



September 2022

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Message from the Dean

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

A church musician's responsibilities rarely are completely paused, but I hope you have enjoyed some rest and relaxation over the summer.

Your Chapter officers and leaders have been very busy this summer planning for the upcoming program year. Sub-dean Christine Clewell and her planning committee have been diligently working on an exciting year of programming.

Our Chaplain, The Reverend Cyril Hurnyak, has resigned for health reasons. Cyril has faithfully served our Chapter for 13 years. We are grateful for his service to the spiritual needs of our members.

In his resignation letter, Cyril wrote: "I have served as chaplain from 2009 through to 2022 I have served 7 deans of the Pittsburgh chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Through these 13 years, I have

tremendously enjoyed serving as your chaplain. I think this ministry is helpful.

I have been fortunate with both Theology and Church music to bridge both of these disciplines and share these with the chapter.

“In addition to offering table prayers at our monthly dinners, and installing our current deans and officers, I have added hospital visitation when asked to do so by the Deans I have served. I have always felt that such contacts were a compassionate way of communicating that the chapter cares about those who have been hospitalized.”

The Reverend Ann Miller Smith has agreed to serve as our newly-appointed Chaplain. Ann has been a faithful chapter member for many years. We look forward to her ministry with us.

Michael Kearney has agreed to live-stream our monthly Chapter meetings. This will allow members who are not physically present to participate. We have learned from these Covid times the importance of being connected by live-streaming. Many of our churches also have learned this lesson and are continuing to live-stream their services and events.

The greatest strength of our Chapter is the bond of friendship and camaraderie that we share, very evident in the cooperation and teamwork that make our Chapter hum.

I hope to see in person or virtually as you are able, at our monthly meetings.

Ken

Kenneth Danchik, FAGO

Dean

Message from the Sub Dean

Mark Your Calendars: It is Here...2022-2023

Summer Greetings, PitAGO Friends and Colleagues!

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since my term began as your elected Sub-Dean. Working with Dean Danchik and our members is a joy and privilege. I've thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the fabulous cohort of presenters, both past and present, along with chapter members who are new to my sphere since July 2022.

While preparing the program year with the committee, I was reminded that each of us play a vital role in the PitAGO community. As well, we have a responsibility to always learn and grow our skills while supporting each other in such endeavors. Furthermore, it is in the harvest of musical diligence that we can enrich the professional lives of each other, and in so doing, we lift each other to a standard that helps each of become the most accomplished musician possibility, whereby generating satisfaction for ourselves and those whom we endeavor to serve. Throughout 2022-2023, it is our hope that we you will find and seek out opportunities to share your gifts and resources with each other. May you attend each meeting with the expectation that you will learn and grow.

Below is a schedule of events for 2022-2023. Thereafter, a description of the Sept. program is provided.

Mark your calendars! The schedule of events for the program year 2022-2023 follows:

Event: Sept. 26, 2022, PitAGO Members, "Music for All Seasons: What are You Practicing?"

Venue: Community Presby. Church of Ben Avon (CPCBA), 7501 Church Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15202.

Request: We are looking for seven members to perform a prelude or postlude—performance time is three to five minutes for each selection.

Event: Oct. 24, 2022, Peter Krasinki; An Evening of Theater Organ Music.

Venue: Keystone Oaks High School, 1000 Kelton Ave., Dormont, PA 15216.

Event: Nov. 28, 2022, Ann Labounsky, Ph.D, FAGO, Ch.M., and Susan Ferré, For PitAGO, "César Franck at 200".

Venue: Ingomar Methodist Church, 1501 West Ingomar Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

Event: Jan. 23, 2023, Peter Luley and colleagues; Demonstration of their refurbished instrument.

Venue: Saint Rosalia Site, 411 Greenfield Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15207.

Event: Feb. 27, 2023, Dr. Alexander Meszler, Assistant Professor of Music and College Organist, Luther College, Decorah, IA; Perspectives on the organ in a secular age.

