

ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY

Annual Newsletter

JUNE 2017

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



Kevin Birch, Executive Director

Greetings from the Executive Director!

Twenty-five years ago St. John's Organ Society was established to further the stewardship and appreciation of E. & G. G. Hook's magnificent Opus 288 built for St. John's Catholic Church in 1860 through a program of public concerts, education and outreach.

Annual Summer Concerts have featured an impressive roster of artists from the United States, Europe, China and Japan. Community outreach regularly includes guided tours, demonstration recitals, and collaborative projects with organizations including the Bangor Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, University of Maine's School of the Performing Arts, All Saints Catholic School and the Bangor Public Library Summer Reading Program.

Major recitals by international artists including Jean Boyer (Paris, France), Dana Robinson (Champaign, IL), Christa Rakich (Bloomfield, CT), Gunter Kennel (Berlin, Germany), Carolyn Shuster Fournier (Paris, France), Matthias Schmelter (Berlin, Germany), Pierre Bardon (Aix de Provence, France), Mark Dwyer (Boston, MA), Hatsumi Miura (Yokohama, Japan), Jacques Boucher (Montreal, Canada) and Loreto Aramendi (San Sebastian, Spain) have been well received by large and appreciative audiences.

Read on to discover more about our 2017 Summer Organ Concerts (July 27-August 31) and a special pre-season offering (July 20) featuring the internationally-acclaimed *Choeur d'Enfants d'Ile-de-France* conducted by Francois Bardot with guest organist Mike Logtenberg of Luxembourg.

In celebration of our Silver Anniversary we announce a major event, Maine Historic Organ Institute (October 24-28). A benefit for St. John's Organ Society, the Institute will include concerts, lectures, masterclasses and a guided tour of important historic organs in Maine. Read on for a beautiful article about the Institute by Stephen Pinel. A long-time supporter of St. John's Organ Society, Pinel has served as Archivist of the Organ Historical Society's research collection, The American Organ Archives, for 26 years between 1984 and 2010. He has written several books on various aspects of American organ history, and frequently contributes articles to the trade journals, both here and abroad. Pinel and a truly distinguished group of faculty and lecturers will be with us in October.

It is a special joy to serve as Executive Director of St. John's Organ Society. My thanks to Fr. Frank J. Murray, Pastor, and members of the St. Paul the Apostle Parish, for their encouragement and support of our work and for supporting the maintenance and care of Opus 288. I am grateful to our excellent Board of Directors, to our many volunteers, to the many organists and instrumentalists for their beautiful performances, and, of course, to organ builders George Bozeman, David Wallace, and Robert Newton of the Andover Organ Company, and those who have worked with them for their expertise in caring so well for this cultural treasure.

Kevin Birch
Executive Director - St. John's Organ Society

St. John's Organ Society
Summer Organ Concerts 2017
25th Annual Series
Thursday Evenings at 7:30

July 20
Choeur d'Enfants d'Ile de France
(choral concert with organ)
guest organist: Mike Logtenberg
(Luxembourg)

July 27
Mike Logtenberg
(Luxembourg)

August 3
Permelia Sears
(Dunstable, Massachusetts)

August 10
Abraham Ross
(Oberlin, Ohio)

August 17
George Bozeman
(Deerfield, New Hampshire)

August 24
Kevin Birch
(Bangor, Maine)

August 31
Margaret Harper
(Portsmouth, New Hampshire)

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

With appreciation to our host hotel
The Charles Inn
20 Broad Street, Bangor | 207-992-2820
www.thecharlesinn.com

ST. JOHN'S
ORGAN SOCIETY
WWW.HOOKOPUS288.ORG

St. John's Organ Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and appreciation of E. & G. G. Hook's Opus 288 (1860) built for St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Bangor, Maine.

RECITALS, JULY 2016-JUNE 2017: AN OVERVIEW

by Carlton T. Russell

The 24th summer series consisted of five recitals and concerts, bringing St. John's audiences another rich variety of repertory and performers, exploring and expanding the sounds and styles of which this great instrument, E. & G. G. Hook, Opus 288, is capable. Returning performers and a newcomer all reveled in expressing their musical personalities through the tonal colors and combinations their ears had discovered in our noble masterpiece of the organ builder's art.



Zhen Piao

The newcomer was an artist diploma student of Dana Robinson, Zhen Piao, who opened the series on July 28 with a program displaying his extensive piano background. After two Bach works, he presented music of two composers deeply rooted in the piano, Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann: the third organ sonata of the former, and —rarely heard complete in recital— the Six

Fugues on the Name of BACH, Op. 60 of Schumann.

August 4 brought a returning organist, Gayle h. Martin of Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, this time with her university colleague, trombonist Linda Pearse playing the sackbut (a Renaissance form of the trombone). This most unusual program, except for the last three movements of Guilman's Sonata No. 7 (with which the concert ended), presented organ pieces with the sackbut playing a line of the texture: early Baroque music by Frescobaldi, Sweelinck, Froberger, and Lübeck as well as —representing Canada— two chorale preludes by the 20th-Century Anglo-Canadian organist and composer Healey Willan.



Gayle h. Martin & Linda Pearse

Canada was again represented on August 11 by the return to the series of organist Jacques Boucher and alto saxophonist Sophie Poulin de Courval, who played in the 2014 series. This equally lovely program included the Sonata No. 1 for saxophone and organ by the contemporary Québec-born composer Denis Bédard and a movement from the suite *Promenades en Kamouraska* (a region of Québec which is the performers' homeland and "spiritual home") by another modern French composer, Dominique Joubert. The program ended with a demonstration of M. Boucher's gift for composition: his "Variations on a Theme of Gilles Vigneault."



