



## Sylvia's NOTES by: Sylvia Chai

### WHY DO CHURCHES HAVE ORGANS?

Survey the artifacts, drawings, and cave paintings of the world's most ancient cultures---Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Indian, Chinese---and you find all cultures had evidences of some type of flute, horn, violin, and harp. Undoubtedly, the original and most basic musical instrument in every culture was also the easiest to use---the human voice.

The earliest known written reference to an organ appears in Aristotle's book *Politics*, where he defines organon as a tool with which to do a job or work. In *The Republic*, Plato refers to organon as meaning any kind, or all kinds of musical instruments, tools or contrivances.

Philo of Byzantium (3rd cent B.C.), Hero of Alexandria (1st cent A.D.), and the Roman Vitruvius (1st cent A.D.) wrote that Ctesibius of Alexandria, a third-century B.C. engineer, invented the first hydraulis organis, a contraption that applied air under pressure to the working of the pump, the water clock, the catapult and the hydraulis. Ctesibius built his

machine as a model of the principles of hydraulics---the science of water harnessed for power. It should be noted that Ctesibius was also the first to observe that sound was generated by his pressurized wind contrivance.

Everything points to the hydraulis as having a strong, loud sound and its wind pressure being higher and more constant than that produced by forge bellows. Specific reference to playing an organ for its musical value dates from a century and a half after Ctesibius invented the machine. A Delphic inscription from c. 90 B.C. tells of a person named Antipatros competing at Delphi on the hydraulic organ, playing for two days and "covering himself with glory."

Cicero, Lucretius, Petronius and others wrote of the instrument's powers. The organ was the favorite instrument of at least one emperor, the Roman Emperor Nero. By the second century A.D., the organ could be heard at some of the more important theatres, games, amphitheatres, circuses, banquets and processions in Rome. A Greek inscription at Rhodes dating from the third-century suggests that the organ was played at Dionysian festivals.

We know that the organ had a part in gladiator contests by studying inscriptions found in provinces as far from Rome as Arles, Colchester, Budapest, and Asia Minor. Exactly how the organ was used---for preludes, interludes, background music, or possibly postludes---we do not know. A mosaic in Nanning shows a player poised to

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## Finance Committee Report

| <b>Financial Summary</b>   |                 |               |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| January - October, 31 2008 |                 |               |                 |
|                            | <u>Actual</u>   | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Variance</u> |
| Offerings                  | \$427,563       | \$387,297     | \$ 40,266       |
| Expenses                   | \$365,787       | \$405,367     | (\$39,580)      |
| Surplus Distribution       | \$ 27,500       | \$ -          | \$27,500        |
| Other Income               | \$ 2,517        | \$ 900        | \$ 1,617        |
| <b>Net Surplus</b>         | <b>\$36,794</b> |               |                 |

## Sylvia's Notes...Cont.

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play at a suitable moment during a gladiator fight--possibly as a death signal, or in order to rouse the spectators in some way.

Organ music was a part of life in the late Roman Empire, too. The poet Claudian (c. 400) describes organ music as making a major contribution to various kinds of banquets during a time when "the singer has thrust out the philosopher" (Ammianus Marcellinus, c. 350).

Mosaics, bas-reliefs, terracottas, coins and other objects provide nearly 40 extant representations of the Greek-Roman organ. The organ is often shown alone, and at other times with one or more instruments, particularly brass instruments. Some representations show smaller organs in the homes of the well-to-do, where girls or women played it. Other artifacts depict organs in theaters or at plays.

Parts of two original Roman organs still exist today. One find from Pompeii is now on display in the Museo Nazionale in Naples. The other more complete organ which was found in Aquinum, Hungary is in the Aquinum Museum in Budapest.

References during the fifth and sixth centuries, which include writings of Church Fathers from the southern and eastern Mediterranean coasts indicate that bellows organs were known in the Eastern empire, to a greater extent or earlier than in the West, where the hydraulis disappears with the decline of the Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth century.

So, if the organ disappeared in the Western world, how and when did it show up in the Christian Church in Western Europe? We will find out in the next installment.

### Birthdays

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Anna Claire Lambers 12.3 | Judy Wildeboer 12.20  |
| Tom McFarland 12.6       | Bryson Pothoven 12.22 |
| Alex Fernandez 12.10     | Eva White 12.24       |
| Jared Frail 12.12        | Grace Morton 12.26    |
| Abby Johnson 12.15       | Hannah Johnson 12.27  |
| Pat Bardin 12.16         | Zach Bolanos 12.27    |
| David Bardin 12.17       | Carol McFarland 12.30 |
| Danny DeLaRosa 12.20     | DJ Koehler 12.30      |
| Jane Lambers 12.20       | Andrea Cawley 12.31   |



### Anniversaries



*Tom and Andrea Cawley 12.20*

*David and Pat Bardin 12.29*

Are we missing a birthday or anniversary? Please help us keep our records up to date by emailing the missing information to church@seminolepca.org or calling 877-6783.



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