

Celebrating The Reign Of The “King Of Instruments”

(NAPSA)—Interest in the world’s oldest keyboard instrument—the organ—strikes a chord among musicians and fans alike.

Originating in ancient Egypt as a mechanical flute-playing instrument, the organ has been used in gladiatorial games, sent as a gift by heads of state, and heard in churches and at baseball games.

Organ Notes

Here are a few facts about organs that might hit the right note with you:

- The “modern” organ, with all its sound effects, was first described in a work entitled “Mirror of the Organbuilder and Organist” written in 1511 by Arnolt Schlick of Heidelberg, Germany.

- The device called the “stop” limits the sounds made at any particular time. The phrase “pulling out all the stops” refers to playing an organ with all its sounds available.

- At one time, pipe organs were big business in America. In just one year, 2,400 pipe organs were made in the U.S.

- Organs were built throughout the U.S. in concert halls, municipal buildings, homes and even schools. They were a popular accompaniment to silent movies.

- Marcel Dupré, the great French organist and composer, played 110 recitals in the U.S., and French virtuoso Louis Vierne’s tour of America included audiences of up to 30,000 per concert.

The Organ Today

In recent years, there has been a resurgence in the popularity of



The spectacular 6,134-pipe organ at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

organ music due to many new concert halls opening across the country. Featured in many of these venues are spectacular organs such as the 3,051-pipe C. B. Fisk organ in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Orange County, Calif., and the 3,617-pipe Schoenstein & Company organ built for the Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville.

The famous Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall also boasts a stunning new organ. Built by a German organ builder, the instrument features 6,134 pipes, ranging in size from a few inches to an astounding 32 feet.

Organs can be found everywhere in the world. Japan, for example, has organs in many concert halls, colleges and schools, most of them imported from Europe and America.

South Korea and Taiwan also

recently acquired several organs for concert halls and churches, and an American firm built a large organ for a concert hall in China’s Forbidden City.

Promoting Organ Awareness

Membership in the American Guild of Organists and its 330 local chapters is open to all individuals interested in the organ and choral music fields. Benefits of membership include educational activities, such as workshops and master classes and competitions in organ performance, organ improvisation, and organ and choral composition. Also included are a comprehensive series of examinations for professional certification, providing standards of excellence to churches, synagogues, schools and other employers.

For professional musicians and educators, the Guild also offers services that include a professional development track, employment guidelines and model contract provisions. It also offers support for musical education of clergy and management and planning assistance for church musicians.

The Guild also sponsors concerts to showcase the organ and its colorful history, how it has evolved through the ages and its indelible impact on society and culture.

Learn More

For more information on the American Guild of Organists, visit www.agohq.org or e-mail info@agohq.org.