist house, which was regarded the best in the State. Both were constructed for the two societies with conformity to the sizes of the two churches, and are much alike in point of excellence and tone.

Announcement of the installation of the Stevens organ in the Belfast Republican Journal, August 3, 1849.

Combination Pedals:
Four unlabelled single-acting pedals:
Great *p*
Great *f*
Swell *p*
Swell *f*
Great to Pedal Reversible

Manual compass: 56 notes (CC-g3);
pedal compass: 27 notes (CCC-D, originally 25 notes)
*Original label missing

The organ was first played by Boston organist John Henry Willcox on Christmas Eve, 1860. It was restored by the Bozeman-Gibson Organ Co. in 1981, and more recently has been under the care of Robert C. Newton and the Andover Organ Co. of Methuen, Massachusetts. Opus 288 received Historic Organ Citation no. 319 from the Organ Historical Society in 2005, and remains the largest nineteenth-century historical organ in the state.

**E. & G. G. Hook (1847)
Community Church, Stockton Springs, Maine**

Manual (GGG, AAA-f3, 58 notes)

- 8' Op. Diapason (TC, metal, 47 pipes)
- 8' Dulciana (TG, metal, 35 pipes)
- 8' Clarabella (TG, wood, 35 pipes)
- 8' St. Diapason Treble (TC, wood and metal, 35 pipes)
- 8' St. Diapason Bass (wood, 23 pipes)
- 4' Principal (metal, 58 pipes)
- 4' Flute (wood and metal, 58 pipes)
- 2 1/2' Twelfth (metal, 58 pipes)
- 2' Fifteenth (metal, 58 pipes)
- 8' Hautboy (TG, metal, 35 pipes)

**Pedal: GGG, AAA-E, 17 notes [no pipes]
Pedal Couple**

Pedal Movements:
2 unlabelled single-acting pedals: all stops above 8' on and off
Bellows Signal

The organ was built in 1847 for the Universalist Church, Bangor, Maine. It was replaced in Bangor by E. & G. G. Hook Opus 318 (1862), a large two-manual organ. In 1864 the 1847 organ was sold for \$500 to the Universalist Church, Stockton Springs, Maine, when it was moved and installed in the gallery at an additional cost of \$125. During the twentieth century, the congregation became known as the Community Church.

All the metal pipework is common metal. The St. Diapason Treble 8' and



1849 George Stevens organ, First Church, Unitarian, Belfast, Maine (photo credit: Len Levasseur)



1863 E. & G. G. Hook Opus 328, First (Elm Street) Congregational Church, Bucksport, Maine (photo credit: Len Levasseur)

the Flute 4' are chimney flutes with stopped wood basses. The Clarabella 8' is actually a Melodia with low cut-ups. The bottom eleven notes of the Open Diapason 8' are grooved from the St. Diapason Bass 8'. The organ was restored by the Andover Organ Co. of Methuen, Massachusetts, and is unaltered.

Stephen L. Pinel holds two degrees from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and did further graduate work in historical musicology at New

York University. A church musician for 45 years, he retired from full-time work during the fall of 2017. He held a Langley Fellowship at New York University, is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda Music Honor Society, an honorary member of the Organ Historical Society, and a past chair of the St. Wilfrid Club of New York City. He is also the author of several books and regularly contributes articles pertaining to American organ history both here and abroad.

THE DIAPASON

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ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STONELEIGH MANSION

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UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK • JULY 29–AUGUST 3, 2018
NATHAN LAUBE AND MYLES BOOTHROYD (CO-CHAIRS)
2018@organhistoricalsociety.org

DALLAS, TEXAS • JULY 14–18, 2019
CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON, BENJAMIN KOLODZIEJ, AND JAMES L. WALLMANN (CO-CHAIRS)
2019@organhistoricalsociety.org

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