

Niagara Centre

Inside this issue:

President's Letter	1, 3 & 5
2011 and all that	2
Website, facebook etc.	4

March 2018

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

It is hard to imagine that here we are already in the middle of the season of Lent, when it seems

like we just filed all the choral music used over the Advent and Christmastide season. I don't know how efficient you are with this task, but I have to admit it isn't one of my strong points... Personally, I just spent two days last week filing dozens of anthems that were used over that season from the choir folders, and

ensuring that the choir had copies of upcoming music for the next several weeks.

The Executive Committee of RCCO Niagara has been working hard on a number of projects, as we plan for Spring through June, and looking ahead to events to offer the membership and community of Niagara in 2018-19.

You are invited to attend and support our upcoming events, beginning with:



Pedals Pipes and Pizza on March 24th at 10:00 a.m. at Queen Street Baptist Church, and demonstrating their 3-manual Casavant. This is primarily an introduction to the (Pipe) Organ for children from 6 years old and up although adults are also welcome. We ask all members to spread the word to their students, and other colleagues that teach music either privately or in the school systems to promote this event, and encourage their students to PARTICIPATE, by attending, and even bringing a piece of music with them and get the chance to PLAY the organ, and walk into the organ chamber to look around, while being shown the different types of pipes and some of the capabilities of the organ, the King of Instruments. We will be serving Pizza to all in attendance, and the event is FREE, though we are always open to freewill donations to help defray the cost of the event. Please refer to our website rconniagara.com for registration details, as though we won't turn someone away, it is good to have a rough idea of how many will be attending. The enthusiastic presenters for this event are James van den Brink and Ryan Baxter, both members of the centre. (It is our intention to make biographies of each available on the website).

Meet Eat and Sing on April 5th, 6:00 p.m. at St. Giles Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines. This is a new endeavour of the RCCO Niagara, as a sort of an adoption from the Royal School of Church Music, who aren't as active in Niagara as they once were... These events have always been a great success, and we encourage all of you to join us, and bring your choirs... In keeping with the traditions of the RSCM, we intentionally chose Thursday, April 5th for the event, as many church choirs rehearse on Thursday Evenings,

Continued on page 3

The following is perhaps a little late but mildly entertaining nonetheless

2011 and all that

Seated one day at the 'puter, (I was weary and ill at ease)
my fingers wandered idly over the silent keys ⁽¹⁾

and, almost by accident, I managed to confirm something that I had previously had a gut feeling about (as one does), namely that 2011 is a prime number.

Pursuing this line of thought (again idly), I decided that this could have absolutely nothing to do with the fact that the year 2011 seems to be very short on truly significant musical anniversaries. But, quite fortuitously, I was reminded by the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Column 8 that 2011 is the 500th anniversary of the birth of the composer Osbert Parsley. You have never heard the name? Nor had I. But, as you will see from my introductory lines, I like to use my idle moments to unleash an enquiring mind, and I felt that the horticultural Mr Parsley might warrant some looking up (or digging up).

It turns out that Osbert Parsley, born in 1511, spent most of his life in Norwich (U.K) and died there in 1585. He was a "singing man" at the cathedral; in other words he was a member of the cathedral choir, for a period of fifty years: quite an achievement for anyone, especially in those days. He is first heard of in the choir in 1535 (at the age of 24), by which time the monks (the cathedral was then a Benedictine abbey) had deputed their service of song to paid men singers. He was obviously not a monk himself, as in 1558 he married a lady called Rose and bought a house in the parish of St Saviour's. One wonders whether the house had a nice garden: flowers at the front and herbs and vegetables at the back, as a fine example of nominative determinism.

Not a great deal else is known about his life (after all, not much happens in Norwich) ⁽²⁾, but he did make some memorable contributions to the music of the Tudor period. His choral works include settings of verses from **Lamentations**, and a psalm, **Conserva me, Domine**. In most of his settings he preferred Latin texts, but he also composed English anthems and several settings of the Anglican prayer book service. Apparently when Queen Elizabeth I visited Norwich in 1578 (I believe they're still talking about it) the **Te Deum** that was sung was Parsley's composition.

