

## SPRING MEETING 2015

### TURIN

The annual Spring Meeting of the European Chapter of the American Guild of Organists took place from April 6-10, the week after Easter, 2015. Member Giorgio Parolini together with Edgardo Pocarobba organized an itinerary in and around Turin, Italy, that met all of the high expectations. The 38 participants came from 8 countries including Germany (9), USA (8), Italy (6), England (5), France (4), Holland (3), Belgium (1), and Finland (2)! The convention hotel was conveniently located in the town of Chivasso. The evening meals were all taken together in a restaurant just across the street. The opening dinner on Monday night confirmed the quality of this choice.

After a good night's sleep (for most to recover from the strains of the Easter celebration and the journey) everyone boarded the bus Tuesday morning for an excursion to the city of Turin. The presentation at the Church of Santo Volto was a tribute to Massimo Nosetti, who died suddenly in November 2013 from pancreatic cancer. Nosetti was a consummate musician (active as a concert artist, teacher, and composer) who



was also well known in the US from his many concert tours. Steve Gentile (Minnesota), a long-time friend, performed Nosetti's "Variations on a Japanese Folk Song" on the Ruffatti, 37/III/P, from 2007. This opening was even more special since Nosetti's widow was also present. As with almost all organs visited, participants then had time to play the instrument themselves. Among others Agnes Goerke followed with a piece by Jongen and Bernard Sanders played his own Prelude (from Prelude, Recitative and Fugue). The 38/II/P organ in the Church of San Filippo Neri was built in 1831 by Serassi, rebuilt in 1889 by Carlo Vegezzi Bossi and restored in 2002 by Brondino Vegezzi Bossi. As one might suspect from this short description, Vegezzi Bossi is one of the numerous Italian organ companies which has been handed down from generation to generation for well over 100 years. This early romantic instrument was capably demonstrated by Corrado Cavalli from the Turin Conservatory with Mendelssohn's 2nd Sonata. Suitable period repertoire was then played by Barry Jordan (Magdeburg) with a Sonata by Antonio Diana

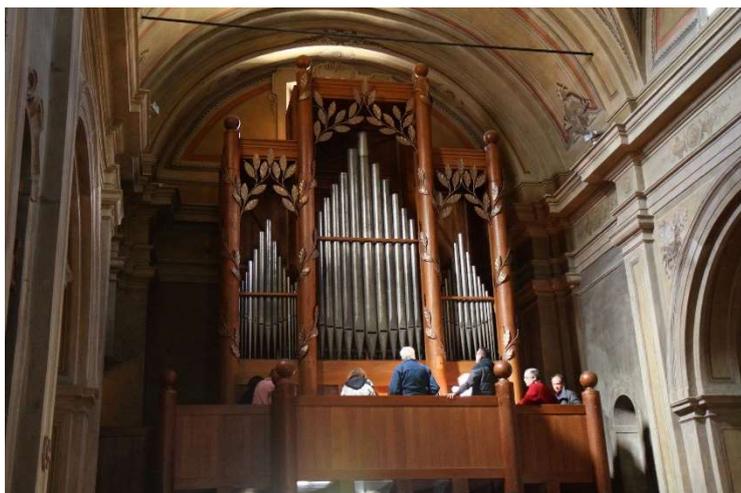
followed by Böhm's "Vater unser" played by Dr. Yao Yue (also from Magdeburg). After a lunch break in the sublime sunshine which continued the entire week, a first taste of Italian Baroque awaited the group in the Church of Santa Cristina. This instrument (11/I/P) was built in 1748 by Grisanti for a church in Asti, was restored and moved to Turin in 1962 by Piccinelli. Typical aspects of the organ type represented here are one manual with only 45 notes and short octave, pedal "a leggio" (always coupled to the manual) of only 9 notes,

and stops divided into Soprano (Treble) and Bass. Also, the ranks typically drawn in a Mixture stop, can each be drawn separately: 2', 1 1/3', 1', 2/3', and 1/2'. Due to the relatively early restoration, the mean-tone temperament one would expect was not realized.

Professor Guido Donati, recently retired from the Conservatory of Turin, demonstrated the instrument with improvisation in early Baroque style. Period literature played by participants included Frescobaldi (Jean van Cleef, Barry Jordan, Faythe Freese, Agnes Goerke), Kerckhoven (Johan Hermans) and Storace (Alissa Duryee). Within walking distance was the Temple Valdese with an interim organ (16/II/P) in North German Baroque style built by Pinchi in 1996 while the gallery organ by Carlo Vegezzi Bossi awaits restoration. Although the instrument is tuned Werckmeister III at 415 Hz, there are 3 stops on the Great at 440 for continuo/accompaniment purposes.

