



From the Director's Desk

Remembering J. Irwin Miller

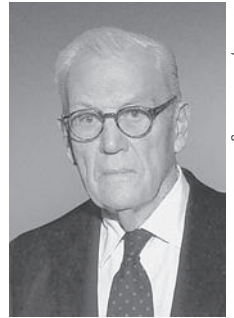
Martin D. Jean

At long last, the leaves here in Connecticut have changed their color and fallen and the weather has turned from a balmy 65 degrees to temperatures hovering around freezing. Fall is coming to a close and winter is approaching.

Such are the changes of season that cause one to reflect. Time lends rhythm to our lives, in much the same way that a meter orders a piece of music. Certain “beats” propel us forward, while others make for points of repose.

The Institute has recently passed its 30th anniversary, it has seen growth in recent years that is unprecedented in most academic programs, and it has a new administration. All these seem good reasons for the Provost’s office to ask us, as an Institute, to pause and reflect on our work and mission. And so we have begun a series of conversations that will lead to a self-study. I suppose that some seasoned academics sigh impatiently at such a project, thinking it not a good use of time, but I am just naïve enough to welcome the conversation. Talking about the Institute and all its potential is enough to keep me going for a long time! I am grateful to my colleagues for their willingness to participate in this “seventh-inning stretch.”

As chance would have it, I was reviewing old ISM files this summer and came across a memo from Mr. Miller (*right*), who, with his sister, Clementine Tangeman, gave the initial gift which founded the Institute. This memo dates from November of 1972, before the ISM indenture was drawn up and any agreement with Yale University was signed. I believe it encapsulates wonderfully and succinctly the core idea of the ISM. As I am learning all over again, Mr. Miller’s words have a timeless quality about them that will continue to guide our work through the coming years.



Courtesy Irwin Management Co.

To Robert Baker, who was to become the first director of the Institute, and to Philip Nelson and Colin Williams, Deans of Music and Divinity, respectively. Mr. Miller set forth two general expressions in the form of an outline:

- i. The dilemma of twin desires of
 - a. Integration: Into the life of the Music School, YDS, Yale College and the full resources of same plus [the schools of] Drama, Art, Architecture and
 - b. Integrity of this venture so that it has a life, character, and purpose of its own.

Neither of these desires has priority over the other. Unless they are achieved simultaneously and fully, the new venture will be less than it could be.

Notes on the Staff

Martin D. Jean

I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Andrea Hart** as the new Business Manager of the Institute of Sacred Music. Andrea is a Certified Public Accountant who brings to the ISM a wealth of business and administrative experience, most recently at the Department of Pathology at Yale's School of Medicine where she has been Associate Administrator since 2002 in charge of all fiscal matters. In this position, she worked with a large faculty department and supervised a number of accounting staff. Before this, she held positions at Farm Credit Financial Partners, Bristol Hospital, and Price Waterhouse Coopers. She also enjoys biking, aviation, and ballroom dancing. She is a Sunday school teacher at her church, and is a Reiki practitioner. Andrea will begin her work with us officially January 2, though she will start coming to some meetings and getting to know our enterprise in small ways throughout December.

I am particularly grateful to **Louise Johnson** who has held on with us since announcing her need to resign in June. For the time being, she is looking forward to being a full-time stay-at-home mother raising her three young sons. Louise has been with the ISM since 2002 when she began work as a casual worker, then as Acting Business Manager, and finally, as Business Manager since July, 2004. During that time she has learned nearly every corner of our operation. She kept the Institute's books in excellent order, and we will always be thankful for the skillful way she worked with Tam Rankin in arranging our study trip to Sweden in 2004. Louise has agreed to remain on to help orient Andrea to her new job. After that transition is complete, Louise will continue to help us out in other ways on a consultant basis.

The faculty joins me in thanking Louise Johnson for her unfailing service to the ISM, and in welcoming our new colleague, Andrea Hart.

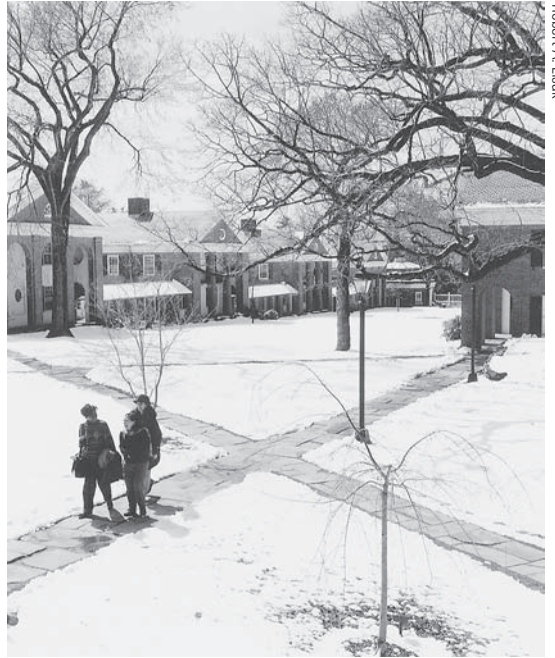
In October, we welcomed another new staff member, **Lynda Paul**, who joined us as Special Projects Assistant and Choral/Vocal Music Librarian, replacing **John Hartmann**, who left in September to become an ISM student.

