

Piping hot!

World class organ convention comes to Worcester

By Chet Williamson

Worcester pulls out all the stops next week when the old town plays host to the American Guild of Organists' (AGO) regional convention.

Many of the world's finest organists and musicians will present recitals, concerts and workshops over a four-day period, Sunday, June 27, through Wednesday June 30. Billed as "Your Keys to the New Century," organizers expect the event to draw thousands of pipe organ lovers to the city.

Because of the city's many outstanding instruments, Worcester has long been considered the pipe organ capital of New England. The AGO convention will showcase such grand instruments as the EG&G Hook organ at Mechanics Hall.

"We were out in the Berkshires a couple of years ago for a convention and it's nice out there, but the organs were primarily all of one kind," says convention coordinator, Lois Toeppner.

"When you come to Worcester



Marie-Claire Alain

Boston scene and a really well known national composer heard that Marie-Claire Alain was coming, he wrote 'Ode to English Horn and Organ' [in her honor] which will premiere at Mechanics Hall."

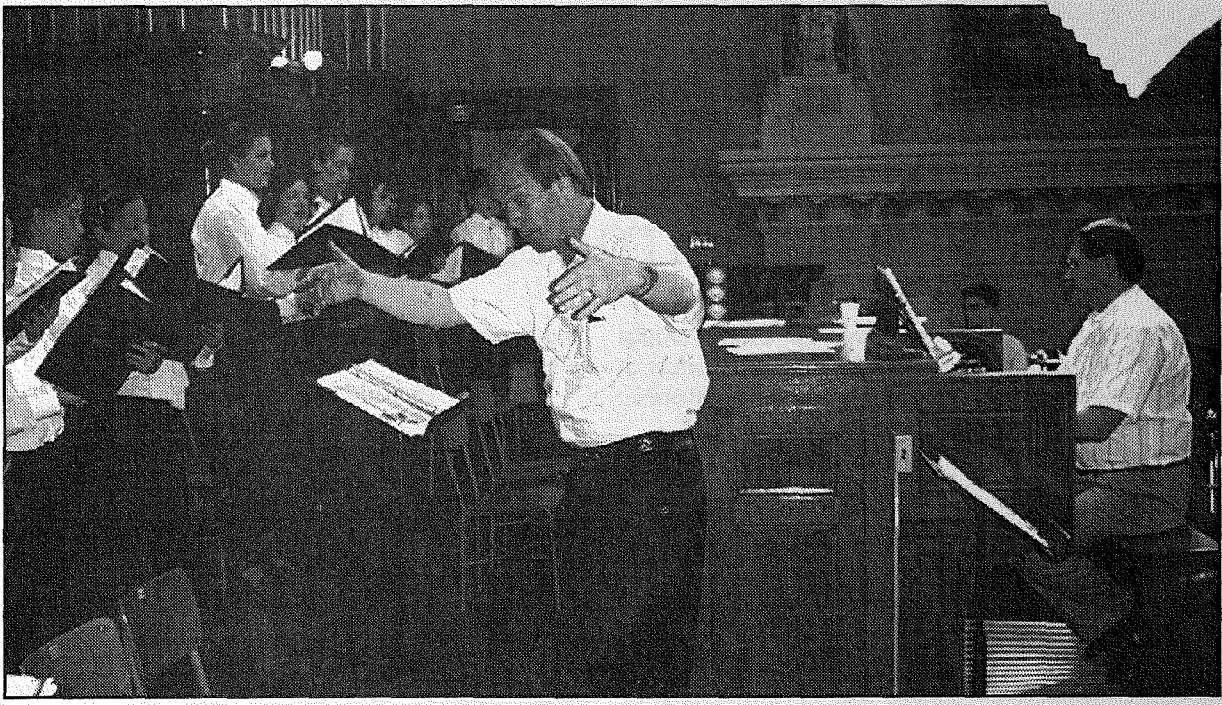


PHOTO BY WILLIAM T. CLEW

Dr. Murray Forbes Somerville conducts the Youth Pro Musica of Boston at St. Joseph's in Worcester Monday. At right, Kenneth Grinnell, minister of music at First Congregational Church, Manchester, N. H., was organist at A Celebration of Psalms.