Prof. Donati demonstrated this instrument as well, including an excerpt from Bach's Fantasie and Fugue in g minor. Members followed with appropriate literature including "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland" BWV 659 (Roger Schumacher), Padre Narciso "Pastorale" (Meredith Baker), Bach Trio Sonate d-m, 2nd mvmt. (Yao Yue) J.G. Walther "Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist" (Ruth Ahrendt and Edeltraud Bode), Böhm "Vater unser" (Johan Hermans), Froberger Toccata (Alissa Duryee), Böhm Partita "Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele" (Faythe Freese). Prof. Donati then bade us farewell with an improvisation on folk songs from the Piedmont region, successfully eliciting unexpected theatre-organ sounds with jazz elements. The bus ride back to the hotel and a welcome pause preceded an excellent evening fare at the restaurant mentioned above.

Wednesday began with a venerable Cesare Catarinozzi (11/I/P) organ from 1695 in the Benedictine abbey church of Sts. Peter and Andrea in Novalesa. Originally built for the Benedictine Abbey St. Scolastica in Subiaco, it was restored and enlarged in 1794 by Celestino Catarinozzi and moved to Novalesa in 1983. Glauco Ghilardi restored it in 2006 in a modern organ case designed for the space. Once again only one manual, short octave, Pedal "a leggio" and this time regular meantone tuning. After a demonstration by Giorgio Parolini many participants played Frescobaldi (Agnes Goerke, Alissa Duryee, Jean van Cleef, Barry Jordan, Christian Michel). Performances of the 5-part Ricercare from "Fiori musicali" with Faythe Freese on the organ and Meredith Baker singing, "Aria detta balletto" with Wim Riefel and a Fantasie by Sweelinck with Johan Hermans deserve special mention. After a scenic drive through the mountains and lunch the group was greeted in Susa by Mariano Martina. The first organ visited here is an early specimen



of the orchestral, operatic organ that was popular in Italy at the turn of the (last) century. It was built in 1894 by the Turin organ builder Giuseppe Mola for the Villa San Pietro in Susa, the residency of Earl German de Magny. In 1903 it was moved to the Convent-Church of San Francesco by Carlo Vegezzi Bossi. The single manual, mechanical action and division of stops into Soprano and Bass are traditional but the disposition includes a Tromba, Carillon (Glockenspiel), Rullante (Drum roll), plus Gamba, Violino, Violino Flebile, Viola Celeste and Fagotto/Oboe - all under expression. After a demonstration by Mariano Martina and Giorgio

Parolini followed a series of more-or-less period pieces: Verdi (Meredith Baker), Mascagni (Charles Baer), C. Franck (Yao Yue), Verdi (Johan Hermans), Antonio Diana "Rondo Polonaise" (Barry Jordan), and the Bellini-Sonata (Alissa Duryee). A short walk took us to the final organ of the day at the Cathedral of San Giusto. Mariano Martina first explained some of the particularities of the early romantic Italian style as contained in this organ by Carlo Vegezzi Bossi; for example instead of the traditional Voce Umana as celeste, here we find an Unda Maris, 2 reed stops on the second manual are Oboe 8' and Corale 8' (with short resonators), the Bombarda 16' in wood, and - as a hint of things to come - Campana tubolari (chimes). Originally built in 1890 it was reworked as a pneumatic instrument with 26/II by Francesco Vegezzi Bossi in 1934. With a lovely reading of Bossi's "Chant du soir" he closed his presentation. This organ allowed a broad choice of repertoire which was forthcoming from the participants: Bossi "Entrée pontificale" (Mike Irvine), Dupré Magnificat I "My Soul doth Magnify the Lord", op. 18 Nr. 10 (Chelsea Chen), Brahms "Schmücke Dich" (Roger Schumacher), Cesar Franck "Chorale E Major" (Yao Yue), Sigfrid Karg-Elert (John Falkingham), Brahms "Es ist ein Ros" (Ian Pattinson), plus an improvisation in late romantic style by Barry Jordan.

