



En Chamade

Newsletter of the Northwest Arkansas Chapter,
American Guild of Organists
March 2019



Greetings, NWACAGO!

Our “Organ Intro for Pianists” event this weekend will be held at Grace Episcopal Church in Siloam Springs. Well aware of past experience, we are not surprised that the response to this type of event is quite slim, but we have determined that it would be meaningful to allow the handful of available candidates to receive individual attention and more opportunity to experiment on the instrument, and thus we have decided to proceed. As our respondents all are piano students at John Brown University, we selected the Siloam Springs venue.

The main presenter is Dr. Paul Whitley, JBU Piano Faculty and Associate Organist at Grace, who himself is a relatively recent arrival—and dare we say, quite a rising star!—on the organ scene, with assistance from Scott Montgomery and Ernest Whitmore. You would be welcome to join in and offer insightful discoveries you have made as you have navigated the console through the years.

We’ll meet at 9:30 Saturday morning and then plan to eat lunch on the town after things wind down, likely around 11:30.

ORGAN INTRODUCTION FOR PIANISTS

Saturday, March 30, 9:30 a.m.

Grace Episcopal Church
617 North Mount Olive Street
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

For further information, please contact Ernest at 479.549.8247.

February Meeting Recap...

A resilient group braved rain, wind, and thunder to attend the Hymn Playing Workshop held at Springdale United Methodist on Feb. 23. Presenters included Jeannie Lee, Paul Whitley, Scott Montgomery, Jack Cleghorn, and host Ernest Whitmore. Jan Wubbena also was represented, though *in absentia*: He provided several samples from his vast store of introductions, reharmonizations, and descants, demonstrated by Ernest. I express special thanks to Annette Zehring, who also was prepared to present, but before she could play, our time allocation expired, and as hunger pangs were increasing she was OK with ending the program at that point. [Smile!!] We'll have to keep her arrangements in mind for future hymn fests!

Paul and Jeannie both had selected WONDROUS LOVE as their respective samples, but we encouraged them that the multiple settings of one tune, rather than being redundant, served to illustrate the fact of multiple-to-limitless possibilities for variation of organ congregational accompaniment.

Jack presented an extensive handout that provided salient information largely in the form of a detailed outline addressing various topics, such as creating introductions, soloing out the melody, interludes, downbeat rests beginning stanzas, non-organ style accompaniments, and dealing with

congregational complaints. Superbly helpful, Jack!

Scott then demonstrated several techniques of improvisation, ranging from a pedal point to bass ostinatos, to chordal planing, to toccata-like treatment of chords over pedal melody, and on and on. You made it all look easy, Scott, but somehow it's not quite as automatic when I am the one who launches into such uncharted waters! But I am getting braver, at least when I play soft background for pastoral prayers, Holy Communion, and the like.

The 20-ish attendees served as a guinea-pig congregation for all of these elaborations. Their strong voices, professional questions, and upbeat interaction facilitated the positivity we all experienced.

I truly enjoyed the event, and I appreciate the cooperation of so many presenters who made it possible.

Ernest