

> news release

The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ Two Weeks of Concerts Dedicated to Unveiling

April 11, 2006

Dobson-Built Organ Largest Concert Hall Organ in the United States

Pipe Dreams' Michael Barone Named Advisor to Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ

The Kimmel Center today announced details of its two-week long **Inaugural Organ Festival** dedicated to the unveiling and first performances of **The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ**, to take place from May 11 to May 26, 2006. The Organ Festival begins with concerts by the Philadelphia Orchestra, ends with a concert by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and in between includes everything from silent films with organ accompaniment, to a marathon organ recital, family concerts, and a performance with the Philadelphia Singers. In addition, the public is invited to play this magnificent new instrument with a special hands-on event, "Pay to Play". In all, the Organ Festival includes nineteen events including postludes, one world premiere and a Philadelphia premiere, and the organ will be played by eleven world-class organists.

For a complete tour of **The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ** and to hear sound samples, people can visit www.kimmelcenter.org/organ.

The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ, Dobson organ Op. 76, ranks as the largest concert hall organ in the United States, with 6,938 pipes, four blowers, 300 levels of memory, 111 stops, pipe sizes ranging from that of about the size of a drinking straw up to two feet square by 32 feet in length, and a total weight of app. 32 tons. Verizon Hall closed for six weeks during the summer of 2005 to complete the installation, and voicing and tuning of each of the individual pipes has continued throughout the winter months during the overnight shifts when the hall is not in use, with completion scheduled for late April 2006.

The Kimmel Center's Vice President of Programming and Education, Mervon Mehta, is pleased to announce that Michael Barone will serve as a consultant to the new instrument. Host of American Public Radio's Pipe Dreams, Michael Barone, has been named Advisor to The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ at the Kimmel Center. Barone has dedicated nearly 50 years of his life to the study of organs and organ repertoire around the world and his program Pipe Dreams can be heard on public Radio Stations around the country. Each week, Barone shares selected organ works and performances, and in doing so, encourages listeners to engage both their ears and imaginations to gain greater appreciation of this instrument. He talks with composers, organists, organ builders and restorers. The show features brand new instruments in churches and concert halls, plus historic pipe organs recorded in locations around the world, from ancient instruments in vast cathedrals to the "mighty Wurlitzers" of movie house fame. Barone will advise the Kimmel's staff on various organ related matters including artists, repertoire, education and marketing.

In February 2006 the organ was named in honor of the late Fred J. Cooper, the father of Chara Cooper Haas. Fred J. Cooper was a jeweler and organist in Philadelphia for many years and passed on a love of music, and organ music in particular, to his daughter and to his grandson Frederick R. Haas, who is the chair of the Kimmel Organ committee. In addition, Fred J. Cooper played the organ at the old Swedenborgian Church at 22nd and Chestnut Streets.

Major funding for The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ was provided by the Phoebe W. Haas Charitable Trusts and the Otto Haas Charitable Trust.

Tickets for Kimmel Center Organ Festival concerts can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999, online at www.kimmelcenter.org or at the Kimmel Center Box Office, open daily from 10am to 6pm and later on performance evenings. (Additional fees may apply) For group sales call 215-893-5883.

A limited number of \$10 tickets are available for every Kimmel Center Presents performance at the Kimmel Center. Tickets go on sale the day of the event and can be purchased at the Kimmel Center box office beginning 2.5 hours prior to evening performances and 11:30am for matinees.

The festival begins with performances by The Philadelphia Orchestra led by Christoph Eschenbach in a program to include the world premiere of a work by composer Gerald Levinson titled *Toward Light* for organ and orchestra, co-commissioned by Kimmel Center Presents and The Philadelphia Orchestra; Samuel Barber's *Toccata festiva* (premiered in 1960 by The Philadelphia Orchestra with Eugene Ormandy); Poulenc's Organ Concerto; and Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3 ("Organ"). The organist for all the works on this program is Olivier Latry. In addition, Latry will give a Postlude performance after each concert. Performances take place May 11-13 at 8pm.

An Organ Recital Marathon takes place on Saturday, May 13 from 1pm - 6pm. Five different organists will each take a turn at the console, including Marvin Mills, 1pm; Alan Morrison, 2pm; Cameron Carpenter, 3pm; Diane Meredith Belcher, 4pm; and Gordon Turk, 5pm. One ticket allows entry to the entire afternoon of recitals by some of this country's leading concert organists.

