



NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

www.nhoa.org.uk

Newsletter 219 June 2025



The well-appointed stop jambs of the splendid Wyvern organ at St John's, Hook (complete with the essential organist's playing aids below the stops). Read more on page 5.

Programme

Saturday, 21st June: Joint visit with ESOA and SOA to Bedfont and Hanworth. 11.30am: St Mary The Virgin, Hatton Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 8JR (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/N09107>). 1pm: St George, Castle Way, Hanworth, Middlesex TW13 7QF (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/N01910>): 3.15pm: All Saints, Uxbridge Rd, Feltham, Middlesex TW3 5EE (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/P00247>). See below for James West's comprehensive notes, **noting especially that All Saints is in the ULEZ.**

Saturday, 19th July: Burgess Hill. Joint visit with ESOA and SOA. 10.30am: St. John the Evangelist, Civic Way, Burgess Hill RH15 9AQ (NPOR E00543). 2pm: Hurstpierpoint College, College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks BN6 9JS /Holy Trinity, High Street, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9TS

Wednesday, 27th August - Friday, 5th September: Sweden visit. Information being circulated by e-mail to those wishing/intending to come. *Others are welcome to join, but please contact Jeff Lloyd on 01483 570586 or jeffreyllloyd@talktalk.net ASAP*

Saturday, 13th September: Visit to Cheam, Worcester Park and Belmont. 10.30am: St. Andrew's United Reformed Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam, Sutton SM2 7BZ (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/N13435>). 2pm: St. John, Northdown Road, Belmont, Sutton SM2 6DY (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/P00131>). 4pm: Christ Church, Ruskin Drive, Worcester Park KT4 8LG (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/N13989>). **NB: all three of these venues are within the ULEZ.**

The **November** meeting will be another **Composers' Anniversary** event (in memory of John Mansfield). Date and venue tbc., details by e-mail and NL 220.

COPY DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER:

Please send any material for Newsletter 220 to the Editorial team at nhoa.chairman@gmail.com no later than 15th August 2025.

Hanworth visit

With thanks to James West, here are further details for the visit on 21st June:

Date 21st June
Time 11.30AM
Venue St Mary The Virgin, Bedfont, Middlesex
Address Hatton Road, Feltham TW14 8JR
Travelling Hounslow and Feltham railway stations are on the S W region lines from Waterloo but travelling between venues will be easier by car so please consider car-sharing arrangements
Parking Street parking is available or there should be spare spaces in the grounds of the church hall, just across from the church
Organ i/11/unknown but rebuilt 1980
Host D I Y but admittance via Rev Philip Smith revpsmith@gmail.com
0208751 0088
Other The church is an attractive Grade II listed building of Norman/12th century origin with subsequent additions

Time 1.00PM
Venue St George's Church Hanworth (01784 259093)
Address Castle Way, Hanworth MiddxTW13 7QF
Travelling Castle Way is just off the M3. The church spire is prominent on your L H side for a mile or so going North on M3 after Sunbury.
Parking There is limited parking opposite the Church by the entrance to a park
Organ ii/15/1988 Hill and rebuilds in 1950 H N B and 1991 N P Mander.
Historic organ cert grade 1
Host Janet Tewkesbury (Church warden) 0208 8904693
Other Contact has been with Belinda - office@smam.org.uk or 01784 259093 - (after 11.00AM)

Time 3.15PM
Venue All Saints Hanworth
Address Uxbridge Rd, Feltham, Middx, TW3 SEE
Travelling *All Saints is in the ULEZ. If this affects your car, you might like to travel with a friend whose car does not attract a charge*
Parking Nearby street parking is available
Organ ii/27/1960 Compton
Host Catriona Downie info@allsaintshanworth.com

News of Members and Friends

We are delighted to welcome new members:

Monty Nelson, who joins as a student member and sings in the choir at Holy Trinity, Guildford. He came to us through our member Jonathan Gaine-Brown, at whose church in Godalming Monty practises as often as he can. Monty took an active part in our Sussex visit on 17th May and we look forward to having him with us again soon. Contact details: Monty Nelson, 28, Eashing Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2JZ: mob: 07377328219 montyenelson@icloud.com

Adrian and Gill Willis, our chairman Geoff Willis' brother and sister-in-law, have been following our activities for some time and in particular helping Geoff design and maintain our Hauptwerk Schools organ. They have joined as Family members and we are very grateful to receive their generous donation to support all our activities.