Today his memory is somewhat overshadowed by more famous contemporaries like Thomas Tallis, John Taverner, William Byrd and Thomas Morley (another Norwich lad), but the esteem in which he was held, at least locally, is shown by a substantial plaque in the nave of Norwich Cathedral ⁽³⁾. Part of the attribution reads

Here lies the man whose Name in Spight of Death
Renowned lives by Blast of Golden Fame:
Whose Harmony survives his vital Breath
Who here a singing man did spend his Days
Full Fifty Years in our church melody.
His Memory shines bright whom thus we praise.

(1) *Apologies to Sir Arthur Sullivan and Adelaide Anne Proctor.*

(2) *I once got a parking ticket outside the cathedral, but I didn't pay the fine, so that doesn't count.*

(3) *Dame Edith Cavell is buried outside the eastern end of the cathedral, but that is another and much sadder story.*

Laurie Wigney

President's Letter Continued from page 1

and following Lent, Holy Week, Easter Day, many groups would like to do something different... Well, this is it... Please join us! (Further details at rconniagara.com)

We meet for a **POTLUCK DINNER** at 6:00 (eating by 6:30), and choristers are asked to bring enough of their favourite dish to feed their own choir, then we pool all the donations together on a buffet table and serve everyone... This gives everyone a chance to meet people from neighbouring churches and choirs and share a meal together.

Following that, we join in the church sanctuary for a workshop/rehearsal/choral coaching evening, learning some new music and techniques. We are very proud and pleased to welcome Dr. Rachel Rensick-Hoff; the new Choral Professor/Conductor of Brock University and the well known Avanti Singers, as our director for the evening. Ryan Baxter, a B.Mus. Hon student of Brock University and Organist/Accompanist of First Grantham United Church, St. Catharines will act as accompanist for the occasion. (Again, biographies will be available on the website) All the music will be provided... Just bring some food, your voice (both of which will be better from some than others) and prepare for a fun and educational night of fellowship and music.

We regret that we were unable to organize a bus trip to St. Mary Magdalene's for the Memorial of Healey Willan, however, we are in the process of planning a Bus Trip to Toronto, to check out instruments in several of the major churches of the city. (Tentatively St. James Cathedral, Metropolitan United, St. Michael's Cathedral, and ending up at Yorkminster Baptist, which is designed in such a way that you can walk into and around the inside of the organ chamber and check out the layout). Hoping to have this scheduled before June, but might have to wait until September. If

that is the case, we will be into a new year of Membership, however, we will welcome you, the members of 2017-18 to participate as well (though hope you will be renewed members for the coming year).

This organization is run by Volunteers, who generously give their time, talents, and efforts to supporting you the members, and your churches, synagogues, and educational endeavours in skills relating to organ playing, choral music, and leadership. We welcome your ideas, we depend on your support and involvement, and ask that you consider how you can help to make this organization a stronger one. The executive is delving into some new endeavours over the next several months, including an initiative called "Save the Organ", and NEED your help and support.

We are thankful to Melissa Wells for her many hours of work with our website, and we are grateful to Ken Stevens for his continued work on our Tierce and Nazard newsletters, and to James van den Brink and David Ruler for their ongoing gift of time in keeping our website current and relevant.

Think of ways that you might be able to support this organization; whether that is by willingness to play the organ for an event, participate in a workshop; maybe hosting an event in your church (we would look after the legalities such as Insurance, etc.), your financial gifts (we are a registered charity and you will receive a tax receipt). Please consider us in preparing your Will and determining the charities in which you invite people to donate to in your memory, and

Continued on page 5

COMMUNICATION

NIAGARA CENTRE WEBSITE

Please visit our website, www.rconniagara.ca, which has new articles, news, and events. Any pending event information may be mailed to rconniagara@gmail.com for review and posting.

