

THE CHURCH MUSIC INSTITUTE

Charlotte Kroeker

THE CHURCH MUSIC Institute (CMI) began in 2006 as the dream of a group of people who understood the importance of church music to religious faith and culture, realized its often-precarious position in denominational priorities, and wanted to insure its health and prosperity long into the future. Among those represented were clergy, laypersons involved in church music, church musicians, music professors, a composer, and a layperson gifted in organizing meetings. The expertise of an accountant, someone knowledgeable in forming nonprofits, and three donors who valued church music completed the founding group. From the outset, it was understood that CMI was to be an educational entity with excellence as a hallmark, and with the practice of church music at its center. Respect for liturgy, sound theology, and good music would be the key to success.

Fast forward ten years. We often recall the admonition of the nonprofit expert who told us that most nonprofits never move from concept to reality because the dreamers cannot put the practical pieces in place to give an organization purpose. He promised to give “checkups” and ask hard questions to make sure CMI stayed on course. The initial meeting in a church parlor in Dallas, Tex., has grown to services from the Pacific Northwest to the Southeast of the United States and everywhere in between. CMI serves three specific constituencies (clergy, musicians, congregations) in bringing together theology and music as a vehicle for the praise and prayer of congregations. Serving the multidisciplinary, ecumenical nature of church music makes CMI a one-of-a-kind entity. While unique in its mission, CMI collaborates with other professional organizations regularly.

Church Music Institute Constituencies and Services

I. Clergy

Of 6,161 degrees awarded by seminaries in 2014, 64 recipients anticipated

working in full- or part-time music positions. (Information provided by the Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting agency for U.S. seminaries.) Only two U.S. institutions are accredited for both theology and music. The majority of clergy are trained in the absence of musicians. A review of seminary curricula also shows clergy study little about worship in seminary and nothing about music. Despite the absence of music training for their profession, all denominations charge clergy with the responsibility for decisions about music. CMI addresses this void by

- offering elective courses at seminaries on music in worship;
- teaching units on music in seminary worship classes;
- gathering pastors and musicians to learn together and discuss topics of common concern in their work together; and
- providing online and print resources to assist clergy in leading worship.

II. Congregations

Congregations, the people in the pews, are the ultimate users of the work of CMI. *Leitourgia*, the origin of the word “liturgy,” loosely translates to mean the “work of the people.” If the people are to do the work of worship well, the leaders of worship must think about their work with congregations in mind. While CMI may focus much of its effort toward leaders, efforts with congregations are as important, if not more so, as congregations will determine the worship ethos of a church over the long term. CMI addresses congregations by

- offering discounts to all clergy and musician events for lay leaders;
- hosting Festivals of Church Music in various locations in the United States to celebrate the music of the church, featuring mass choirs from churches, organ, brass, and congregational singing with the participating church constituencies;

- nurturing reciprocal relationships with donors who want to invest in strong church music; and
- providing ongoing newsletters with articles of interest to a general readership on topics of church music.

III. Musicians

Just as clergy study little about worship and nothing about music, so musicians develop their musical skills and knowledge during academic preparation but study no theology and likely no church music. Thus, both clergy and musicians arrive in the parish with a language the other does not understand to do the work of worship; and, likely, neither is prepared to develop the musical theology of the congregation, the ultimate goal. For musicians, CMI offers

- events with specific training in church music skills;
- gatherings with clergy for conversations of mutual concern;
- vetted resources, especially the eLibrary (see below);
- newsletters with bibliographic and specific repertoire suggestions for the liturgical year; and
- articles on topics of musical theology specific to musicians.

CMI has official partnerships with professional music organizations that are by definition secular but whose members in large numbers serve churches. CMI has cosponsored events with the American Choral Directors Association and the music departments of state universities (Florida State and the University of North Texas), and with chapters of the American Guild of Organists, as well as the national AGO, where a pilot project is currently in progress to make the eLibrary available to members (below). The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada has natural overlap with CMI’s mission as its membership consists of text writers of sacred song. Denominational music organizations and their members have been part-

ners from time to time—including the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, Association of Anglican Musicians, Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, United Church of Christ Musicians Association, Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, Association of Disciple Musicians, and National Association of Pastoral Musicians.

The eLibrary

The Church Music Institute is supported in large part by donors who believe in its mission and in part by memberships with benefits to worship and music leaders—including regular mailings with resources specific to liturgical season and articles on church music; discounts to CMI events; and access to the eLibrary, an online database of more than 10,000 pieces of music searchable on 24 criteria.

The purpose of the eLibrary is to provide sacred music for worship that is the best of its genre, and to create an archive of sacred music for use and study. It functions like a reference library and is a non-

commercial, select catalog of sacred music from the 15th century to compositions most recently published. All major publishers of sacred music are represented.

Texts are evaluated for theological integrity and use of language; music is considered for its worth, imagination, and compositional skill on the part of the composer. Further, the marriage of the text and music must raise the text to a higher level than just reading the text alone. Music in the CMI Library collection is historically and stylistically eclectic, meant for ecumenically broad use and with the understanding that context matters greatly. Excellence transcends style and is the unifying selection criteria for all entries in the eLibrary. The technology was built with criteria from librarians from major university music libraries so that fields are consistent with U.S. Library of Congress standards.