Gillian Lloyd

News Roundup

'Something's Coming'

Well - it could be, if you'd like it to, and if you know the song from West Side Story, you'll remember the sense of excitement and anticipation it carries. In our case, your Committee is proposing a **very special visit to a high-profile organ venue** (the sort of place that you can't normally get into, or, if you can, the cost would be way beyond what NHOA can normally afford). It would be funded by the extremely generous legacy left to us by our late member and friend Pete Currie (see below for more information about the legacy). What we need to know at this point is **how many people would be interested in coming**. We've made no plans (although various ideas are floating around): but once we have a sense of how many people would be up for this sort of adventure, we can take things forward. So - over to you! We are open to all suggestions based on the aforementioned clue. Please let Geoff Willis (nhoa.chairman@gmail.com) have your thoughts and ideas.

“Souper Organ” series at St John’s, Hook

If you have been to recent NHOA events at St John’s, Hook you will know that the Wyvern organ is a first class example of a digital organ installation. Our NHOA member Paul Wren led the specification and voiced the instrument in 2002 when he was organist at the church. It has given great service from that time. In the first three months of 2025, the current organist and NHOA member Stephen Davies organised three lunchtime concerts. Under the banner of “Souper Organ” the audiences enjoyed a soup lunch in the well appointed kitchen/dining area before each concert with up to sixty people attending each event. The enduring theme in all of these events was the tuneful and harmonious nature of the programmes. Audiences for lunchtime concerts generally expect lighter music and maybe something more robust to set them up for the rest of the day. Of course more complex or contemporary music is highly enjoyable but perhaps that repertoire is better appreciated by audiences who go to recitals dedicated to that type of programming.

The programmes for all three of this short series of concerts are printed below and you will see the wide variety of pieces performed. It is always interesting to hear the musical preferences of different organists. Also, fellow organists sometimes hear other interpretations of pieces that they play and on many occasions hear new repertoire that they would like to try.

Being completely unbiased (maybe!), I have to say this organ is a joy to play - the console is comfortable and the tonal variety supports a huge range of music including classical, baroque and transcriptions of orchestral or even choral pieces. The audio system is well matched to the capabilities of the console. Stephen is rightly optimistic about this winter series of concerts because he has already set the dates for 2026.

Geoff Willis

Stephen Davies

St John the Evangelist, Hook
31st January 2025

Rondeau	Jean-Joseph Mouret (1682-1738)
Adagio from Organ Sonata No.1 Opus 65	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Adoration	Florence Price (1887-1953)
Choral Preludes on "Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier"	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
"	Max Reger (1873-1916)
"	Paul Fey (b.1998)
Noël Suisse	Louise-Claude d'Aquin (1694-1772)
Psalm 23	Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)
Aria on Greensleeves	James Biery (b.1956)
Verbum Supernum Prodiens (No.3 from Three Liturgical Improvisations)	George Oldroyd (1887-1956)

Paul Wren

at St John the Evangelist, Hook
28th February 2025

Trumpet Tune	John Stanley (1713-1786)
Tune in E	George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987)
Two Hymn Preludes	Alec Rowley (1892-1958)
Marche Triumphale	Sigfried Karl-Elert (1877-1933)
Rhosymedre	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Elegy	George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987)
Prelude in a Classic Style	Gordon Young (1919-1998)

