

June 7, 2006

Greetings to all!

On behalf of Westfield and its Board of Trustees, I welcome you to this conference which celebrates the new Hellmuth Wolff organ at Christ Church Cathedral, and which also honors our dear friend and musical colleague, Harald Vogel.

The conference topic, "South/Central Influences on J.S. Bach" explores a topic of increasing interest. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, much of "Bach territory"---and the distinctive organs of Central Germany--- have become accessible by "the west". Advances in musical scholarship and organology have also increased our appreciation of the influences of Pachelbel, Frescobaldi, Kerll and others, in addition to the organ builders of central Germany. These new discoveries add to our appreciation of Bach's admiration of north German organists and instruments, where he spent formative years at the beginning of his career.

This conference is the final event of a year-long celebration of Hellmuth Wolff's new organ for the Cathedral. It is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual instrument---perfect for this conference topic. The organ also includes a number of stops modeled after those made by South/Central German builders. French-style reeds will make the case for Vogel's assertion of French influences on Central German organ music on Thursday night. The size of the organ will render Bach's plenum works with majesty and *gravitas*.

It is also a celebration of Harald Vogel, the German organist who has revolutionized keyboard performance standards and provided a wealth of information about organ building and construction. His influence is too great to list here (we had to write a book to cover that topic). I would note, however, that the reason Westfield exists is because two of Vogel's early students, Lynn Edwards Butler and Edward Pepe returned to the United States brimming with new ideas about music and instruments, and needed to found an organization to help disseminate it all. Twenty-five years later, we are still working on the same task.

Oh yes---the book. Our largest publication to date, *Orphei Organi Antiqui: Essays in Honor of Harald Vogel* will be announced at this conference and made available for the first time.

Reflecting the interests of Westfield's membership, this conference also includes recitals on harpsichord and fortepiano.

Conferences require the expertise, work and cooperation of many people. I would personally like to thank Tony Humphries for his extraordinary generosity and support; Michael Gormley for his gracious support and musical inspiration, Shirley Finley for the idea of a Westfield conference in the first place, Cleve Johnson for his tremendous gifts of time and talent in editing the Vogel *Festschrift*, Pamela Ruitter-Feenstra for chairing the publications committee that made the *Festschrift* possible, Bill Porter for a substantial gift to this conference, Bethany Moore for her expertise and support, and finally, the Dean and staff of the cathedral for their warm hospitality.

and assistance. But most of all, we must thank Harald Vogel and Hellmuth Wolff who have provided the *raison d'être* for this conference. I hope each of you enjoy this week of brilliant performances, stimulating lectures and collegial dialogue.

Sincerely,

Roger W. Sherman, Executive Director
Westfield