Venue: Saint Paul's Cathedral – Social Hall, 108 N. Dithridge St., Pittsburgh, PA, 15213.

Event: March 20, 2023, Richard Fitzgerald, DMA, Director of Music and Organist at Saint Joseph Cathedral, Columbus, OH; “Improve Your Improv,” a workshop.

Request: We are looking for three participants to play either a prepared improvisation or demonstrate the skills to improvise as presented by Dr. Fitzgerald.

Venue: Shadyside Presbyterian Church, 5121 Westminster Pl., Pittsburgh, PA, 15232.

Event: April 24, 2023, Carson Cooman, Meet the Composer and learn from his diverse music industry.

Venue: First Lutheran Church, 615 Grant St., Pittsburgh, PA.

Event: May 22, 2023, Members’ Recital hosted by Doug Starr, DMA, featuring the music of PitAGO composers; a celebrative Centenary Anniversary reception is planned to follow the recital.

Venue: Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church, 1066 Washington Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15228.

Please note that all of the programs take place on Monday evenings beginning at 7:30P. You will also note that the March program takes place on the third Monday of this month in collaboration with the *Organ Artists Series of Pittsburgh*. We are planning to host all events in-person, face to face (f2f). Please bear in mind that public health concerns are fluid for many of our members. Should the need arise, updates on venues or virtual platforms will appear in the monthly *Pipelines* article, or in an email blast.

“Music for the Season: What Are You Practicing?”

Monday, September 26, 2022

Ben Avon Community Presbyterian Church

7501 Church Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15202

<http://cpcba.squarespace.com/>

On Monday, Sept. 26, we hope you will attend the fall kick-off event at 7:30P at CPCBA. Parking is available in the church’s parking lot. You may enter at the main entrance. CPCBA’s music director, Timothy Heavner has graciously facilitated the use of this lovely space for the evening. While he is unable to attend the program owing to a professional obligation, as Sub-Dean I will be hosting the meeting.

Called “Music for All Seasons: What are You Practicing?”, the program comprises two parts with the sole purpose of sharing professional resources of literature and practice. The evening will begin with a musical program of service preludes and postludes performed by our members. Because many of us are in the business of practicing service music throughout the week, why not share what you are preparing? We would like to hear what you are practicing! Then, after the mini-recital presentation, we will host a forum to hear from you, our members. During this second portion of the program, we will meet and discuss a variety of focused topics related to our weekly duties. As well, we have invited members to prepare and share their topics of interest. By creating a forum, the goal is to gather, re-engage, discuss, identify ways (new and old) to help each other learn and grow as a community of organists. Analogous to a monthly book group, one group might wish to learn about the music of The Netherlands. We have a leader for such a topic as this! From finding new choral and organ literature for Advent to teaching *au courant* performance practices in our study of the canon, we need to consider the enriching possibilities found in each of you, a wonderful, resourceful community of organists.

Whether you are an organ studio teacher or music director of organ and choirs, finding and learning new music requires a great deal of time, money, and resources. This Sept. discussion should inspire and provide a way for everyone to connect or reconnect with your colleagues and friends who can impart their experiences and wisdom.

Summoning the schedule of events, we are looking for participants to perform three to five minutes of a prelude or postlude to perform on Sept. 26th at the beginning of the program. Please consider sharing what you are practicing and let us know what you wish to present. You may wish to repeat the postlude from Sept. 25, or rehearse music for Oct. 2, Reformation Sunday, Advent 1, or Christmas Eve, etc. The organ specifications and practicing arrangements with CPCBA will be shared upon hearing from each participant. I can be reached at (724) 840-7308, or at this email address: orgel@iup.edu

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Program Committee for aiding generously and thoughtfully. Thanks to their vision, time, and diligence, we have prepared a great year of chapter events. Do join me in thanking Dean Ken Danchik, R. Craig Dobbins, Frank Kurtik, and Cynthia Pock. Enhancing the team of program planning, we are most fortunate to have Michael Kearney joining us. Michael will oversee the livestreaming details for each of our monthly meetings. Thanks to his expertise and willingness to serve in this capacity, we will be able to reach more if not all of our members with this consistent and effective service.