A glorious Thursday morning bus ride took us to Abbadia Alpina. Here in the village church of San Verano we were met by the regional organ expert Professor Silvio Sorrentino, who was to accompany us the entire day. The organ built here by Giacomo Filippo Landesio in the middle of the 18th Century is typical for the Piedmont area; 11 stops on one manual, short octave, 12 note pedalboard a leggio, mechanical action and meantone tuning. The Mixture is again divided into single stops at 2', 1', 1 1/3', 1', 1/2', the Cornetto (Treble only) consists of 4', 2 2/3', 2', 1 3/5' and is playable only in the Treble, the Voce Umana from e. The demonstration was an elegant performance of anonymous Variations on the Follia. Period works were played by Alissa Duryee, Barry Jordan, Yao Yue, and Fabrice Muller. Faythe Freese deserves special mention for her performance of José Lidon's "Sonata para la Corneta real con Eco" as do Jean van Cleef and Wim Riefel (Tenor) for another performance of Frescobaldi's Ricercare à 5. The rest of the day was spent in Pinerolo, beginning at the Basilica of San Maurizio, a medieval collegiate church from the 14th Century with 5 naves



and frescoes from the 15th Century. Originally constructed 1861 by Alessandro Collino (the Collino family build more than 200 organs in Piedmont), the organ was rebuilt by Giuseppe Lingua in 1891 with a spring chest typical for northern Italy and stops divided into Treble and Bass. It was first restored by Bortolo Pansera in 1968, then by Dell'Orto & Lanzini in 2009. After Silvio Sorrentino's demonstration with a Rossini transcription all sorts of fun music was packed out: a Sonata by Nicola Moretti (Johan Hermans), Padre Davide da Bergamo (Yao Yue), Marseilleise by Claude Balbastre (Fabrice Muller), Chelsea Chen played one of her own Variations on a Chinese Folk Song, and a Humoreske by Gustav Merkel (Agnes Goerke). Many of the performers made ample and effective use of the Tympani and Glockenspiel. Practically at the back of the San Maurizio church was the Santuario della Beata Vergine delle Grazie (Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of Grace). The organ here is somewhat older but

with a similar history. Built in 1848 by Giuseppe and Alessandro (father & son) Collino, it was modified in

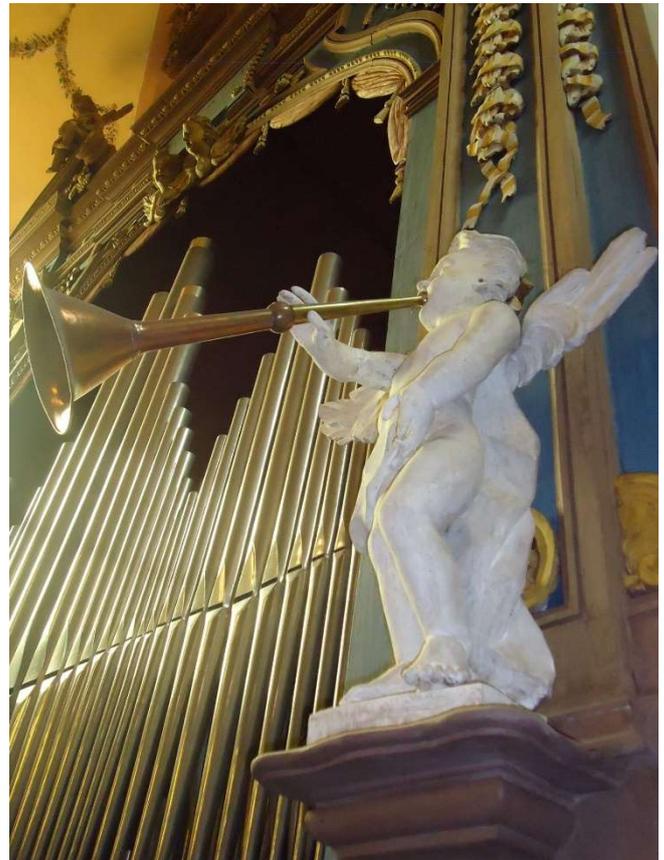
1897 by Giuseppe Lingua, first restored by Pansera in 1969, then in 2008 by Dell'Orto & Lanzini. For Sorrentino's performance of a Sonata by Pescetti he quite obviously had drawn a reed stop although there was none apparent in the disposition. The solution was quite simple, in the Italian nomenclature of this period a Violoncello stop can also be built as a reed! Although considerably smaller than the previous organ, a Drum roll stop was still available. Around 1771 the French organ builder Adrien Joseph Potier from Lille built a small organ (7/I/P) for the Convent Church of the Visitation (Conventuale della Visitazione di Maria). At the time Pinerolo belonged to France and both Cardinal Richelieu as well as the Musketeers had been to the fortress (or the prison) there. The disposition starts with a 4' Principal in the manual, the only 8' stop being the Contrabasso, which is always drawn in the pedal. Various participants tried out the instrument but Chelsea Chen's rendition of Pietro Yon's Humoresque brought down the house. Lunch for all was served in a cafeteria run by the parish of Our Lady of Fatima (Nostra Signora di Fatima), whose church and organ are both new. The organ (34/III/P) was built in 2011 by Dell'Orto & Lanzini in the North German Baroque style, modeled after Arp Schnitger. The organ builder Carlo Dell'Orto and the pastor of the parish welcomed us personally. The organ was capably demonstrated with Variations on "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland" by Samuel Scheidt and Kneller, which are also available on a CD recorded on the organ.

