

Organ listening – wherever you are

The day job has involved a lot of essay marking recently, and when Radio 3 lets me down for background listening, I have been streaming internet radio from the States, where they have several free radio stations devoted solely to organ music.

Pipedreams <http://pipedreams.publicradio.org> is probably the best known of these, and even if we can only listen to the archives, not the live programmes, outside of the USA, there are hundreds of hours of online listening, with detailed programme notes and links galore, featuring pipe organs from all over the world.

Pipedreams presenter Michael Barone will be over this side of the pond next year, for the 28th London Organ Day next March. Subtitled *Stars and Stripes*, the event will explore American organ culture on the new Richards Fowkes & Co organ at St George's, Hanover Square – which is, of course, a US built instrument, the first American organ to be commissioned in a London church.

In a recent *Organists' Review*, you may have seen the interviews with British organists working in the States. Several of them mention the great can-do attitude of Americans, especially when it comes to fundraising. Non-profit US organisation The Organ Media Foundation fundraises once a year in April to support internet radio site <http://www.organlive.com/>, which was set up to make sure the organ is heard over new media as well as the old.

You're not quite sure who or what is coming up, but that's part of the fun. For each broadcast performance there are lots of links to play with – organist pic and biog, public domain sheet music, and links to Amazon to buy the CD or mp3. You can visit the OHS Pipe Organ Database (the equivalent of our NPOR) to see the organ specs. And (I love this!) you can click through to Google Earth, to see the building where the organ is being played.

You sometimes have to refresh the *listening now* page manually to make sure the info correlates with what you're hearing (they're working on it) and it took a while to get it to play on my computer here in the UK, but that was probably the fault of my browser setup (there is a choice of 5 player formats and 3 bit rates for Europe – just keep clicking until one works).

Organlive plays organ music from all periods – the sister station *Positively Baroque* (www.positivelybaroque.com) plays only organ music of the baroque (the *playing now/coming up* function is much slicker here).

During this year's fundraising, The Organ Media Foundation apologised for a rise in the estimated budget for the forthcoming year to just under \$6,000 – to cover web hosting, royalties and licensing, server and network hardware, library additions, and voiceover talent, for both stations. Sounds like a bargain to me. We should be doing something like this.

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