Geoff Willis

at St John the Evangelist, Hook
28th March 2025

Festive Trumpet Tune	David German (b.1954)
Reflection	Daniel Bishop (b.1981)
Gospel Chorus	Sandy Small (b. before 1999)
Ladies in Lavender	Nigel Hess (b.1953) arr. Geoff W
Quiet Piece	Kenneth Gange (1939-2015)
March in F	Louis Lefébure-Wely (1817-1869)
Swanee	Stephen Foster (1826-1864) arr. Edwin Lemare
"Starring Fred Astaire"	Jerome Kern (1885-1945) & Irving Berlin (1888-1989) arr. Geoff W
Saints on a Spree	Nigel Ogden (b.1954)

Joint visit with ESOA to Cambridge 5th March 2025

We are grateful to ESOA members Iain MacFarlane who organised the visit and Melvyn Hughes for the following report. Photos, courtesy of our member Richard Martin, can be seen on our website www.nhoa.org.uk/?page_id=6733 or click the Recent Events tab and "More info" on the Cambridge visit item..

The visit encompassed 3 organs in Cambridge Colleges with an optional Choral Evensong afterwards. It was joint with the North Hampshire Organists' Association.

Selwyn College was founded in 1882 and at the time must have seemed very remote from the main grouping of Colleges in the centre of Cambridge. The large Chapel in Old Court has since 2004 contained a large mechanical action organ by the French-Canadian firm of *Orgues Létourneau* based at Quebec (IIIP/30). According to their website, since 1979 they have crafted more than 140 pipes around the world. However there are only a handful in the UK (ESOA has visited previously their organs in the Tower of London and Pembroke College, Oxford). The tonal structure of the organ is based on 2 large choruses on Great and Swell reinforced by an ample Pedal division. There is also a small 5 stop Positif in the Chayre case. The instrument has much presence and plenty of character and from its position in the West gallery speaks directly into the clear acoustic of the Chapel.

We were met by Shanna Hart, the Assistant Organist who demonstrated various aspects of the organ's tonal resources. Members ventured various pieces which included Bach (*O Mensch bewein* BWV 622 and the St Anne Fugue BWV 552), de Grigny, C S Lang, Sousa, Ethel Smyth (*O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid*) and Walond. There is also in the Chapel a delightful box organ by Kenneth Tickell (I/3, 2010).

Corpus Christi College in the centre of Cambridge was established in 1352. The relatively modest Chapel in New Court contains a very large electric-action organ (IIIP/40) designed by John Dykes Bower and Michael Gillingham and provided by N P Mander in 1968. Apart from the exceptionally large and flexible specification (choruses to Mixture on all 3 manual divisions and a 9 stop pedal division) the organ also has a sumptuously decorated shallow case. There is no shortage of organ tone available.

This was a DIY visit and the available time was easily filled by Members. Various this included: Derek Bourgeois (*Serenade*), Wilfred Emery, sometime Organist of Glasgow Cathedral (*Paean*), César Franck (*Pièce Héroïque*), Handel, Purcell and Lefébure-Wély. On this occasion it was not possible to hear the Lammermuir box organ placed in the chancel.

Trinity Hall College was founded in 1350 and has a bijou Chapel since 2006 graced by a small mechanical action organ in the West gallery by Carsten Lund of Copenhagen (IIP/20). We were met by one of the two organ scholars, Bern Mercado, who played the Bach B minor Fugue (BWV 544) to demonstrate the

organ. Apart from an improvisation, a variety of pieces were offered by Members which included: Bach (*Herr Jesus Christ* (Trio) BWV 655) Handel, Heron, Wolff (Processional). Perhaps surprisingly on a small specification there is a 16' manual flue on the Great. The organ is more than adequate for the chapel space without in any way being overwhelming. Personally, I found this organ the most satisfying of the 3 visited.

Our thanks are due to Iain Macfarlane who organised the visit and chaperoned us around Cambridge (lacking a tour guide umbrella he sported instead a splendid Trinity Hall scarf being a former organ scholar there).

This was a very memorable and successful visit. Cambridge is easily accessible by rail from this part of the world – we should take more advantage of that!).