As previously stated, **mark your calendars** for this year's season filled with rewarding and impactful events presented by industrious and inspiring professionals in our field. Come learn and grow, get re-engage and be revitalized with the amazing community of PitAGO members!

Announcing our new Chaplain, Ann Miller Smith:



Pastor Ann Miller Smith joined the Pittsburgh Chapter of the AGO before training with her first Leader Dog for the Blind more than 20 years ago. She was Midnight; her successor is Chloe, now retired, and now works with Tigger, whose musical preferences are yet to be determined. Pastor Ann serves Grace Lutheran Church, Troy Hill and Evaline Lutheran Church (the NALC) in the Friendship area. She is a University of Pittsburgh alumna (1970) and a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg (1975). Her first Call was to serve the York Haven-Goldsboro Lutheran Parish in Central PA and has served Congregations in the Pittsburgh area since 1981. She is married to Gerald Franklin Smith and is the mother of four adults. She has served for over 30 years in outdoor ministry, and is an adequate 12 string guitarist. She is also the great, great grand niece of Franz Gruber and the eldest sister of Fr. Thomas R. Miller, serving the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

NOTES FROM THE REGISTRAR

End-of-Summer Greetings to All

As of this month's *Pipelines* deadline, we have 197 active members in all classifications. Of this number: 70 are "Regular" members

97 are "Special" members (a nice way to say senior citizens!)

23 are in the "Young Organist" category

7 are listed as "Chapter Friends"

In addition to the 197 active members, in 2022 we have had 9 folks who have been moved in the ONCARD system to the "cancelled" category, which means they did not pay their dues for this year. They have been contacted by email to inform them that they must renew their memberships through the National office. Hopefully most of them will indeed re-up.

Since last year's directory was put together, we have had a large number of member changes, from different employers to churches (*especially Roman Catholic parishes in the Pittsburgh Diocese*) with new names due to parish mergers. We also have several new members. Because of this, I will be assembling an updated directory to be sent out via email in October. (We had requests for only about 10 printed copies, and I will arrange to have that number printed again to be distributed at the October chapter meeting, or snail-mailed to those who request one.)

Is ALL of your information Correct in ONCARD? In downloading and formatting member information from ONCARD for the new Chapter Directory, I noticed that several of our members who recently changed positions have not updated this information in ONCARD. Please complete this as soon as possible, so our directory will be as up-to-date as possible! It's really quite simple:

Go online to www.agohq.org.

Click on the "Member Login" link in the upper right corner of the home page.

Log into ONCARD. Your user name is your first initial and full last name (*ex. Mine is "jgray"*) Your password is the 4-digit number in the mailing label section of *The American Organist*, immediately to the left of your membership expiration date. (*ex. Mine is NOT 1234!*)

Click on the "Update Personal Information" bar on the next page.

Please review ALL information in this section for accuracy. Your church/employer information will be found under the "View/Edit Address Information"

When you're done verifying/updating information, click the "Post Changes" bar at the bottom. That's it!

Hope to see you at the September meeting!

Jeff Gray, Chapter Registrar

PitAGO + PPTA + CASP

by
Wayne Earnest, DMA

After decades of full-time work, first as a college professor and later as a parish musician, I retired in the Fall of 2015 and moved to Washington PA. I began playing in church at age 13 and now, almost 60 years later as a 72-year-old retiree, I am still playing the organ for worship as a substitute-/interim-organist, mostly in the greater-Pittsburgh PA area but also occasionally in the Wheeling/Moundsville WV area.

