

CHRISTIAN LANE
Press Notices

MONTREAL (*Rendezvous-des-Grandes*) “Christian Lane’s programming, on the other side, demonstrated not only a presence of an overarching musical concept, but also willingness to adopt contemporary repertoire, something that distinguishes a visionary artist from the others. Lane began his part of the concert with *Gloucester Estampie* by Cooman (born in 1982), composed in 2010 and dedicated to Mr. Lane. Based on the form of the medieval *dance estampie*, this exciting and pleasant composition offered the organist a chance to demonstrate his capacity to pace the work’s development and his inventiveness of orchestration. After having accomplished both magnificently, Lane changed the style drastically with Ducasse’s *Pastorelle*, a work of big contrast and technical diversity. Vierne’s *Carillon de Westminster* exemplified a type of unfolding based on repetitive motifs, similar to Cooman’s. Placing the two works around Ducasse’s as well as the variety of stops that Lane used to pair them, demonstrated the historical connection of certain types of instrumental techniques and reflected the interpreter’s profound understanding of repertoire.”

The Bulletin (newsletter of the RCCO Montreal Centre), December 2012

MONTREAL (Canadian International Organ Competition) “To win the competition requires musicality, coordination, dexterity, virtuosity and good programming in order to navigate the 92 stops, 122 ranks and 7,000 pipes of the Notre Dame Basilica Casavant organ and produce a rich palette and dynamic range of sound.

“The \$25,000 first-prize winner, American Christian Lane, assistant university organist at Harvard, demonstrated exactly that, with a varied repertoire that made full use of the spectrum of possible sound.”

Montreal Gazette, October 2011

CAMBRIDGE (Recital in Memorial Church, Harvard) “In this, the second recital [on Harvard’s new Skinner organ], Christian Lane went a long way — maybe too far for some — in his bid for voicing the instrument’s colors ... In *Imperial March* of Sir Edward Elgar, Christian Lane, a student of Thomas Murray, found registration similar to that of his teacher, and right off at the beginning of the recital, an array of principals and reeds filled the small space. The crescendo-diminuendo of ‘Nimrod’ from *Enigma Variations* under Lane illustrated even better the range of volume this Skinner can attain. Certainly, Opus 793 plays well in Appleton Chapel when it comes to softness and loudness.

“Lane displayed the purity of the Skinner flutes in the opening of the “Scherzo” from *Suite pour orgue* of Jehan Alain as well as in the fugue from the *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major, BWV 564* of Johann Sebastian Bach. Lane had more than a workout in the toccata creating calls and responses with quick, frequent, if not unusual, changes in registration. He gave his fluty fugue a loud quick crack of reeds from the Skinner in a showy moment that brought some giggles. Never mind that, though, the Skinner was on display and Lane was doing a formidable job of proving, for the time being, that this instrument is a ‘lovely, lovely’ one.”

The Boston Musical Intelligencer, February 2011

CAMBRIDGE (John Stainer's *The Crucifixion*) "It almost goes without saying, so we will say it, that the [Harvard University Choir] and Jones's leadership were impeccable. So too was the finely varied playing of Christian Lane on the restored Skinner organ of Appleton Chapel. Stainer was careful to specify most of the registrations right in the score ... but Lane threw in a few nice touches of his own, including some 'harpeggios' at the end of No. 18."

The Boston Musical Intelligencer, April 2011

CAMBRIDGE (Fisk organ Op. 46 farewell recital) "Understanding the organ's compromised existence in the context of the original great musical expectations for it in 1967 appeared to be a theme of Monday night's concert, given by Christian Lane, Assistant University Organist and Choirmaster.

"Charles Fisk himself pronounced this particular instrument "high-strung," and as one who has both played on and listened to the organ for many years, I can attest that a full-length program can be demanding for player and listener alike. But from the first notes of the Buxtehude *Praeludium in G minor*, BuxWV 149, we knew we were in good hands: Lane's confident, plangent and rhythmic playing was matched to a keen and thoughtful sense of registration. Throughout the evening for that matter, Lane made the organ sound as ingratiating and musical as anyone I have heard play it.

"The far-ranging program was carefully chosen to honor those who had played in the first several dedication years, and it was delightful for this listener to recall the likes of E. Power Biggs, John Ferris, and Anton Heiller. Bach's estimable *Passacaglia in C minor* was an early highlight, and if it seemed slightly restrained in rhythmic drive, the color of each variation and imaginative registration prevailed convincingly. It should also be mentioned that having a video screen which allows the audience to see the console and player makes a qualitative difference in the communicative union of listening and watching.

"The Memorial Church's composer-in-residence Carson Cooman's *Gloucester Estampie* received its world premiere, to brilliant and engaging effect. Renaissance dance seemed to be the core of this rhythmic romp, with a dash of French toccata here, a dollop of Irish gig there. It might have gone on a minute or two too long, but who cared? This was a clever foil to the piece that preceded it, Daniel Pinkham's 1968 commission, *A Prophecy*, which combined probing gesture and acerbic harmony. Again, Lane's handling of each piece was assured and convincing.

"Although colorful and ingenious registration characterized the whole concert, Lane seemed to take particular delight in the evening's concluding works. Robert Schumann's *Canon in B minor*, originally written for pedal-piano, had the most curious registration of the evening and an unusual rubato, but it worked. Kenneth Leighton's searching take on the hymn tune "Rockingham" was poignant; and, especially, Sir George Shearing's puckish "I Love Thee, My Lord" frolicked enticingly through mutations, reeds, and even the sparkling cymbelstern bells. And although I had doubts before hearing the *Prelude et Danse Fuguée* by French composer Gaston Litaize, Lane's registration was so clear and brilliant, as was his handling of the rhythmic and structural challenges of this work, that it sounded as though it had been written especially for the Harvard organ. John Knowles Paine's *Variations on 'The Star Spangled Banner'* was treated in a manner that made the piece sound frankly better than it is, but which turned out to be a stirring and appropriate close not only to Christian Lane's splendid program, but to the brilliantly-conceived series of farewell concerts.