Melvin Hughes, ESOA

Cecilia Singers concert and NHOA's organ in action

You might be wondering why we are reporting on a choral concert in our Newsletter? The reason is that an unexpected use of our Hauptwerk organ had a big impact that made it a very memorable event.

The Cecilia Singers, a choir of some 40 voices, gave an accomplished and enjoyable performance in St Michael and All Angels church, Sandhurst on Saturday 5th April. The programme included the Mozart Requiem, Rutter Gloria and Handel's Let the Bright Seraphim. The plan was for organ accompaniment but the resident Hele organ, being fine for congregational hymns and more modest choral items, is tucked away behind the chancel arch. There was no sight line to the conductor who stood beyond the chancel step in front of the large choir. We were asked about hiring a digital organ and offered our portable school organ as an option to keep costs down for this fundraising event. Karen Phillips, the choir's conductor, was impressed by the sound of the video on our website so, with the agreement of £100 donation to NHOA, we were booked.

On the day before the concert Martin Barnes and I transported the many pieces of the organ in our cars to Sandhurst. We have performed this operation many times and now have it down to a fine art! The speakers are designed for a school classroom so, to get the best sound in this open church, we had to place them on tall stands in order to project into the building. After much manoeuvring, the choir and audience could then hear the organ to its best advantage. The bass speaker just sat on the floor and produced a full-throated rumble and roar of pedal notes.

The organist was Stuart McSweeney, the choir's accompanist. I went to the rehearsal on the Saturday afternoon to explain how the organ worked. Stuart is a very accomplished player and quickly understood how he would manage the many registration changes. I asked him if he had a page turner but it transpired

that even the offer of payment had not tempted his students to help! Naturally, I offered but it rapidly became clear that the task was more than the occasional swish of a page. The organ was designed for demonstrations so the music desk has no page restrainers and Stuart played from the vocal scores which had no intention of staying open at any page whatsoever. I became a human page clip! We both saw the funny side of performing - Stuart playing the divisional pistons with almost as much gusto as the notes while I stretched over the console with balletic moves so as not to distract him. After some 80 pages of the Mozart and 48 for the Rutter Gloria, I felt I had done my bit ... but this was just the rehearsal so a repeat "performance" was required for the public event in the evening. I have to tell you the musical performance was marvellous AND there were no missed entries or calamities from me but I did feel rather overstretched when I eventually climbed into bed that night!

Despite the unplanned activities of my role as 'console assistant', we had many complimentary remarks and questions about the organ from the audience, choir and conductor. It seems this organ has a second life as a church instrument where there is no suitable pipe organ or even any organ at all. Now we are planning to add a couple of extra speakers to the setup for future events to provide a more even sound and also two page restrainers on the music desk to prevent overstretching our resources!

Geoff Willis

Update on bequests from Pete Currie

We are delighted to say that the items that Pete left to NHOA in his will have now all gone to new homes.

The Model M 1963 Steinway baby grand was sold to our member Chris Dew who is delighted to have it in his teaching practice in Aldershot.

The four manual Hauptwerk organ was sold to Mitchell Farquharson, a young music teacher and ARCO at St Catherine's School, Bramley. He wanted it as a practice instrument in his house. Mitchell didn't want the speakers. We will use them to add to our portable digital organ configuration. This will be particularly useful in larger venues e.g. churches.

The sheet music was a mix of piano and organ pieces, many that we all have in our own collections. A few members have perused the eleven large boxes and selected some items. The remaining items will be taken to Oxfam in Farnham who specialise in placing sheet music with their subscribers and supporters.

Pete would have been highly delighted that the instruments and music that he enjoyed will benefit their new owners and also provide an uplift in NHOA's funds amounting to £16,300. We are considering how to broaden our activities and outreach with the support of the new funds (see 'Something's Coming' above).