Organists play around Worcester

By William T. Clew

The American Guild of Organists Region One held its annual convention in Worcester, a "fine city, quite rich in organs," according to one organist.

The convention, which included workshops and clinics, opened Sunday at St. Joseph's Memorial Chapel at Holy Cross College. James David Christie was organist. The Paramount Brass and the Church of the Advent Choir performed.

Kenneth Grinnell, minister of music at First Congregational Church, Manchester, N. H., was organist at A Celebration of Psalms Monday at St. Joseph's Church on Hamilton Street.

Mr. Grinnell, who received his bachelor's and master's degrees in organ and sacred music from Boston University, said the American Guild of Organists enjoy coming to Worcester. "It's a fine city, quite rich in organs," he said. He called the Casavant organ, installed in St. Joseph's in 1928 and renovated at a cost of about \$40,000, "a lovely instrument."

The day was sweltering. At 5 p.m., when the service began,

instruments in the choir loft recorded the temperature at 89 degrees and the humidity at 70 percent. But the church nearly was full for the service.

Mr. Grinnell accompanied the Convention Choir, made up of members of Worcester's Salisbury Singers and conducted by Michelle Graveline, assistant professor of music at Assumption College. Also taking part was Youth Pro Musica of Boston, directed by Hazel Somerville and conducted by Dr. Murray Forbes Somerville.

Before the concert began, Mr. Grinnell addressed the audience in both French and English and thanked the St. Joseph congregation for its hospitality.

An organ recital was performed by Marie Claire Alain of Paris Monday night at Trinity Lutheran Church. Ms. Alain, who has been called a legend in the organ world, is a teacher and recording artist and has been honored by the French government.

Organist Alice Parker presented a program at Wesley United Methodist Church Tuesday afternoon.

Solemn Choral Vespers for the Solemnity of S.S. Peter and Paul

was presented later in the afternoon at St. Paul's Cathedral. Bishop Reilly welcomed members of the Guild of Organists and others in attendance. Father Robert K. Johnson, director of the Diocesan Office for Worship, presided. Father Andre Dargis, A.A., chaplain for the Worcester Chapter, American Guild of Organists, delivered the homily.

Jonathan E. Sittard, music director, conducted St. Paul's Schola, Cathedral Festival Singers and Worcester Trombone Consort. Mark Dwyer was organist.

Thomas Murray presented an organ recital that night at All Saints Episcopal Church.

Three organists, Peter Sykes, Catherine Rodland and Mark Steinback, were joined by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Paramount Brass at noon Wednesday for a concert at Mechanics Hall on the Hook organ, installed in 1864.

Highlight of the concert was the premiere of "Ode for English Horn and Organ," by Daniel Pinkham, written in honor of Ms. Alain. An organ recital by Joyce Jones Wednesday night at All Saints Episcopal Church ended the convention.

Hymns restore parishioners' spirits

I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

— From the hymn "Heré I Am Lord"

By James A.W. Shaw
Telegraph & Gazette Staff

WORCESTER — When word came that today could be the last Sunday service for St. Joseph's Church, an organist and small choir serenaded the parish with songs of hope and strength.

"It's amazing, but we went from sorrow from the beginning to more joy at the end," choir member Linda Beriau said Friday.

"Our singing was really sort of therapeutic."

The sound of the organ and choir resonated in St. Joseph's

immense ceiling. As parishioners heard the music, they gathered in the pews, opened their hymnals and began to sing. Many were holding hands or hugging and crying as they let the spirit of the music capture them, giving them a brief respite from the day's tribulations.

AFTER DECISION

They began singing soon after learning that a state Appeals Court judge had upheld an earlier decision that the church was unsafe and parishioners would have to leave.

After the initial reaction of tears and outrage, Beriau and the others started singing. They said the hymns brought them back to life.

Beriau and four other members of the choir sang along with music played by organist Judy

Ollikkala. Ollikkala was filling in for the regular organist.

Ollikkala played the church's famous Casavant-Freres organ, which is the oldest such organ in Worcester. It was custom-designed for St. Joseph's. Supporters of the church argue that the organ will never be able to duplicate its beauty in another church.

DESIGNED IN QUEBEC

St. Joseph's Casavant was designed in 1928 in Hyacinthe, Quebec. The organ was built to play songs from the Romantic French-Catholic era.