The Philadelphia Singers joins forces with the Mannes College of Music Orchestra led by conductor David Hayes, in a performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and the Philadelphia premiere of David Raksin's *A Song After Sundown* on Sunday, May 14 at 3pm. Philadelphia's Michael Stairs is the organist for this performance.

A Song After Sundown was written in 1960 and premiered in 1984 in San Francisco at the American Guild of Organists' Annual Conference by then Wanamaker organist Keith Chapman (1966-1989). Chapman died in 1989 in a fiery plane crash and the work has not been performed since its premiere. The score has since resided in Philadelphia's Fleisher collection and parts have been specially prepared for this performance during the organ festival.

William Neil, organist of the National Symphony Orchestra, is joined by members of The Philadelphia Orchestra's brass section for a special Mother's Day Concert Sunday, May 14 at 7pm. The program includes works for solo organ, organ and brass, and brass alone by Bach, Gabrieli, Manfredini, Britten, Gigout, and others.

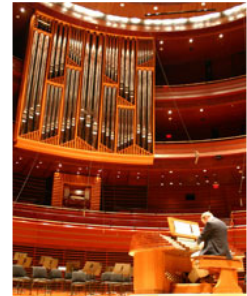
The Philadelphia Orchestra, led by Christoph Eschenbach, performs Lindberg's *Sculpture* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 ("Choral") on Wednesday, May 17 at 8pm. *Sculpture*, which was premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in October 2005, received a rave review in *The Los Angeles Times*: "The score is sophisticated yet immediately engrossing," wrote the *Times*. "The orchestral writing is that of a master."

Soloists for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony are Marina Mescheriakova, soprano; Jill Grove, mezzo-soprano; Vinson Cole, tenor; and Alan Held, bass-baritone. The Philadelphia Singers Chorale (David Hayes, music director) joins the orchestra.

Subscription concerts by The Philadelphia Orchestra on May 19 and 20 feature repeat performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, this time paired with Kodaly's *Missa brevis* (organ and chorus) with organist Michael Stairs.

Education and family concerts are an important and ongoing tradition for Kimmel Center Presents, and the brand new organ presents an additional opportunity for families and younger concertgoers. Philadelphia's Mum Puppettheatre joins the organ festival and Wanamaker Organist Peter Conte on Saturday, May 20 at 11am for Prokofiev's beloved *Peter and the Wolf*, narrated by WRTI's on air host Jill Pasternak as well as Dukas' *A Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Immediately following the performance families and children are then invited to remain in Verizon Hall for their own special up close look at The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ. Kimmel Center Presents is pleased to have WHYY as a media partner for the Organ Family Concert. Select members of the WHYY Kids Club will be given the opportunity of attending this concert as a benefit of their membership, which supports WHYY's childrens programming.

In an effort to give new meaning to the term "Pay-to-Play", Philadelphians are urged to come to Verizon Hall on Saturday, May 20, from 1-5pm to give The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ a test drive. No experience is required to be a participant in this event. Opportunities to play the stage console are on a first come first served basis, and are priced at \$25 for one minute or \$75 for five minutes. There is no admission fee to listen to the "Pay to Play" participants.



The golden era of film making, the era of silent films, provides a special opportunity to showcase both the unique attributes of this massive new organ, as well as the special improvisational skills of renowned organist Tom Trenney accompanying two of the greatest films of the period: Charlie Chaplin's *Gold Rush*, and Douglas Fairbanks Sr. in *The Mark of Zorro* on Sunday, May 21 at 3pm and 7pm respectively.

The Kimmel Center's Inaugural Organ Festival comes to a close with a performance by the Pittsburgh Symphony, led by German conductor Manfred Honeck, on Thursday, May 25 at 8pm. Philadelphia organist Jeffrey Brillhart performs Poulenc's Organ Concerto, and the program also includes Mozart's Symphony No. 40 and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5. Brillhart will also give an Organ Postlude performance.

Biographies

Diane Meredith Belcher made her solo recital debut at age 15 and has performed throughout the United States, France, and England for three decades since. With a degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, a frequent performer on the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ, and organist for Saint Mark's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, she is no stranger to the city. A brilliantly expressive player full of personality, she played to a standing ovation from over two thousand five hundred members of the American Guild of Organists convention in 2002. Today, she is on the Organ Faculty of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and continues to be in high demand as a competition juror, organ and composition consultant, and a leader of numerous workshops and master classes.