NHOA's Ark sets sail again

The 19th of May saw the restarting of NHOA's Ark. Our dear and very much missed friend Frances had taken care of this group. I have always been passionate about encouraging others with their playing on whatever level they wish, whether it's a pianist transitioning to an organ, or a pianist wishing to explore organ playing, whether it's a home hobbyist organist who wishes to expand his or her confidence, or whether he or she hasn't played for a few years and is a bit rusty or seeking tips to improve their playing. Yet most importantly, to get better enjoyment out of their ability. NHOA's Ark is very much that place where this level of support can be offered. I expressed an interest in seeing this restarted as I am indeed a wobbly organist at times, especially when all eyes and ears are on me! With the restart approved, I unexpectedly found myself at the helm too.

For our first get together, six of us gathered at Chris Dew's residence where we spoke about our anxieties and ways to improve things. Each of us played a piece, suggestions were made on what could be done to improve that piece even if it was played well, just the reassurance can be very helpful to the player. One of all newer members, Camila Alison, played Rheinberger's Trio III beautifully, smoothly and without blemish.



*Chris Dew assists Camilla setting up for Rheinberger Trio.
L to R: Joe Stuckey, Paul Whewell taking notes and Ian Wickens*

This group is open to anyone who wishes to join us, whatever their playing ability is. Whether they can only (at that moment) play one piece even if it's Twinkle Twinkle Little Star or a refinement of Widor's Toccata, you are very welcome. So please do contact me at damianhunter747@gmail.com

Damian Hunter "Denny"

CDs

Yes - they are, as a member reminded me recently, those flat round things that you push into a slot! If, like me, you still treasure your collection (rather than making use of Spotify), you might like to have a look at our late friend Bill Cartwright's Aladdin's Cave of organ and choral music on disk. I am working through it, and Bill would, I'm sure, have been very happy to think that other members had the chance to enjoy it too. Please let me know if you're interested (gillian.lloyd@hotmail.com), and we'll work out how to get the CDs to you.

How to arrange an overseas organ tour



You will need: a clear idea of where you'd like to go and how long you'd like to be there: gritted teeth: a shedload of determination: limitless patience: an abiding sense of how much fun this will be once everything's in place.

Where to go and how long to stay: the inspiration for this tends to filter through from the enthusiastic chaps and chappesses who've come on previous tours. There's a sort of nudging sensation indicating that Kyiv would be a really nice

place to go this summer... Fired up, we then turn to the excellent website <http://orgbase.nl/>, the European equivalent of The National Pipe Organ Register and full of fascinating and helpful information, even if it is in Dutch. It's sometimes a little difficult to work out whether a particular instrument still exists, or whether it's been demolished or moved: but there's usually plenty to work with, and, like flowers in a garden catalogue, everything looks mouthwatering.

The next step is find the websites for possible venues (mostly cathedrals/ churches, but also concert halls, sometimes schools or music colleges, and even hospitals) and plot the locations on Google Maps. The idea is, if at all possible, to make our way from one church etc. to another without undue travelling. Of course, this can't always happen. Venue A may be available at 10.30am on Tuesday, but adjacent Venue B can't accommodate us until 2pm on Wednesday afternoon. And this is where we get to the knotty bit...

Contacting possible hosts is a minefield. Some churches are brilliant: they respond immediately with a valid e-mail address for the precise person you need to speak to, who then replies equally quickly with a positive reply for a firm booking to include a demonstration of the instrument and ample playing time. However, many do not reply at all: or the organist's e-mail address doesn't work: or the roof/nave/organ is closed for restoration: or (rarely) they just don't want us to come, for whatever reason. Time for Plan B. Grovel to the one local host who has replied, and ask him or her very nicely to put us in touch with the right person at all the other churches. This usually yields fruit - in the fulness of time.

And once it has - it's time to prepare The Brochure. This is a very professional piece of work, containing organ specs, pictures of venues/organs, visit times and hotel details, topped off with gloriously glossy front and back cover pictures giving more general views of our destination and a witty introduction from one of our travellers.