Very frequently I get calls or emails from churches, often desperate to find an organist. When I am not available for the date(s) for which churches are seeking an organist, I make certain that they know about the PitAGO substitute-organist list, the Pittsburgh Organ Academy, and the organ instructional videos available at the AGO national website, www.agohq.org. In the event that locating an organist isn't possible, I refer them to the **Pittsburgh Piano Teachers Association (PPTA;** www.pittsburghpianoteachers.org). Most churches have a piano in their nave/sanctuary and having a pianist play for worship is much better than using "canned music." Therefore, I would strongly suggest that the PitAGO develop a working collaboration with PPTA! Around 4 years ago, I did a special presentation for PPTA about how pianists can (should!) learn to play the organ – by focusing primarily on 3 areas: pedals, stops, and repertoire (&/or improvisation). Since pianists do not own organ music and since organists need 3-4 pieces per Sunday (prelude, offertory, [communion], postlude), it would be a big and sudden expense for a pianist to buy that many pieces for 52 Sundays per year (not to mention special services, weddings, funerals, etc.); that's why it is important to teach them how to do simple improvisations* on hymns to use as preludes, offertories, postludes. See the attached pdf (below) of my settings of *O God, Our Help in Ages Past* which began as improvisations.* Certain harpsichord and piano music, such as Bach *Inventions*, Clementi & Mozart *Sonatinas*, and the like also adapt well to the organ; further, there is quite a lot of organ music, ancient through modern, that requires no pedal. Still further, there is quite a lot of hymn-based music for piano nowadays – evidence of a shortage of organists and a move away from using the organ by some churches. Incidentally, that piano music can be adapted to the organ, too!

Most colleges/universities concentrate on recruiting organ majors for the full-time jobs but, since there is such a need for organists for the small, part-time positions, I have advocated (for at least the last decade)

training organists for those small, part-time positions – i.e., someone with a piano background but who would be earning their living in another field. (Who could live on a part-time organist’s salary?) IUP organ professor Dr. Christine Clewell is doing exactly that: concentrating on training organists for the part-time jobs. Since **PPTA** is the logical organization with which PitAGO could/should form a collaboration, I welcome anyone to join me in establishing a collaborative effort between PitAGO and PPTA in teaching pianists how to play the organ! Please contact me at 724-206-8854 or musicmanwayne@outlook.com.

Another organization with which PitAGO might consider collaborating is the **Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania (CASP; www.casp.org)** an ecumenical association of clergy about which I learned in recent conversations with a couple pastors. There are at least three very good reasons to form a collaboration with CASP. (1) The Rev. Dr. Victoria Sirota holds the DMA in organ as well as an MDiv and is an ordained Episcopal priest and a former AGO national chaplain; in her writings and lectures, she has reminded us of the importance of collaboration between clergy and church musicians. (2) Martin Luther said that clergy should not be ordained unless they knew music and, conversely, parish musicians should know liturgy and theology, and (3) Clergy could help us locate parishioners in their congregations who play piano! As with PPTA, I welcome anyone to join me in collaborating with CASP.

The settings here of **O God, Our Help in Ages Past** are *Gebrauchsmusik*, a German word meaning “music for use” or “utility music,” as opposed to “masterworks” – i.e., music that exists, not only for its own sake, but also for some specific use, purpose, or occasion. As such, these settings of **O God, Our Help in Ages Past** are intentionally easy to play and are playable upon a two-manual organ. As noted in the score, they include an introduction and three accompaniments for hymn singing and six variations for use as organ voluntaries. The word *voluntary* refers to music not required by the liturgy – i.e., “volunteered,” such as a prelude, offertory, or postlude.

The arrangements here of *O God, Our Help in Ages Past* began as improvisation – an historically and practically important skill for organists. As mentioned above in the first paragraph about the **Pittsburgh Piano Teachers Association**, improvisation should be included when teaching pianists to play the organ.

Incidentally, if you print the *pdf* as “double-sided” (“two-sided”), then the only page-turns would be at pages 3 and 9. Measures 135-137 are easily memorized, so the page can be turned at measure 134.

It is hoped that you might use this music and your feedback welcomed at: musicmanwayne@outlook.com.

