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A Recital to Remember

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A RECITAL TO

By Stephanie Sloan, B.M. Performance, class of 2014

Anyone who has ever dedicated a large portion of time to studying a musical instrument always remembers their first major recital. Whether it's the excitement, the nerves, the venue, or the joy of creating beautiful art, the experience can often be recounted in great detail. For junior organ performance student Rebecca Marie Yoder, her recital at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. in August, 2012 was a combination of all of the above.

To be chosen as a recitalist at the National Shrine at any age is an admirable accomplishment. Yoder competed for a concert against seasoned professional musicians with only seven years of pipe organ study under her belt. Her teachers, Dr. Ann Labounsky, chair of organ and sacred music, and Dr.



Rebecca Yoder, Stephanie Sloan

Mickey Thomas Terry, encouraged her to apply for a recital at the Shrine because a performance on that substantial an instrument would significantly augment her career recitalist aspirations.

What Yoder's application lacked in experience, it made up for in tenacity: in September of 2011 she submitted a DVD of a full-length, unedited organ recital performed completely from memory and featuring a challenging repertoire by Böhm, Rheinberger, Mendelssohn, J.S. Bach, and Mark Fax. In January of 2012, Russell Weissmann, associate director of music at the Basilica and a Mary Pappert School of Music alumnus, selected Yoder to play a summer recital at the National Shrine.

The daunting prospect of a recital in our nation's capital lay ahead. Yoder's pre-Shrine recital preparation was largely spent polishing her selected program pieces. Attempting a recital without sheet music, at the Shrine or otherwise, is a task executed only with singular patience and exacting diligence. For Yoder, the additional preparation time is worth it. Not only is it "a higher level of performance, I know and play the pieces better when memorized," she said.

To test her mental retention, Yoder gave a Shrine trial recital in early June at her home parish, St. Mary's Catholic Church at Piscataway in Clinton, MD, for which she received a standing ovation. Unexpectedly, her final Shrine recital preparation after the trial was to stop practicing her program pieces altogether. Her month-long respite was essential for relaxation, and "taking a break lets [the pieces] sink into my brain more, allows them to mature...and I become more 'one' with the pieces."

REMEMBER



In the week prior to her recital, Yoder was given only 13 practice hours on the Shrine's four-manual, South Gallery Möller organ, many of those hours occurring early in the morning. Most of that practice time was spent working through the instrument's quirks, getting used to the organ, registering her pieces, and ensuring tonal balance in the sanctuary. She was allowed no warm-up time at all on the day of her recital, which did nothing to calm her nerves. Once she did get on the bench, the thrill of playing in such an exquisite space eclipsed her anxieties, and with "reined joy" she played an hour of beautiful aural art.

Included on the program was the *Magnificat VI: Gloria Finale* by Dupré, Franck's *Cantabile*, Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, Vierne's *Symphony No. 1, Movements IV & VI*, *Sonata No. 3* by Mendelssohn, and Mark Fax's *Three Pieces for Organ, Movements II & III*, ending on a grand Tutti.

Yoder's summer recital at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception this year is a noteworthy achievement. We should expect additional successes from this exemplary Pappert pipe organist. Congratulations, Becky!

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Rebecca Marie Yoder,
B.M. Performance, class of 2014

IN MEMORIAM

DAVID CRAIGHEAD

*Adjunct Professor of Organ
Professor Emeritus, Eastman School of Music
Honorary Doctorate, Lebanon Valley College
Honorary Doctorate, Duquesne University
B.M., Curtis Institute of Music*



David E. Craighead passed away in Rochester, NY on March 26, 2012 at age 88. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Marian R. Craighead. He is survived by his children James R. Craighead and Elizabeth C. Eagan, his grandsons Christopher and Jeffrey Eagan, sister-in-law Elizabeth Marino, three great-granddaughters and many dear friends.

David was the head of the organ department at the Eastman School of Music for 37 years and also served

as organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church for 48 years. Renowned organist, teacher and servant of God, he touched many lives with his music. Kind and devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend, he filled our lives with joy and deepest love. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He served on the Mary Pappert School of Music faculty for the past 15 years and received an honorary doctorate degree from Duquesne in 2005.