So: we finally have all our venues in place, in good order, and waiting for us to arrive. Now it's the turn of the Travel Committee, who deftly work out, and produce detailed maps and timetables for, the best hotel for us to stay in (reasonably priced, not too far from the railway station, good and central for the organ venues and within reach of other places of interest - after all, not all of us want to spend all our time at the console, and we also need nice places to eat), the most efficient way to get from A to B, and the most economic means of transport from the UK to our base destination. Simples! Not necessarily: but in the end, it all shakes down, and we pitch up in Kabul on the appointed day, raring to meet our first host...

Jeff and Gillian Lloyd

The Organs I Played

We are delighted to present this article by Dr Carol Williams, international concert organist, composer and long-time NHOA member. She writes about some of the stunning American organs she has enjoyed.

I have been in the USA half of my life and as many of you might know I have dedicated my life to the concert organ. I spent my graduate years at the Royal Academy, London, and then study with Daniel Roth at St. Sulpice. What an experience to play these instruments and of course to be in Paris.

However one day, I came across a CD of Thomas Murray playing the Woolsey organ at Yale University and that was it! I decided I had to study with this great artist. I was accepted into Yale for Postgraduate study with a full scholarship and immersed myself into American Organs.

There are a total of fifteen pipe organs at Yale and many of these are worth an article. I was appointed Chapel Organist for Yale during my study and experienced the clean sounds of the Holtkamp organ at Battell Chapel. Here is a link to the organs at Yale. <https://ism.yale.edu/about/organs-at-yale> [Alternatively type into your internet browser [organs at yale](#) and click on the link]

It was a great privilege to be able to rehearse on these amazing instruments and particularly to go in late at night to Woolsey Hall and savor the Newberry instrument. Thomas Murray is famous for his orchestral transcriptions and these are so well suited for this historic instrument. Woolsey Hall has approximately 2,650 seats, it is the university's largest auditorium and hosts concerts, performances, and university ceremonies.

After Yale, I went to New York City to do my Doctorate at Manhattan School of Music with McNeil Robinson. What a teacher, almost cruel with his technical approach to music instruction. On occasions he would make one sing a fugal contrapuntal part in Tonic solfa while playing the other parts.

It goes without saying that New York City has a wealth of incredible instruments. Just google pipe organs of New York City and you will be kept busy for hours looking at these. St. Patrick's Cathedral is one of the most fiery instruments with an superb acoustics. I had a lot of fun playing this and raised a few eyebrows! I enclose a short 6 minute video.

[Click on the photo of St. Patrick's NYC below. Alternatively, in YouTube Search [carol williams st. patrick's cathedral nyc](#)]



There is one organ in the USA that took a great enjoyable chunk of my life. The outdoor organ in San Diego, California, at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park. I was made San Diego Civic Organist and the Artistic Director of the Spreckels Organ Society. I remained there for over fifteen years. The position involved playing weekly concerts and organizing the International Summer Organ Festival. All the concerts at the Pavilion are free which makes programming very important. The organ is a major tourist attraction so programs have to be selected extremely carefully. Any boring music would send people out of their seats to the next attraction. The organ was built by the Austin Organ Company and is one of a kind. Since this is an outdoor instrument, artists must choose registrations (sounds) that will project out into the parks' 2500 seating area. It took me a while to understand this instrument but, with the help of a playback system I could record and go into the seating area and check my registrations. <https://agospd.org/resources/area-organs/spreckels-organ-pavilion> [Alternatively type in your internet browser [agospd spreckels](#) and click on the AGO Speckels Organ Pavillion link]

Recording on this instrument is not easy. Balboa Park is such a busy public tourist attraction with a flight path to the international airport, recordings had to happen in the middle of the night. Though occasionally FedEx would arrive at 4:30am.