"These songs are the songs they have been singing right along. They're meaningful to the parishioners," Ollikkala said.

Giselle Desroches, another organizer, was thankful for the music and the choir. She credit-

ed the hymns with raising s-

"The people needed a gave them strength to just going. Everybody needs it, said.

Beriau began to cry when was asked how it felt to sin the day the parishioners lea they would be ordered out.

"That has been one of the experiences of my life," she

Beriau said that during holidays, she always gazes at particular stained-glass dows. One is of a shepherd looking toward heaven and other is of Christ looking d-

"I happened to look over saw that window," Beriau tearfully, "and it was very tional to me thinking we're going to be holding our ser here."

Five-Day Organists Convention

Catherine Crozier Performs in Concert Finale

By Richard Duckett

The five-day organists convention concluded in fine style with a superb festival concert before a packed audience at Mechanics Hall last night. World renowned organist Catherine Crozier offered a matchless display of control, co-ordination and poise during her two featured performances, while the Worcester Orchestra and Chorus rose to the occasion splendidly in such works as "Mass in Time of War" by Haydn.

The concert got off to a brilliant start with Haydn's "Concerto in C Major," and indeed nothing that followed quite equalled the beauty of this rendition. The concerto is an elegant and charming work, and the playing by Ms. Crozier was crisp and pure. In the first movement, the organ states the main theme to which the orchestra replies in kind. A conversation between organ and orchestra thus ensues, and the elegance that Ms. Crozier brought to her music was more than matched by the grace of the strings. Under the guiding influence of guest conductor Henry Hokans the slower and more expressive second movement emerged with a gorgeous purity of sound, while Ms. Crozier's solo passages in the third movement came across with spirit and warmth.

The "Concerto in G minor" by Poulenc allowed Ms. Crozier some spots that call for more virtuosity, and her playing was technically perfect. But the concerto, which is rarely performed, is a curiously uneven piece. There are flashes of brilliance, but it never quite explodes with the passion that one is anticipating. Still, the intense first movement where the organ and orchestra gradually blend as one voice at the conclusion was memorable, as

Music Review

Program

Concert in C Major	Haydn
Catharine Crozier, organist	
Agnus Dei Missa dum Compleveur	de Victoria
Dem dunkeln	Brahms
Two Motets	Bruckner
A Festival Cantata on the Hymn Tune "Worcester"	Phillips
Mass in Time of War "Paukenmesse"	Haydn
Concerto in G minor	Poulenc
Catherine Crozier, organist	
The Worcester Orchestra	
The Worcester Chorus	
Henry Hokans, guest conductor	
Gerald Mack, conductor	

were some of the solo passages that radiated genuine power.

The rest of the concert showcased the Worcester Choir who performed exquisitely in the solemn and haunting "Agnus Dei" by Tomas Luis de Victoria, and in the rich "Two Motets" by Bruckner. The one disappointment was the "Festival Cantata on the Hymn Tune 'Worcester'" which had been written especially for the convention. One cannot fault the playing, but the arrangement seemed remarkably heavy handed and confused elaborate orchestration with clumsiness.

The Mass by Haydn, however, was a genuine highpoint, as the chorus provided a stirring interpretation of this dramatic and inspiring piece.

The convention has treated local concertgoers to a rare feast of sound over the past few days. The range of works chosen for performance has been interesting and varied, while the playing has been almost uniformly excellent. One would hope that an event such as this could be staged again in the near future since it highlighted how fortunate Worcester is in possessing instruments of such unique musical beauty and historical importance.

Richard Duckett is a free-lance music critic

Man Held in Slaying At Disneyland Jailed

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — A 30-year-old man convicted in the only slaying in Disneyland's history was sentenced to 16 years in prison by a judge who called him "a walking time bomb."

Orange County Superior Court Judge Everett Dickey said he opted for a prison sentence rather than probation in the second-degree murder case because of James O'Driscoll's attitude and because the stabbing occurred in a public place in a dispute between strangers.

O'Driscoll was convicted of murdering Mel Christian Yorba, 18, of Riverside in 1981.

WATCH
Now

TONITE THRU SUN.

8 P.M.

NEVER BEFORE SHOWN
IN WORCESTER!