Upcoming Events

Johnstown Concert Series 2022

First Presbyterian Church, 209 Lincoln St., Johnstown, PA 15901.

September 17, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Seipp/Sheets Organ Duo

For directions, see the website: <http://www.johnstownmusic.org>

2022 ORGAN SERIES

Saint Paul Cathedral Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Sunday, October 2 at 3:30 p.m.

Kenneth Danchik, *Associate Organist of Saint Paul Cathedral, Adjunct Music Faculty of the University of Pittsburgh.*

All Concerts are Open to the Public and Admission-Free Free-will Donations are gratefully received at each event.

The Cathedral is located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Craig Street (Oakland). For more information: Call 412-621-4951, ext. 13; or E-mail bgurley@saintpaulcathedral.org

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Vincent Dubois

Friday, October 28, 2022 at 7:30 pm
Saint Paul Cathedral



Bruce Neswick

Sunday, November 20, 2022 at 3:00 pm
Calvary Episcopal Church



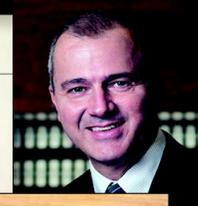
Richard Fitzgerald

Sunday, March 19, 2023 at 3:00 pm
Shadyside Presbyterian Church



Alan Morrison

Sunday, April 30, 2023 at 3:00 pm
East Liberty Presbyterian Church



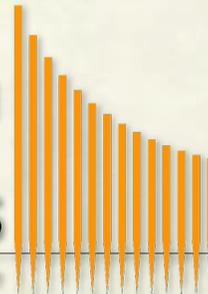
Amanda Mole

Friday, May 12, 2023 at 7:30 pm
Westminster Presbyterian Church



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SUBSTITUTES

It is the policy of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Guild of Organists that only current members in good standing may list their names on the Substitutes List. Employers may contact organists directly or ask the coordinator for assistance. The AGO assumes no responsibility for the musicianship, reliability, or conduct of substitute organists, and background checks are the responsibility of the employer. Persons listed as available substitutes may be required by employers to present clearances; e.g. Child Abuse History Clearance; Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Checks for Employment; and/or Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprinting.

Services: W-Weddings, F-Funerals, E-Evenings, S-Saturdays, L-Liturgical Only, N-Non-Liturgical

Substitute Organists Available for Sunday Mornings

ALEY, PHILIP 412.302.8653 WFE
ANDERSON, GERALD 412.251.6718 WFELNS
BROWN, JUDITH 240.522.5070 WFES
CAFARO, ROSS 412.885.1625 WFES
EARNEST, Dr. WAYNE N. 724.206.8854 WFESLN
FRANZ, GRETCHEN 412.531.5564 WFESN
HILL, THOMAS 512.421.1484 WFES
JANKO, RAY 724.325.7449 WFES
JUSTHAM, MARY ANN 724.335.7792 WFES
KETTERING, REGINA 412.477.5547 WFES
KRANTZ, DOUGLAS 724.554.3314 WFS
LA RUE, ELIZABETH SPC 412.999.4812 WFESLN
LINDSEY, III, C. DENNIS 918.409.6467 WFES
MISLIN, DAVID W. 617.223.1270 WFES
PARK, HAEHYUN 734.657.0869 WFESLN
REILAND, MICHAEL 412.882.5521 WFESLN
ROEDERER, CHARLOTTE 412.853.6647 EFS
ROLLETT, TONY 412.726.8569 ES
RUBRIGHT, SANDY S. 724.994.8872 WFE
SALMON, MICHAEL 904.7187.622. WFEL
SHAW, PAMELA, MA, MLS 412.425.5962. WFESLN
SKROUPA, DANE 724.265.4840 FLN
STIPCAK, VALERIE 724.388.1038 WFES
SZEREMANY, RICHARD, AAGO 412.327.6254 WFES