"As this organ leaves for Texas, we look forward to a bright future for it there and a new chapter in the musical life of the Memorial Church with its old Skinner and new Fisk instruments. In the splendid hands of Christian Lane ... any instrument promises to sound glorious."

The Boston Musical Intelligencer, May 2010

CAMBRIDGE (Fisk organ Op. 46 farewell recital) “Playing the final 7:30 p.m. recital was Christian Lane, an Eastman School-trained rising star in the organ world. He has been Harvard’s assistant University organist and choirmaster since 2008.

“The audience watched Lane — playing alone in the chapel — on a video screen. It offered a side view of the performer, who wore a conservative dark suit. He played the keys with demonstrative flourish, and his feet glided over the pedals like a dancer. The 10-piece program included work by Schumann and Shearing, as well as the world premiere of *Gloucester Estampie* by Carson Cooman ’04, composer-in-residence in the Memorial Church.

“Fittingly, the last piece in the program was composed by John Knowles Paine (1839-1906), Harvard’s first professor of music and the University’s first organist and choirmaster. *Concert Variations on ‘The Star Spangled Banner,’ Op. 4* ranged from the straight to the playful to the mournful. But the final variation was grand, full, and uplifting, like the occasion itself. After the final lingering note, at 9:02 p.m., there was a two-minute standing ovation.

“At the back of the crowded church, someone said, ‘The audience always has the last word.’”

Harvard Gazette, May 2010

LOS ANGELES (2004 National Young Artists Competition at the AGO National Convention)

“One of three finalists to compete in the National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance, Lane, a student at the Eastman School of Music, gave the only playing of the required Roger-Ducasse Pastorale to realize both its delicacy and forward sweep. With no lack of virtuosity in the culminating mid-section “storm” music, Lane also limned the delicate contrapuntal writing in this unique organ work from the French composer.”

The Diapason, February 2005

PHILADELPHIA (2002 AGO National Convention) “Mr. Lane’s program was well suited to both the occasion and to the organ. He played with the assurance and ease one would expect of a major competition winner, and he seemed at home with the complexities of the large organ.”

The American Organist, October 2002

BETHLEHEM, PA (2001 AGO Region III Convention) “... Lane showed driving energy and mature interpretation of his entire program.”

The American Organist, October 2001

RECORDING REVIEWS

Christian Lane, Casavant Organ, Église des Saints-Anges Gardiens, Lachine, Quebec ATMA Classique ACD2 2674

“Christian Lane, recently elected as Councillor for Competitions and New Music for the AGO, is associate university organist and choirmaster at Harvard University. As the second winner of the Canadian International Organ Competition, Lane has recorded a stunning program that showcases a noble Canadian organ and Lane’s extraordinary musicianship. The program of 19th- and 20th-century repertoire was carefully chosen to highlight the Casavant’s many beautiful and heroic timbres. Its dark, rich, yet clear sounds are an ideal match for the repertoire. Each work flows naturally into the next, a real lesson in recital programming. Lane chose complementary works representing English, German, and French traditions. Elgar’s majestic *Imperial March* contrasts nicely with Whitlock’s charming, poetic *Folk Tune and Allegretto*. Schumann’s restrained, Bach-inspired *Canon in A-flat* is paired with Liszt’s dramatic, emotional *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, which is based on a Bach theme. France is represented by three composers demonstrating a multifaceted array of expressions: Roger-Ducasse (*Pastorale*), Dupré (*Prelude and Fugue in B*), and Vierne (*Clair de Lune* and *Carillon de Westminster*). Christian Lane is a true artist whose gratifying musical maturity is demonstrated through playing that is suave, elegant, and exciting. His technical brilliance is balanced by his equally brilliant sense of pacing, phrasing, and sensitive expression. His unhurried approach penetrates the depths of the music, yielding interpretations that are wonderfully communicative. These are performances of a true winner.”

The American Organist, November 2012

“The young American Christian Lane’s debut solo recording comes hot on the heels of his success at last year’s Canadian International Organ Competition. ... Lane shows himself equally sensitive in the militaristic bombast of Elgar’s *Imperial March* as to the bucolic poetry of Roger-Ducasse’s *Pastorale*, or the sonorous declamation of Liszt transcribing Bach.”

Choir and Organ Magazine, Sept/Oct 2012

“Still the success of this disk is not only its balance and freshness; what makes this CD so stunning is Lane’s intense, innate musicality. Phrasing, articulation and rhythmic élan are all spot on. There are certain phrases in Roger-Ducasse’s *Pastorale*, Schumann’s *Canon* and Whitlock’s *Folk Tune* which are so beautiful that they take the listener's breath away.”

“Lane’s performance of the transcription of Elgar’s *Imperial March* shows a real facility for registration and he creates a varied and mixed palate of colours that makes the listener feel as if they are hearing ‘orchestration’ and not registration.”

“I recommend this CD with extreme and unqualified enthusiasm! If Christian Lane is an example of the future of our instrument, not only will he bring new converts to it, but the panache, vitality and joy with which he plays may just show people how musical the instrument truly is capable of being! Bravo!!!”

Organ Canada, Sept 2012