Among the 24 search options for a piece of music in the eLibrary are composer, voicing, accompaniment, instruments, hymn tune, lectionary reference,

topical reference, and Scripture. A church musician can search for music specific to the resources available in any church setting, choosing music right for the given occasion and musicians available. Perhaps most unique to the eLibrary is the capability of searching by Scripture, opening dialogue with the clergy for unifying the spoken and sung portions of any liturgy. Users report the eLibrary is not only a source of new music but also one of the best ways to search their existing libraries, as none are indexed so well. Most all 10,000-plus entries in the eLibrary have a sample PDF of two to three pages of the music and many have an audio sample provided by the publisher. CMI holds hard copies of all entries in acid-free folders as a permanent file, available to users as a reference copy upon request.

In 2015, conversations began about the possibility of the eLibrary becoming a membership benefit to members of AGO. Funding was sought and obtained for a pilot project; considerations among the appropriate levels of approval needed

October 10-21, 2017

www.ciocm.org

Canadian International Organ Competition

The Competition is open to all organists born after October 18, 1982. Deadline for Preliminary Round 30 January, 2017 (date of postmark)

Prizes

1st Prize: \$25,000 + Solo Album recording (ATMA Classique), and three year career management and professional development by Karen McFarlane Artists and the CIOC.

2nd Prize: \$15,000

3rd Prize: \$10,000

Additional Prizes TBC

Travel, lodging and incidental expenses are covered by the CIOC for all selected competitors. Competition to take place on three of the finest organs in Montreal.



#CIOC2017

Application forms, regulations and further information at: www.ciocm.org



**St. Philip the
Apostle
Church
in
Saddle Brook,
New Jersey**

**is proud
to announce
the**

Summer Concert Series 2016

Monday, July 18th, 8:00 pm
Joseph Wozniak
Director of Music
St. Aloysius Church - Caldwell, NJ

Monday, August 1st, 8:00 pm
David Ball, Organ
Trevor Nickols, French Horn
Juilliard School, NYC

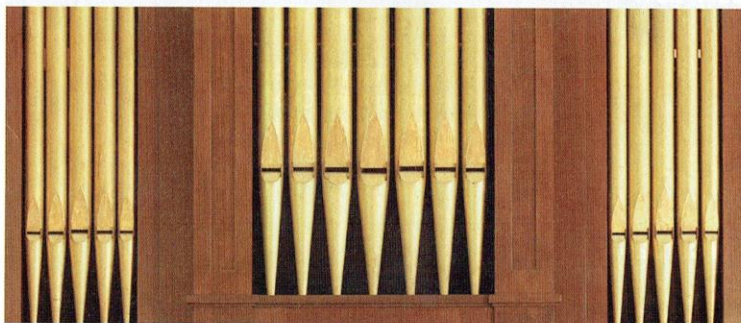
Monday, July 25th, 8:00 pm
Richard Frey
Director of Music
Unitarian-Universalist Congregation
York, PA

Monday, August 15th, 8:00 pm
Alessandro Pittorino
Juilliard School, NYC

Special thanks to St. Philip the Apostle Church for hosting these events.

488 Saddle River Road Saddle Brook, New Jersey

For directions call: 973-684-3414 or email: john@peragallo.com



within AGO were initiated and completed. In early 2016, a pilot project for CMI and the AGO to offer access to the eLibrary was begun through the national office to chapters in Kansas City, Indianapolis, and Atlanta. Enrollment processes were honed, and access was provided; at this writing, dozens of AGO members and their colleagues are experimenting with the eLibrary as we look forward with hope to offering all AGO members this benefit in 2017.

Some have asked whether the eLibrary could be a database of organ music, particularly chorale and hymn tune-based compositions. CMI has built the technology for the current eLibrary that could be adapted to accommodate organ music. We now await the person who is willing to help populate the electronic files!

A Journey of Faith and Love

The Church Music Institute has been a labor of love of professionals from many fields—first, those most directly involved with the scholarship, composition, and practice of church music, and the clergy who work week to week in creating liturgy. Just as important have been those persons who have contributed their professional expertise as accountants, organizational development consultants, nonprofit experts, fundraising professionals, arts and education specialists, enthusiastic volunteer choir members, community development specialists, technology gurus, and personal friends of esteemed retired church musicians. All love church music for their own special reasons and have given in their own ways generously and selflessly to the greater good of church music to build the Church Music Institute. This village of people has built something no one or even a few persons could have built. That is its strength and the spirit that undergirds our work together. *Soli Deo gloria.*

Charlotte Kroeker is executive director of the Church Music Institute, overseeing program development and strategic planning. She is the author of *The Sounds of Our Offerings: Achieving Excellence in Church Music* (Alban Press, 2011) and editor of *Music in Christian Worship* (Liturgical Press, 2005), and has published numerous articles on church music. She has spent the last 15 years studying foundational issues for effective music in worship.