Substitute Organists NOT Available for Sunday Mornings

AIKINS, CANDICE 724.568.2640 WF
ANDERLAAN, BRETT, SPC 301.919.1835 WFES
BRUHN, LYNN 724.733.8111 WFE
CLEMENS, KEVIN M. 443.604.5072 WFES
COCHRAN, NICOLE 724.799.1373 WFES
DANIELS, J.R. 412.389.6658 WF
HAMMER, MICHAEL 217.766.4230 WFES
HENRI, LAURA 412.418.7392 WFESL
KARDOS, MICHELLE 724.757.0972 WFESLN
MILLER, JANE 412.526.6618 WF
PINKERTON, RICHARD 412.561.2015 WFE

RASLEY, DON 724.487.7303(D) 724.283.4829(E) WFES
RIZZO, ELMIRA, CAGO 724.612.2029 WFES
SCHALL, STEPHEN 412.215.2971 WFE
SPENCER, GEORGE 412.731.3324 WFE
STROBEL, JOYCE MOON 412.366.0074 WFES
TYILLIAN, JON 724.456.5135 WFESV
WALLACE, JUSTIN 412.531.0525 WFES

Free Score from IMSLP

Submitted by

Bob Senay



The composer Percy Whitlock was born in Chatham, Kent on June 1, 1903. At the age of seven he was given a voice trial at Rochester Cathedral, where he was successful in being accepted as a probationer. This was the beginning of a long association with the organ loft. He was a scholar at the Cathedral Choir School and then the Kings School. He attended the Royal College of Music between 1920 and 1924. There he studied organ with Henry G. Ley and composition with Ralph Vaughan Williams.

In 1921 Whitlock became the assistant organist at his old 'alma mater'. The organist of Rochester at that time was Charles Hylton Stewart. At the same time Whitlock was able to be the organist and choir master at St Mary's Chatham and then at St Mathew's Parish Church, Borstal. It was always regarded that he would become the organist at Rochester when the post became vacant. However, a certain Harold E. Bennet was appointed to the post when Hylton Stewart left for Chester Cathedral. Whitlock resigned as assistant and moved to Bournemouth where he became organist at St Stephen's Parish Church. He remained there until 1935. However the main task of the thirties and forties was his appointment in 1932 as the Borough Organist at the Municipal Pavilion. He remained in this post until his untimely death in 1946. It was here, perhaps that he discovered his truly eclectic spirit. The post required an ability to play 'heavy' classics and 'light' dance music.

During this period he was much occupied with giving recitals in London, Bournemouth and other parts of the South. He gave performances for the BBC. A perusal of the appendices to Malcolm Riley's book shew a fine catalogue of journalism. A regular contribution to the Bournemouth Daily Echo was published under the pseudonym of Kenneth Lark. This 'nom de plume' was also used in a number of compositions written at the time. There were a number of literary contributions to the standard musical journals of the day.

Percy Whitlock died on the May 1, 1946, an untimely death at the age of 42. A loss regretted by all who knew him. L.S. Barnard writing the Obituary in Musical Opinion states that "[Whitlock] had the most extraordinary and endearing personal qualities. His personality carried with it an atmosphere of serenity and gentleness seldom

encountered in these sophisticated and disingenuous times. He had, too, a virile wit and sense of fun..."

He was interested in things other than music. He was a great Meccano enthusiast, building working clocks. He wrote a monograph on the steam locomotives of the South Eastern & Chatham Railway.

Whitlock was survived by his wife Edna, who was also musician.

The Music

Whitlock's catalogue is not extensive. The main corpus is the organ music. From the relatively light *Chanty* from the Plymouth Suite to the deeper waters of the Fantasie Chorals Whitlock never allows the quality of his writing to slip. He never attempts to surprise the listener with 'harmonic or formal novelties'. In many ways his music is quite conservative. Yet on the other side, although much of his writing has a 'light' quality to it, it never becomes sentimental or trite.