Participants responded with Bach Orgelbüchlein, excerpts from Toccata, Adagio and Fugue, Prelude and Fugue in a-minor, Prelude and Fugue in E-flat, Fantasie and Fugue in c-minor), Böhm (Vater unser) and Buxtehude (Praeludium F-Major, Praeludium g-minor). In the Pinerolo Cathedral of San Donato there is a processional organ (4/I) attributed to Giuseppe Calandra. Although built at the end of the 17th Century it is very much in Renaissance style with short octave, 7-note pull-down pedal and meantone temperament. A Gagliarde by Trabaci (Agnes Goerke) and a Corrente by Michelangelo Rossi (Christian Michel) as well as improvisations in Renaissance style (Wim Riefel and Barry Jordan) brought the instrument to life. The gallery organ (25/I/P) built by Carlo Vegezzi Bossi in 1922 is in the "reformed" Italian organ style. That is, 2 manuals with 61 notes, full pedal with 32 notes, second manual under expression, crescendo pedal, reed cancel piston, sub and super couplers from II to I and, as Prof. Sorrentino said, "lots of strings": Dulciana 8', Viola Gamba 8', Unda Maris 8' on I and Viola Gamba 8', Voce Celeste 8', Coro Viole 3 rks on II. There are also a 4 rank Mixture and Tromba on I and a 3 rank Mixture and Oboe on II. With music by Giovanni Battista Polleri (Meredith Baker) on the foundations, a Variation from Michael Burkhardt's "All Glory Laud & Honor" (Steve Gentile) on the strings, and an excerpt from Bach's Fantasy in g-minor on the principal chorus (Emil Iliev) the versatility of this instrument was proven. The test went on however with contemporary pieces: Petr Eben "Moto ostinato" from the Sunday Music (Yao Yue), Naji Hakim (Faythe Freese), and Bernard Sanders "Fugue" from Prelude, Recitative and Fugue (Bernard Sanders). Barry Jordan summed up the sonic experience with an improvisation in romantic style exploiting not only the rich palette of colors but also the broad dynamic range with use of the crescendo pedal. At the evening dinner Chelsea Chen, AGO District Convener and AGO Regional Councillor Cheryl Duerr took their leave from the group as they were departing the next morning. Both had attended the Spring Meeting of the European Chapter for the first time, were thrilled with the experience, and hope to come again in future years. Thanks for his invaluable assistance on the planning was also given to Edgardo Pocarobba since he couldn't be with the group on the final evening. In recognition for his service he was presented with an engraved plaque.

Friday started once again with the beautiful warm Spring weather accompanying the group all week. The final day began with a trip to the church of St. Mary of the Assumption in Caluso which houses an organ