There are a number of other legendary organs in California and the one I think that most people know is the Walt Disney concert hall organ in Los Angeles. The eminent organ facade designed by Frank Gehry was very controversial at the time. I have played concerts here a number of occasions and always loved the experience. Two consoles give the instrument a unique insight into the characteristic sound the instrument produces. Here is a link to the instrument:

<https://www.laphil.com/about/watch-and-listen/the-walt-disney-concert-hall-organ>



[Alternatively type into your internet browser [Walt Disney concert hall organ](#)]

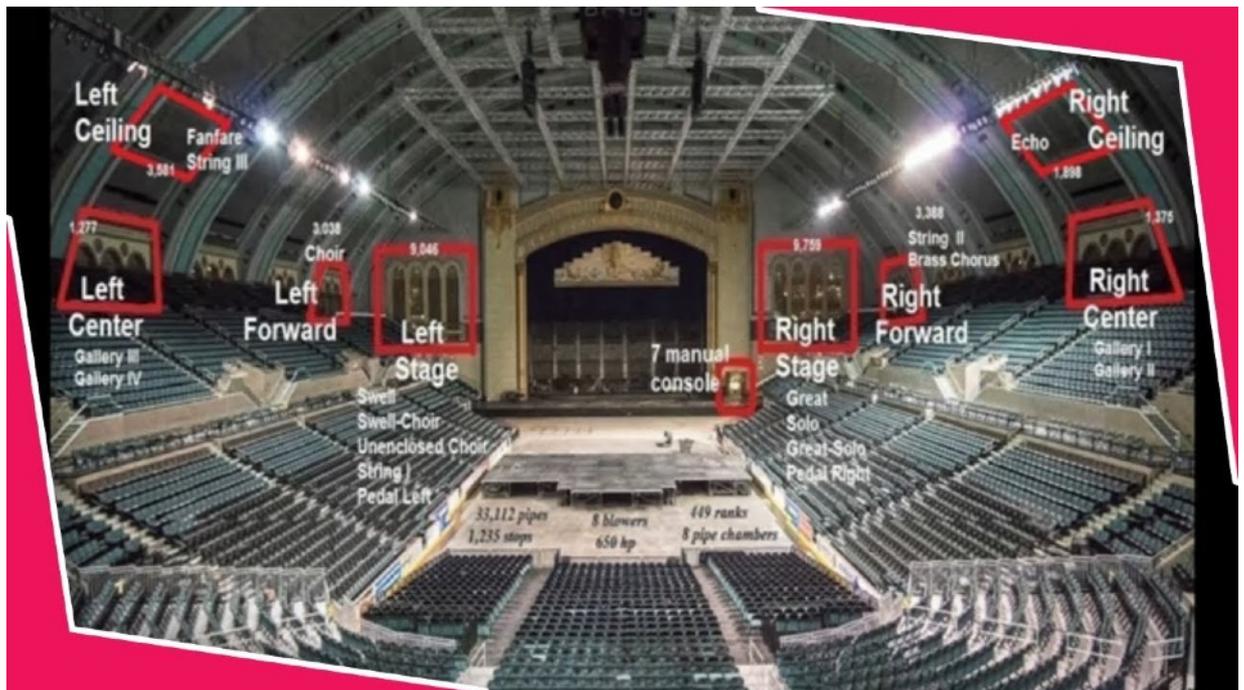
Now lets return to the East Coast of the US and to New Jersey state. Firstly the "one and only" Atlantic City Boardwalk organ. A mammoth instrument with a unrepeatable organ console.

https://www.boardwalkorgans.org/?gad_source=1

[Alternatively type in your internet browser [boardwalkorgans.org/?gad_source=1](https://www.boardwalkorgans.org/?gad_source=1)]

For years the pistons on this instrument did not function and to most organists that is a terrifying concept when the instrument is so huge with seven keyboards. A few years back, I had been asked to play this instrument for the regional convention of the American Guild of Organists and was delighted to be a part of this. However, I was also very concerned as to what to play with no functioning pistons. But, I took courage and transcribed the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth. In for a penny, in for a pound I thought! Well a week before the event I got a call to say that the amazing team had the pistons functioning. This hadn't happened for years and needless to say I was over the moon. The hall is immense and the organ has to be to fill it. But to my great surprise I found the instrument extremely musical with the acoustics adding a substantial warmth to the instrument. Here is an interview I did with Brant Duddy who has been linked with this instrument for years.