Jacques Boucher & Sophie Poulin de Courval

Another returnee, from the 2011 series, area organist, pianist, teacher, and conductor Douglas Beck, played on August 18. This mostly contemplative program, with music of Sweelinck, Byrd, Langlais, Howells, and Oldroyd, ended with Rheinberger's Sonata in A Minor, Op. 98, the last movement of which (*Fuga Chromatica*), as Douglas observed in his program notes, begins with the same set of pitches that open his first piece, Sweelinck's *Fantasia Chromatica*.



Douglas Beck



Kevin Birch & Scott Burditt

The summer finale was on August 25, when Kevin Birch and Scott Burditt, Band Director at Bangor High School and Principal Horn in the Bangor Symphony, presented a program of music for organ and French horn. Birch and

Burditt are an impressive combination! Highlights of this concert included Mozart's delightful Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-flat; Dr. Birch's transcription of a 20th-Century piece, "Share My Yoke" by Major Joy Webb of the Salvation Army; and a thrilling performance of the Finale from Guilman's Organ Sonata No. 1 in D Minor, Opus 42.

June 6, 2017 marked the beginning of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the St. John's Organ Society: the annual International Concert, this year played by Dana Robinson, professor in the University of Illinois School of Music, and also a longtime friend and colleague of Kevin Birch. Dr. Robinson's program



Dana Robinson

included two works of Mendelssohn: the Prelude and Fugue in D Major, Op. 35, No. 2 (transcribed by Richard Lange) and the Organ Sonata in D Minor, Op. 65, No. 6, as well as the *Pastorale, Prière*, and *Final* from the *Six Pièces* of César Franck.

OPUS 288 - OUTREACH AND EDUCATION



Above: Introduction to the King of Instruments - Senior College Field Trip (Bucksport)



Above: Bangor High School field trip with Mr. Scott Burditt

Below: AGO Organ Scholars (Caleb Sension, Anne Small, Jacob Gould, Johan Halvorsen)



Below: Mr. Scott Burditt



ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY ANNUAL FUND 2017

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)

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



St. John's Organ Society

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**.

THE SILVER ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. JOHN'S ORGAN SOCIETY AND THE MAINE HISTORIC ORGAN INSTITUTE

by Stephen Pinel

The State of Maine—often dubbed *America's Vacation Land*—calls to mind intimate and heart-warming imagery: the craggy coast of the chilly North Atlantic, old and venerable light houses, L.L. Bean the clothiers, whale watching, and indisputably the tastiest and most-tender seafood anywhere. Of special interest to members of the Organ Historical Society, Maine also has a bumper-crop of vintage American organs. A generation has passed since the OHS last visited the state for one of its annual conventions.

Twenty-five years ago, Kevin Birch, the indefatigable music director of St. John's R.C. Church in Bangor, established the St. John's Organ Society. Besides advocacy, the organization's purpose was to call attention to one of the larger and more significant pre-Civil War Hook organs extant. Opus 288, built and opened on Christmas Day, 1860, has been in continuous use since. On this silver anniversary of the organization, a fall Institute is planned which offers a unique opportunity to experience, hear and play this notable organ—as well as a number of similar instruments in the surrounding communities. The Institute is intended to raise funds, and its ultimate goal is the long-term preservation of Opus 288.

Between October 24 and 28, 2017, just as the foliage season in Maine reaches its peak, St. John's Organ Society is hosting the Maine Historic Organ Institute. This mid-week event, beginning Tuesday afternoon and ending Saturday morning, offers a virtual smorgasbord of events: concerts, field study, lectures, sight-seeing, tours, and the singular privilege of studying with some of the country's more-respected organ teachers. Home base will be the historic Charles Inn (www.TheCharlesInn.com) in downtown Bangor, known for its old-world charm, and many of the events will be within walking distance of the hotel.

Beside Opus 288, a number of other historic organs by E. & G.G. Hook and George Stevens will be featured. Optional side trips will take attendees to Belfast, to examine George Bozeman's landmark restoration of the 1848 Stevens organ at the First Church; to Bucksport, to see Andover Organ Company's fine restoration of the 1863 Hook at the Elm Street Congregational Church, and to Stockton Springs to see an 1847 Hook. Of particular interest is a "new" two-manual organ, E. & G.G. Hook, Opus 304 (1861), restored and recently installed by A. David Moore in the Hammond Street Congregational Church in Bangor. The Institute will be a hands-on experience, so bring your music and shoes, as many of the organs will be open-keydesk for those who want to play.

*Experience the
essence of New
England,
fall foliage,
Maine history
and culture.*

The faculty of the Institute reads like a veritable *Who's Who of the American Organ World*: master teachers Kevin Birch, Margaret Harper, Christian Lane, Jonathan Moyer and Dana Robinson will work one-on-one or in small groups with attendees. Several organ

builders will be in residence, including George Bozeman, A. David Moore, David and Nick Wallace, and the cherished grand-daddy of them all—Robert C. Newton! Messrs. Moore and Wallace will bring continuo organs, and along with a small organ by Darron Wissinger already at St. John's, you'll also have an opportunity to play on those. Other noted names in the old organ community will participate, including Barbara Owen, Carlton and Lorna Russell, Stephen L. Pinel, and James Woodman. They will present lectures and prepare handouts to further document and preserve the unique organ culture of Maine.

The St. John's Organ Society sponsored the successful Hook Holiday back in 2010. The Maine Historic Organ Institute will offer even more opportunities to experience these remarkable instruments. The registration fee is an affordable \$150. The schedule with further information and a downloadable registration form is available at www.hookopus288.org or you can call Kevin Birch directly at 207-217-6740 if you have questions.