Jeffrey Brillhart has served as Director of Music and Fine Arts at the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church since January 1983. He held his first position as an organist at the young age of 11. In 1994 he won first prize in the American Guild of Organists National Competition in Organ Improvisation. Subsequently, in May 2005, he was appointed Lecturer in Organ Improvisation at Yale University. A brilliant sensation, he has worked with internationally renowned artists such as Dave Brubeck, Nick Page, and Rossen Milanov.

Cameron Carpenter's musical talent was discovered at the age of 4, when it was found that he could play keyboard music by dictation. His first public recital took place seven years later, and was soon found to be a talented boy soprano in addition to being a keyboard prodigy. His gift of perfect pitch and photographic musical memory served him well both in his performances and in his transcription projects. In 1999, Cameron, the youngest of more than 35 competitors and the only American, won the highly prestigious Medal for Interpretation at the World Organ Competition in Memoriam Franz Liszt, Budapest. He has also received a recognition of eminence from the Premier of Hungary for his work and currently holds the organist position at New York City's First Church of Religious Science.

Peter Richard Conte is the fourth organist to hold the position of Court Organist at the world-famous Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia since 1911. An artist who performs both well-loved favorites and unique arrangements with ease, he has earned the prestigious Performer's Certificate in Organ. Conte's performance flaunts his dexterity and emotional versatility in a way that brings the composer's intentions to life in a way that is accessible to the audience. It is no wonder that he performs hundreds of recitals each year on the six-manual 30,000-pipe organ and maintains an active national recital schedule besides.

Olivier Latry, titular organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, is one of the world's most distinguished organists, not only in France, but in the international community as well. He was born in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France in 1962, and began his study of piano at the age of 7, and his study of the organ at age 12; he later attended the Academy of Music at St. Maur-des-Fossés, studying organ with Gaston Litaize. From 1981-1985 Olivier Latry was titular organist of Meaux Cathedral and at age 23 he won a competition to become one of the three titular organists of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. From 1990-1995 he taught organ at the Academy of Music at St. Maur-des-Fossés, where he succeeded his teacher, Gaston Litaize. Since 1995 he has taught at the Paris Conservatory, where he has succeeded Michel Chapuis.

Marvin Mills is a native Philadelphian who once served as the director of music/organist at All Souls Church in Washington, DC. Currently, he is the associate minister of music at National City Christian Church. A prizewinner in the Alexander McCurdy Organ Competition, he earned his Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Institute in May 2002. He has performed in various venues across the United States and has also recorded for PBS television.

Alan Morrison is one of the most sought-after American concert organists and will perform as a featured artist at the American Guild of Organists' 2006 National Convention. He has also won the coveted first prizes in both the Mader and Poister National Organ Competitions as well as a Silver Medal at the Calgary International Organ Festival. In 1993, Morrison performed with Itzhak Perlman and Yo-Yo Ma on a live telecast for the Fred Rogers Memorial service from Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall. An avid explorer of modern composers, he has premiered new works by composers such as William Bolcom, Bob Chilcott, Eric Sessler, and Luis Prado. A pioneer who combines tradition with a modern flavor, he has more than earned himself a position in the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. Morrison currently teaches at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

William Neil, organist and harpsichordist of the National Symphony Orchestra, is one of the busiest and most sought after keyboard artists in the Washington, DC area and throughout the United States. He is the keyboardist of the Washington Chamber Symphony and organist for the Choral Arts Society of Washington as well as The Washington Chorus. From 1998 to 2000, he served as Organist of Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago, a post held by some of the world's most noted organists. He has appeared in solo performances with the National Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Mstislav Rostropovich, Alessandro Siciliani, Christopher Hogwood, Iona Brown and Jose-Luis Garcia, and is featured in recordings on the Phillips, Sony, Naxos, Summit and Newport Classic labels.

Michael Stairs studied the organ with Alexander McCurdy at The Curtis Institute in Philadelphia after receiving his B.M. from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1986, Stairs became the official organist of the Philadelphia Orchestra and recorded the Strauss Festival Prelude for Organ and Orchestra with the Orchestra while on tour in Japan in 1993. He is currently the Chairman of the Music Department at The Haverford School and serves as the organist-choirmaster at The Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr.