[Click on the photo. Alternatively, in YouTube Search [Brant Duddy "On The Bench with Dr. Carol"](#)]



This Summer we are returning to the US for a concert tour and one on the menu is the Ocean Grove Auditorium. I have been playing concerts here for years and I have to say it is one of my favourite instruments. Totally distinctive as half the year the organ goes into hibernation when temperatures freeze and then is woken up with the warmer weather for the concert season.

Here is a link: <https://www.oceangrove.org/organ> .

[Alternatively type in your internet browser [oceangrove.org/organ](https://www.oceangrove.org/organ)]

There are so many organs in the world and I am active in documenting them in my "TourBus" to the King of Instruments series.

[In YouTube Search [carol williams tourbus](https://www.youtube.com/search?q=carol+williams+tourbus)]

So, for now I have picked just a few that stand out to me in the United States. I always enjoy going back to play them, it is like meeting an old friend and catching up!

Best Wishes,

Dr. Carol

Free membership available:

https://www.patreon.com/DrCarolWilliams?fan_landing=true

Hidden Gems

... of the French Romantic Organ Repertoire

Gems are characterised by their rarity and craftsmanship. Finding them is the tricky part — and recognising them depends very much on the eye (or ear!) of the beholder.

Some years ago, I was searching for new repertoire, frustrated that most recitals in this country seemed to circle around the same familiar works. Many pieces I would now describe as true gems had, at that point, never crossed my path in a live performance.

Nowadays, thanks to recordings and the internet, it's easier than ever to discover unfamiliar music. Back then, however, it was through listening to CDs that I first encountered some remarkable short works by Marcel Dupré — specifically from his Fifteen Pieces for Organ, Op. 18. Three pieces stood out immediately: Antiphon II, Ave Maris Stella I, and Magnificat II. They struck me as miniature masterpieces — subtle, evocative, and beautifully crafted. However, when I finally had the chance to play them on a large Willis organ, the result was... underwhelming. The magic seemed to vanish; the gems, sadly, had become pebbles. I should have realised: these pieces depend not only on registration but on the right acoustic. They need space to breathe.

You can hear all of Op. 18 performed by Ben van Oosten on the grand Cavaillé-Coll organ of Saint-Ouen, Rouen — an instrument and setting that does full justice to Dupré's intentions. The video also includes the full organ score: [Ben van Oosten – Dupré, Op.18, Saint-Ouen](#)

[Alternatively, in YouTube Search type [Marcel Dupré - Vepres du Commun](#) and click on the video showing the Antiphon I score]

Another French rarity I stumbled upon is the Marche from Widor's Symphonie No. 3 (Op. 13, No. 3) — a piece I first heard on CD and later, to my delight, at the annual service for St Sulpice at St Sulpice in Paris, where Widor himself was organist. Despite its ceremonial grandeur, it seems never to be played in this country. The piece is immediately accessible, and one can almost picture the French officers in full dress — white gloves and kepis — taking the salute at a grand parade. It's quite a blast! Perhaps it could serve as an alternative to Walton's Crown Imperial??



Here it is performed by Daniel Roth on the magnificent Cavallé-Coll organ at St Sulpice: [Daniel Roth – Widor Marche, St Sulpice](#)

[Alternatively in YouTube Search [Daniel Roth Widor Marcia Symphony n.3](#)]

And here is a somewhat fast performance by Bernhard Schneider on the Klais organ of St. Aegidien, Braunschweig with score: [Bernhard Schneider – Widor Marche, Braunschweig](#)

[Alternatively in YouTube Search [Schneider widor op13 marcia](#)]

Vive la France!

Douglas Corr

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