There were excursions into orchestral music and chamber pieces. He wrote, as was common with many composers of the day, a Phantasy Quartet in A minor. There were works for String Quartet and Violin and Piano. Unfortunately many of Whitlock's scores have either been destroyed or lost. It will be impossible to hear much of what he wrote. However the manuscript for his Piano Quartet is available at the British Library and may one day be revived.

There was a fair amount of choral music written. Settings of the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis, a simple communion service and a number of other anthems and liturgical pieces. There were two pageants written for the communities of Bridgwater and Rochester which were for chorus and orchestra. However it is probably difficult to rescue what were highly ephemeral pieces of music.

Whitlock fans are lucky that the CD company Marco Polo is due to release an album of his orchestral music. In fact nearly two thirds of the surviving scores are due to be published. Most of it is frankly 'light' music though none the worse for that. They have evocative titles such as the Wessex Suite and the Holiday Suite. This first of these suites has sentimental but attractive movements such as 'Revels in Hogsorton' and 'The Blue Poole' - the second suite enjoying pieces called the 'Bucket and Spade Polka' and 'In the Ballroom'. - Echoes of holidays by the sea - especially at Bournemouth.

There is much organ music. Many of the pieces have become favorites of those who haunt organ lofts. Most organists probably have one or more of them well and truly under their belts.

The earliest were the Five Short Pieces - perhaps the most popular being the second piece - *Folksong*. It has all the trappings of the 'English folk song revival'.

Four Extemporisations were issued in 1933 followed by the two volumes of Seven Sketches on Verses from the Psalms. Whitlock entered on a more serious period with his Two Fantasie Chorals -one in D flat major and the second in F sharp minor. Both these pieces reflect the Whitlock romanticism at full flight.

The Organ Sonata in C minor dwarfs most of the other pieces that this composer wrote. There is little of the 'sea front and deck chairs' about this work although the Scherzetto has a lot of 'fun' about it.

However, Whitlock's masterpiece must be his Organ Symphony of 1936/37. It is a work in four movements lasting nearly three quarters of an hour. Scored for large orchestra including two harps, it is set in four movements. The piece was inspired by an article in the Radio Times where George Thalben-Ball lamented the fact that there was no good 'English Organ Concerto' in existence. Whitlock rose to the challenge and produced this work which is more of a concertante piece than a concerto. Musical detectives have found references to the styles of a number of composers in this work including Elgar, Richard Strauss, Delius and of course Sergei Rachmaninov. However this is no pastiche - no cut and paste exercise. It is pure Whitlock. A highly romantic and tuneful work.

The Plymouth Suite was a highly competent return to a somewhat more approachable vein - in fact it is probably the composer's most famous and most popular work. There was a gap of six years between this famous work and the two volumes of the Six Hymn Prelude of 1945.

The last published organ music Whitlock wrote was Reflections (Three Quiet pieces) given in 1946.

Plymouth Suite.

Whitlock and his wife Edna had gone on a trip to Plymouth to attend a conference of 'The Incorporated Association of Organists'.

The Plymouth Suite was the outcome of this visit. There are five movements. Each of them is dedicated to an organist who had attended the conference.

The piece was composed between August and November of 1937.

The first movement, *Allegro risoluto*, was dedicated to the then famous organist Harvey Grace. Harvey Grace was the organist of Chichester Cathedral and had succeeded W.G MacNaught as editor of the Musical Times.

Like much of Whitlock's music this movement is not easy to play. It is a somewhat laid back Allegro Risoluto with pretension to sounding like a theme for a passacaglia. This theme is treated in an extremely competent manner with robust harmonies. The second theme has been influenced by a phrase from the first movement of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony. The two themes are worked quite extensively with the first re-appearing towards the end. The piece concludes with tuba fanfares. The writer Peter Hardwick in his article 'The Organ Music of Percy Whitlock' notices a number of neo-classicist finger-prints leading to some interesting dissonances. There are polytonal and polymodal parallel triads working in opposition to each other and spare parallel fourths and tritones. The meter is also subject to 'modernism' - there are quick alterations between 5/4 and 3/4 time and 2/4 to 3/4. Hardwick suggests that this is done to suggest the 'changing rhythms and moods of the sea.'