Tom Trenney received his bachelor of music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music under the mentorship of Todd Wilson and studied organ and improvisation with David Higgs and Gerre Hancock at the Eastman School of Music. He began his study of the piano at age 4 and earned Colleague certification on the organ before the age of 16. The magnificent maturity of his playing won him the first prize in the 1997 Redlands Organ Festival Competition and in the 1998 Ohio Federation of Music Clubs' Agnes Fowler Organ Competition. Currently, Trenney is the Organist and Director of Music Ministries at First Presbyterian Church and is in high demand for recitals, silent films, and hymn festivals throughout the nation.

Dr. Gordon Turk studied with Alexander McCurdy at the Curtis Institute of Music and with McNeil Robinson at the Manhattan School of Music. A performer and artist of international acclaim, he has toured the United States, Europe, and Asia, and has had his composition "Elegy" for string orchestra and oboe performed on live television in Japan. His talent extends beyond the organ to the harpsichord and piano, and his astounding interpretations of various works have won him the John Cerevalo Prize for "Excellence in the Performance of the Music of Johann Sebastian Bach" as well as a prize in the national improvisation competition of the American Guild of Organists.

Composer **Gerald Levinson**, born in 1951 and raised in Connecticut, has been increasingly recognized as one of the major composers of his generation. In 1990, he received the Music Award (for lifetime achievement) of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which cited his "sensitive poetic spirit, imaginative treatment of texture and color," and his "potent and very personal idiom which projects immediately to the listener." Levinson has taught at Swarthmore College, where he is the Jane Lang Professor of Music, since 1977. He spent 1979-80 in Bali as a Henry Luce Foundation Scholar, studying Balinese music and composing, and returned there in 1982-83 as a Guggenheim Fellow.

Composer **David Raksin**, who in 2004 died aged 92, was a senior figure in the world of film composing; having begun his career in 1935 arranging the music for Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, he went on to write scores for more than 400 films and television shows, most notably that for *Laura* (1944). David Raksin was born in Philadelphia on August 4, 1912.

Raksin collaborated with Igor Stravinsky, whose *Circus Polka* he arranged for the celebrated elephant ballet that was staged by Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey and choreographed by Balanchine.

From the late Thirties onwards, Raksin became a prolific writer of soundtracks for films that included Hollywood *Cavalcade* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (both 1939), *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947), with Danny Kaye, *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952) - Raksin's own favorite score - *Father of the Bride* (1950), *Two Weeks In Another Town* (1962), *The Patsy* (1964) and the Charlton Heston Western *Will Penny* (1968).

He was twice nominated for Oscars, for *Forever Amber* (1947), and for *Separate Tables* (1958), which brought David Niven his only Oscar.

For many years, Raksin taught composition at the University of Southern California, and from 1962 until 1970 he was president of the Composers' and Lyricists' Guild of America. He also wrote orchestral music, music for ballets and the stage, and three musicals, including *The Wind in the Willows*.

Raksin also taught film composition at the University of Southern California from 1958 to 2003, and hosted "The Subject Is Film Music" radio show on NPR. A former president of the Composers & Lyricist Guild of America, he was the first film composer invited to establish a collection of his manuscripts in the music division of the Library of Congress. In 1992, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers awarded Raksin the Golden Soundtrack Award for a lifetime of achievement in film and television music.

He was the first film composer invited to lodge his manuscripts with the Library of Congress.

Kimmel Center, Inc., a charitable, not-for-profit organization, owns, manages, supports and maintains The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, which includes Verizon Hall, Perelman Theater, Innovation Studio and the Merck Arts Education Center. Kimmel Center, Inc. also manages the Academy of Music, owned by the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and the Academy of Music serve as home to eight Resident Company performing arts organizations, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, American Theater Arts for Youth, PHILADANCO, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Peter Nero and the Philly Pops®. Kimmel Center, Inc.'s mission also includes arts in education, community outreach and a rich diversity of programming through its Kimmel Center Presents and Cadillac Broadway at the Academy series of performances.

Kimmel Center Presents' 2005/2006 season is supported by: Mellon Financial Corporation, University of Pennsylvania Health System, Sovereign Bank, The American Express Company, Verizon Foundation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The William Penn Foundation. Special Student Matinees at the Kimmel Center are generously supported by Merck & Co., Inc. American Airlines is the Official Airline of Kimmel Center Presents. Toyota is the Official Vehicle of Kimmel Center Presents Jazz and World Pop programming. In-kind support is generously provided by Deloitte and Southern Wine and Spirit. NBC-10 is a Media Partner for Kimmel Center Presents.

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