(40/IIP) built in 1821 by Fratelli Serassi from Bergamo. Giacomo Vegezzi Bossi did some modifications in 1859 and 1882, the last restoration was done in 2006 by Italo Marzi. Many of the stops are divided between Treble and Bass, there are 17 pedals but the pedal stops have only 12 notes which repeat for the upper octave (as is frequently the case), otherwise "a leggjo", the "toy counter" includes Gran cassa (Bass Drum), Campanini (Glockenspiel), Timballi, Triangolo, Timpanone, Rullante (Drum Roll) and Tuono. An interesting stop was the "Tromba sforzate", only in the Treble, whose Cornamusa reed pipes were located centrally in the balustrade as a sort of tiny Rückpositiv. Although not uncommon, we had only encountered it only once before in the Temple Valdese. Lateral pedals activate an additive mechanical combination system which can also be changed during a piece. This relatively exotic organ evoked equally unusual repertoire from the participants. Giorgio Parolini performed a piece by Padre Davide da Bergamo with "all the bells and whistles". Emil Iliev started off on the Bach F-Dur Toccata but soon ran out of pedals, Yao Yue did some of Liszt's "Weinen, Klagen", Faythe Freese excerpts from Naji Hakim's "To Call My True Love" and Johan Hermans a good portion of a tango-like "Florinda" by Andrés Laprida (born 1959). In the rustic rural town of Chiaverno we were joined by Emilio Giachino and Angela Maria Fontana. Although both are active organists in the churches we visited, they preferred, with one notable exception, not to play themselves. The church of St. Silvester houses a rather large baroque organ (40/II/P) in meantone temperament. Built in 1793-95 by Giovanni Bruna it was restored by Dell'Orto & Lanzini in 2007. Despite the large number of stops there is no independent pedal, but rather only (and always) coupled ("a leggjo"). The Carilioni (Glockenspiel), Timpani and Tamburo are all historic and not, as one might expect, added in the operatic period. A cute touch were the Putti (Cherubs) to the right and left on the front of the case, each with a trumpet on their lips. These were actual sounding Trumpet pipes (D + A) and could be played with a lateral pedal. There were also lateral pedals for free mechanical combinations. After a brief demonstration by Giorgio Parolini, pieces by Zipoli (Alissa Duryee), Balbastre "O filii" (Johan Hermans) and Arbeau (Fabrice Muller) were played. Fabrice Muller closed with an improvisation utilizing the Putti. The organ builder Bruna apprenticed with Carlo Silvestro Velatta. In the second half of the 18th Century Velatta built a smaller organ (15/I/P) in the parish church of St. Peter in Chains (San Pietro in Vincoli) in the nearby town of Andrate. During the course of the next 250 years the organ was changed at least 5 times by different builders with loss of a great part of the original material. For the most recent restoration by Dell'Orto & Lanzini 5 of the stops including the Fagotto and Cornetti were completely reconstructed to bring it back to the original specification. It is now tuned with the Valotti temperament. In addition to the principal chorus (Mixture stops drawn separately) there are only the aforementioned Fagotto and Cornetti, Sesquialtera, Flutes at 4' and 2' and the Voce Umana (Principal celeste). Everything one needs for the repertoire of the period as was demonstrated by Giorgio Parolini. Other pieces played were Sweelinck's "Chromatic Fantasie" (Faythe Freese), Pasquini (Fabrice Muller), Padre Narciso di Milano "Elevation" (Meredith Baker) and a Ricercar by Floriano Aresti (Agnes Goerke). Wim Riefel and Barry Jordan also improvised in late Renaissance style. Just as an interesting footnote, on the very scenic journey to our next and final instrument Giorgio Parolini pointed out that we came past the birthplace of the composer and past organist of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York Pietro Alessandro Yon. In 1747 Giovanni Michele Ramasco built an instrument in the parish church of San Maurizio in Borgofranco d'Ivrea. It was enlarged in 1897 by Giovanni Foglia from Bergamo keeping a great part of the original material. Two stops added in 1937 were removed in the last restoration by Italo Marzi in 2011. The 12 stops (4 divided) on one manual with a 27-note pedal (16' and 8') is very versatile. Pieces played were Liebster Jesu BWV 731 (Emil Iliev), an Elevation Toccata by Frescobaldi (Johan Hermans), Bach's Adagio from Toccata, Adagio and Fugue (Yao Yue),

"Monica" by Bernard Storace (Alissa Duryee), a Rondo by Gherardeschi (Agnes Goerke) and the "Ballo della Battaglia" also by Storace (Wim Riefel). The closing dinner was fabulous, which was to be expected after the experience of the whole week, and was crowned with a round of well-deserved thank yous. The restaurant and kitchen staff were called in to take their applause, but the main recipient was Giorgio Parolini, not only as a demonstrator for many of the instruments and for sharing his profound knowledge of the Italian organ, but mainly for the meticulous preparation work he had done well in advance. The Board members present each gave him a token of their collective thanks and esteem. Gratitude was also duly expressed to Dean Judy Riefel-Lindel, who gave much support and assistance in advance, as well as to Giorgio's wife Isabella and to the other non-organists that participated in the entire tour. The fabulous Spring Meeting booklet with daily itinerary, list of participants, and not only the stop lists but detailed information about all of the organs was prepared by Giorgio. Practically a constant at the Spring Meetings of the European Chapter is the noteworthy and admirable camaraderie of all participants. Both Chelsea Chen and Cheryl Duerr mentioned this at their farewell. Mutual respect and acceptance of the other participants regardless of their playing abilities or academic status is the basis for a harmonious common experience. One last event topped off the Spring Meeting experience. Not only did Edgardo Poccorobba help to organize our itinerary, he is also instrumental in organizing events for the "Chivasso in Musica" festival. The European Chapter was invited to be guests of honor at the final concert which took place at 9 PM in the Chivasso Cathedral. The young international concert pianist Saskia Giorgini gave a stunning performance of works by Chopin and the 13 Preludes, op. 32, by Sergei Rachmaninov.



*Bernard Sanders*