The second movement is entitled *Lantana* - the dictionary definition of which is a 'tree-like shrub.' However it is translated by Whitlock as the 'Wayfaring Tree.' This movement was dedicated to the organist of Buckfast Abbey, Dom. Wilfred. The monk was well known for 'organ' crawls and even collected bits and pieces of kit for use on his own instrument. The mood is peaceful and quite distant in its atmosphere. There is no doubt that there are echoes of Edward Elgar in the working out of the melody.

The third movement is a *Chanty*, which is written for manuals only. It is dedicated to the Lancaster Roman Catholic Cathedral organist Dr. Reginald Dixon. Apparently this gentleman was regarded by Whitlock as being the 'generally the naughty boy at any party.' Here we have a genuine Plymouth reference. Quite definitely a nautical piece in a quick 2/4 rhythm. Riley points out that this piece is more in the style of an eighteenth century Hornpipe rather than a Shanty. Hornpipes however did not always have a nautical association. Handel used the form in his one of his concerti grossi. The time signature of this was 3/2. A 'shanty' was definitely a sailor's song - devised to make hard manual work easier by assisting the rhythmic motions of task aboard ship.

The fourth movement, called *Salix* is an example of the pastoral style. It would be easy to see such a piece composed by the likes of Finzi or perhaps William Lloyd Webber. The depth of the piece is actually more intense than the 'light hearted' dedication would imply. Apparently the dedicatee was a certain Henry Austin Dewdney who was a Bournemouth pianist. He was involved in most of the local music making in the nineteen thirties. Whitlock states of him 'A perpetual grouser, yet with much humor.' *Salix* means a willow tree - a weeping willow. The main theme is a gentle 'Sicilian' tune in 6/8 time. It is quite definitely one of the composer's finest miniatures. One wonders what it would sound like arranged for strings or small orchestra.

The last movement is a robust *toccata*. This was dedicated to the Borough Organist of Plymouth, Dr. George Harry Moreton. Strangely, perhaps this is Whitlock's only essay in the form of Toccata. However this piece is in

the tradition of the great French Toccatas of Böellmann, Gigout and Mulet. This is a grand finale to a fine suite. Superficially it is easy to play, however the subtle changes of key and figuration make it much harder to 'bring off' than a first glance would suggest. There are two themes at work. A wonderful, fairly slow moving pedal theme is set against a semi-quaver accompaniment on the manuals. The solo reed emerges to lift this piece into the heavens. This uses a wider melodic range and shorter note values.

Conclusion

Whitlock died at an early age. Who knows what would have issued from his pen if he had lived until the 1980's, say. He would have seen the demise of the seaside orchestras and the music-making of a pre-rock and roll era. The public's interest in hearing organ recitals waned and dancers danced to the sound of records rather than a resident band or instrumentalist.

However, we have an excellent corpus of works from this very fine and competent composer. And amongst this corpus are a number of real treasures. The Organ Symphony and the Sonata would entitle any composer to huge respect if not the suggestion of genius.

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Video Material

Percy Whitlock: Symphony for Organ and Orchestra in G Minor, Organist Graham Barber with the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra, Grant Lewellyn, conducting The Symphony for Organ and Orchestra by British organist/composer Percy Whitlock was written in 1937-1938. Whitlock, being a prolific organ composer, also composed over a dozen pieces for orchestra, this work being one of the major works among them. It enjoyed a revival by this organist and the BBC Welsh Orchestra years after it was composed and forgotten. Also, it was recorded by Francis Jackson, and the University of York Symphony Orchestra in the 1980's, but this elusive recording is presently unavailable.

The movements:

1. *Allegro Sostenuto (0:46)*

2. *Elegy (for organ and strings) (13:51)*

3. *Scherzo (19:20)*

4. *Toccata and Fugue. (24:50)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLT1iHZlwDs>