Ken Cowan internationally known recitalist is the son of one of our members David Cowan, and was the subject of an interview with Christopher Holman the editor of VOX HUMANA (www.voxhumanajournal.com) which may be of interest to the membership. We have been granted permission to reprint it however the article is somewhat lengthy so it will appear on the centre website in the near future. www.rconniagara.ca

FACEBOOK

Use Facebook to grow the RCCO Niagara Centre. If you are a facebook member log on regularly to check our posts at <https://www.facebook.com/rconniagara> Please consider three things to help grow our awareness. First, "Like" the post if you are so inclined. Second, and more importantly, share the post on your facebook feed. Finally, don't hesitate to directly forward the post to someone you know that would enjoy reading it either by posting it on their facebook page or by sending a link through messenger. The latter two methods factor into how facebook determines the value of our page and information. The higher value the more it is shown to people of similar interests.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pedals, Pipes and Pizzas. Register at rconniagara.com

March 24th @ 10:00 a.m.



Tuesday, March 27, 11:45 am at Queen St. Baptist Church,
The Music of Holy Week,
Organ recital by John Clipsham and hymn sing,

let us together continue to build this organization with interest, participation, support, and membership. That said, think of ways that we are here for you...

DO YOU KNOW: We have \$CHOLAR\$HIPS and BUR\$ARIE\$ available to students in the continuation of their studies (MANY of which haven't had an applicant in Years)? Check our website and the national website for details, or speak to someone on the Executive Committee.

DO YOU KNOW: In 2017, the Niagara Centre initiated a MONTHLY Newsletter, "The Tierce" to announce your concerts, special services, etc. As we felt "The Nazard" might be missing community events with its limited editions. Take advantage of this if you would like people to support your events. Nothing more frustrating than hundreds of hours of rehearsal, only to walk out to 20 people in an empty church, all with blank looks on their faces.... SUBMIT Your Events to us so we can support your work. I know from personal experience as past editor of a church newsletter, it is VERY FRUSTRATING to try and produce a newsletter when there aren't any submissions!! Thank you Ken Stevens for your patience...

Our Annual General Meeting has been set for June 8th, at 12:00 p.m. We are returning to "Betty's" in Chippawa, as they are offering the three choice menu as they did last year, for \$28.00 including tax and gratuities per person, beginning with a salad, ending with dessert. Please attend, as we present the slate of officers for next year, look over our past year, the financial reports, and look to our plans for next year.

Our guest speaker this year will be Mr. Peter Partridge, a long-term member and supporter of the Niagara Centre, and member of the National Council. It is no surprise to many of us, that Peter served as Assistant Organist of Westminster Abbey, in London England. He has donated an organ to the Abbey, to enable the organists to rehearse the required repertoire without doing so in the dead of night after Worshippers and tourists have vacated the facility. He is going to share with us about the organ itself, the choosing of the builder, and finally the finished product, which of course was gratefully received by Prince Charles as well as the resident Organist of the Abbey, James O'Donnell. It will be interesting to hear about his time and ongoing connection to the Abbey, and hope to see you all there!

Wishing you all a Very Blessed and Holy Passover, Holy Week, and Easter Season, and hoping to see you at one or all of our upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Robert Anderson

Niagara Centre

Founded 1940

Executive for 2017-2018

President: Robert Anderson

Secretary: John Clipsham

Treasurer: James van den Brink

Membership Convener: Ruth Schappert

Newsletter: Ken Stevens

Website: James van den Brink

Members-at-Large: Frank Cammisuli, David Cowan, Mary-Teresa Franceschini, Diane Humann, David Ruler, Marjorie Slinn, Peter Snyder,

SUBSTITUTE ORGANISTS

Robert Anderson— 905-932-6051

jagmkv@gmail.com

Frank Cammisuli— 289-968-5397

frank_cammisuli@hotmail.com

Dave Cowan – 905-227-7556

davidbcowan@sympatico.ca

Sheila Ketler—905-227-9336

ketbears@yahoo.com

(funerals only)

David Ruler—1 814-449-1321

druler56@gmail.com

Rodger Swinton – 905-935-9654

rswinton@cogeco.ca



Forum

Letters, articles & event announcements by our members are always welcome and should be directed to 905-788-0511 or cstevens31@cogeco.ca

The publishing schedule is as follows:

September 1st, Mid November, Mid February,
and May 1st.

Centre Website

Our website address is

www.rconniagara.ca

Our thanks go to Melissa Wells at

<http://exnihilo designs.com/> for the excellent job she has done in preparing it!