

Our *Organ-ic* Heritage in Singapore

By Suzanne Lau

Did you know that there are eleven pipe organs (although one of them is no longer playable) in Singapore? The Singapore AGO is currently working on a project to update information about pipe organs in Singapore, so as to preserve our unique musical heritage. Leading the project is our Programme Director Yap Wai Hoong.

In January this year, we had an opportunity to meet Singapore's only organ builder, Robert Navaratnam, who showed us the two pipe organs located at the Orchard Road Presbyterian Church - one in the Sanctuary and the other in the Chapel.

For more information on pipe organs in Singapore, visit www.singaporeago.org/organs.html. Should you wish to share information on the organs in Singapore, please do contact us.

Moments from our organ trek:



Organs in Singapore:

Above (L - R): The inside of the JW Walker (1969) Pipe organ in the Sanctuary. Mr Navaratnam explaining to Wai Hoong on the intricacies of the instrument, while fellow member Julian Tay plays the organ

Below (L - R): The ORPC Chapel pipe organ view from the console; Mr Navaratnam demonstrating at the organ



Message From The Dean

Pipe organs may be commonplace for centuries in the civilised West, but to find a functional one here in S.E. Asia is less common. The instruments in churches formerly run by colonial masters and early missionaries to our region are not always well maintained. Many are but poor shadows of what they originally were. The records of pipe organs in Singapore churches show the presence of the French and English, long before the two German concert hall organs were built.

“Because it has always represented a rich collaboration of the music, art, architecture, handicraft, and science of its day, the organ, more than any other instrument, continues to reflect the spirit of the age in which it was built.”

- abstract from *The Organ As a Mirror of Its Time: North European Reflections, 1610-2000* by Kerala Snyder.

The Singapore AGO took up the task of creating a catalogue of the pipe organs in our country, and the legacy that each represents. Over many months, enthusiastic individuals went through the research, updated the information and sought permission from the institutions which housed the organs. The project is almost complete. Please enjoy browsing through our webpage!

With every good wish
Dr Evelyn Lim
Dean (2016-2018)

Virtuosic Canadian Organist in Singapore

By Suzanne Lau
Photos by Dr Evelyn Lim

What was dubbed as the 'Demers Fever' by The American Organist at the 2010 AGO National Convention in Washington DC finally reached the shores of Singapore in mid November 2017.

20 November 2017 - was a busy day for virtuoso organist Isabelle Demers (Canada). Demers gave a lunch time concert at Victoria Concert Hall, presenting pieces from the different musical periods - from Bach to Prokofiev.

Later in the evening, the Singapore AGO organised a German music-themed masterclass where members Joel Lee, Anne Maria Lim and Loraine Muthiah played for Demers. Each participant received tips on interpretation from Demers in their pieces by Mendelsohn, Karg-Elert and Brahms.



The "Demers Fever" in Singapore:

(Above): Isabelle Demers posing for a photo at the foyer of Victoria Concert Hall

(Left): A group photo with the masterclass attendees at Singapore Bible College



Coming Soon...

Dulwich College Organ Inauguration Concert
- 8 June 2018, 10:00am; Dulwich College (by invitation only)

Celestial Pipes: Winfried Böinig (Germany) with Sand Artist Lawrence Koh
- 16 June 2018, 4:00pm, Victoria Concert Hall; Tickets at <<https://www.sso.org.sg/vchorgan>>

2018 AGO National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri; USA
- 2 - 6 July; register on <www.agokc2018.com>

Stay Connected With Us!



Singapore Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
c/o Methodist School of Music
496 Upper Bukit Timah Road, #03-20 John Wesley Centre
Singapore 678099



enquire@singaporeago.org



www.singaporeago.org



<https://www.facebook.com/AGOSingapore>



. Behind PIPE ECHOES - Advisor: Dr Evelyn Lim . Newsletter Editor: Ms Suzanne Lau . Publicity Officer: Ms Esther Seet .

PIPE ECHOES is published by the Singapore Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. The opinions expressed in the articles, reviews, comments, letters and interviews are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the AGO, the Singapore Chapter, or the editors of this journal. All effort has been made to acknowledge the authors and sources of articles and images in this journal. In the case of any errors, omissions, or failure to credit a source, pardon is sought. Please inform the editors of all such errors and omissions at the address listed above.

EDITORIAL: Your contributions are welcome. Please forward articles and contributions to the above address.