

SFAGO Special Projects Committee Season Summary **By Douglas Franks, Outgoing SPC Chair**

The 2014–2015 season has been a productive one for the Special Projects Committee. This article will attempt to touch on the highlights of our work.

Last summer, we welcomed two new members to the committee, Lenore Alford and Donald Mulliken, both of whom have helped see us through our annual quota of three funding cycles. Sadly, we say goodbye to Rod Gehrke who has served as an able Secretary of the committee for the past two years and has been a valuable contributor to our deliberations every step of the way. We are pleased that Katya Kolesnikova will be continuing her term on the committee for another year. Having served as SPC Chair for four years and two years before that as an SPC committee member, I am cycling off the committee along with Rod. We welcome two newly elected members onto the committee, Helen Pereira and Jerome Lenk.

I would again like to thank SFAGO chapter members who made special donations to the Special Projects Fund when they renewed their membership dues last spring. We urge members to do likewise when they renew their membership through ONCARD this summer. Such financial support is still greatly needed. All gifts will go directly towards funding worthy organ-related projects approved by our committee.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out again to Mr. Oscar Burdick who generously donated to the Special Projects Fund on behalf of his wife Dora's estate. His gifts have been a tremendous boost to our grant-giving capacity.

We've continued to keep SPC work visible to members by running newsletter articles describing projects supported by our grant awards. Our committee ran a quarter-page display ad in the program book for the AGO 2015 West Region Convention in San Diego earlier this summer.

In our fall 2014 and winter/spring 2015 funding cycles we awarded a total of \$14,000 in grants. The eight grant recipients are:

San Diego AGO (\$1,000)—Two young persons' organ recitals at the 2015 AGO West Region Convention as part of "Youth Day." The grant covered transportation, housing, and an honorarium for these "exceptional young artists," Thomas Mellan and Susanna Valleau.

Evansville AGO/Indiana (\$1,500)—Payment towards an organ composition commission by Pulitzer-Prize winning composer William Bolcom, a significant work for organ and brass in honor of the 35-year teaching career of University of Evansville Organist Dr. Douglas Reed. The finished work was performed in April 2015 by Dr. Reed with the American Brass Quintet.

Indianapolis AGO (\$2,000)—The 2015 AGO Great Lakes Region Convention, used as needed to help Indianapolis AGO keep registration fees at an affordable level.

Ronald Ebrecht (\$2,000)—Translation and publication in English of original articles in French about organ pieces by Maurice Duruflé.

Gail Archer (\$1,500)—Recital early next year at a San Francisco Bay Area church focusing on women composers in order to bring these artists to the attention of a wider audience and in furtherance of the grantee’s advocacy for women composers and gender equality in our field.

Vic Ferrer (\$2,000)—Exhibit of the Exposition Organ (Austin Opus 500) mounted by the citizen's committee the grantee works with, Friends of the Exposition Organ, as part of the 100th anniversary of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco. This exhibit keeps the memory of the Exposition Organ alive by making historical memorabilia, the organ console, and an informative documentary accessible to the public for the duration of the 100th-anniversary celebration. This grant also represents support of the long-term goal of finding a permanent home for Austin Op. 500 so that it once again becomes a playable instrument. The organ and its story are an important piece of San Francisco's cultural heritage.

Randall Harlow (\$2,500)—"Organon Novus: Contemporary Organ Works by American Masters", a two-CD recording project of 20 pieces by 20 American composers, most of them previously unrecorded, including AGO commissions. The instrument Mr. Harlow will play for the recordings is a 1928 Skinner organ at the University of Chicago’s Rockefeller Chapel.

Patricia Van Ness (\$1,500)—New composition, based on a Psalm, for organ and “medium-ability” choir for concert or church use. Costs to be covered are composing, engraving, publishing, and posting.

There is nothing more satisfying than to be able to use our dedicated financial resources for the furtherance of a diverse stream of organ-related projects from around this vast country of ours that as a whole serve to enrich the life of our professional community. The Special Projects Committee looks forward to meeting next September when it will once again carry out that mission with gladness and discernment as it has done for over a quarter of a century.

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