Lynda received her Master's degree in June of 2005 from the University of Chicago in Music History, Literature, and Performance Studies. She also has two bachelor's degrees: one magna cum laude from the University of Rochester in English with a minor in Brain and Cognitive Sciences, and a bachelor of music cum laude from Eastman School of Music with a concentration in musicology and a certificate in world music. In her spare time she sings with the Yale Collegium Musicum. We welcome Lynda Paul, and extend best wishes to John Hartmann in his career as an ISM student.

2. A fundamental recognition that words are only one means used by man to communicate his thoughts and feelings. Christian concepts transcend man and all his little tools. So he needs to use and exploit to the full *every* sense if he is to come close to getting a handle on Christianity. The arts are therefore not an ornament – but an absolute *necessity* to the Christian experience.

This year we remember with special thanksgiving the legacy of J. Irwin Miller, and we will be sharing more of his words with you in coming issues of *Prism*.

May this holy season be filled with blessing and joy for you, and may you find the time and peace to make your own reflections as you receive the gift of a New Year.



Robert A. Lisak

Prism is published ten times a year by the Yale Institute of Sacred Music

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Improvisation – The Art of Illusion

Jeffrey Brillhart

What is improvisation? What is involved in the improviser's art?

Simply put, improvisation is the art of making up something on the spot. Whether in the art studio, on the dance floor, the jazz club, the practice room, the garden, the kitchen, or in the midst of conversation, improvisation permeates daily life. One has only to spend a few minutes watching children at play to remember that we began life as natural improvisers. Or, take a moment to reflect on what happens when you hear a lively piece of music. The natural response is to tap your foot. In that simple, natural act, you are improvising.

The *Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines improvisation as “the art of performing music spontaneously without the aid of manuscript, sketches, or memory.” Improvisation is thought by others to be “composition-in-performance.” Arnold Schoenberg wrote that “composing is a slowed-down improvisation; often one cannot write fast enough to keep up with the stream of ideas.” Jazz great Dizzy Gillespie wrote that “Improvisation is a gathering together of all the evidence of how to resolve going from here to here to here.” Perhaps that’s an overly simple explanation of the improviser’s art, but in essence, “going from here to here to here” is at the heart of improvisation.

I believe that, at its best, improvisation can give the *illusion* of being a composed work, with well-crafted melodies, supportive harmonies, and a coherent structure. I view the act of improvising as an unleashing of one’s inner musical self, which can lead to the harnessing of one’s inner spiritual force. When one is improvising well, one is immersed in the liberating act of creation. And, when everything goes well in improvisation, few musical experiences can equal the exhilaration.

What is involved in the improviser’s art? Can one learn to improvise? The answer to this is a qualified “yes.” In his recent book, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, Stephen Nachmanovitch says, “the fruits of improvising may flower spontaneously, but it [improvisation] arises from soil that we have prepared, fertilized, and tended in the faith that it will ripen in nature’s own time.” To be sure, some musicians seem born to the art; improvising just comes more easily to them. Yet, with enough self-motivation, enough discipline and study, and with a willing and open attitude, I believe anyone can experience the art of improvisation and do so in an authentic and musical way.

So how *does* one learn to improvise?

My training was in the French tradition; I studied in Paris with French improvisers Olivier Latry and Philippe Lefebvre, both of whom serve as organists at Notre Dame Cathedral. Their approach was primarily through 20th century French harmonic practices, particularly as approached by composers Olivier Messiaen, Jean Langlais, and Jehan Alain. They were especially concerned with issues of color, dissonance, and musical atmosphere.



Robert A. Lisek

My own teaching of improvisation has evolved into a process that begins with analysis of the melody... the theme. What is its character? What is its structure? How does it want to be supported, harmonically? What are its rhythmic qualities? And, in the case of improvisations on submitted themes, one often has to ask, what is missing from the theme in order to create a successful improvisation?

Once the theme is analyzed, we begin the process of supporting that theme through harmony, form, registration, and counterpoint. I prefer to begin the improvisation process through liberating the student from conventional harmonic practices. The beginning improviser is generally trapped into supporting a given theme with the most basic of harmonic ideas, most of which come from the organist’s hymn playing background.

I begin by imposing a variety of restrictive harmonic ideas on the student. For example, we might commence by placing the theme in the right hand, harmonized with 5ths placed in the left hand. A second step might be harmonizing that theme with 4ths in the left hand. A third step might be to place only a major 6/3 chord beneath the theme.

From the earliest stages of learning to improvise, we begin to combine these ideas. For example, an exercise might entail placing a major 6/3 chord below each note of the melody and in the left hand, playing 5ths. At this stage of development the student’s “ears” begin to open and interesting sonorities are created, often to the astonishment of the student. Thus we’re slowly building a variety of harmonic treatments for the accompaniment of the theme and developing a harmonic *facility* that can be used freely by the student over the course of an improvisation.

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Reflections from a Visiting Professor

Melva Wilson Costen



Time passes much too quickly when the surroundings are collegial, the academic prowess of students commendable, and the worship life of the community is consistently fulfilling. Such an environment is the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and Divinity School

from the perspective of one who has spent an extended portion of her life in one theological environment – and now teaching at another. Perhaps the excitement engendered by the faculty, administrators, staff, and students at the beginning of the academic year helps to set the momentum for the incorporation of new persons into the total life of the community. As one also very much concerned about “rites and rituals of incorporation,” it was important for me to seek and find opportunities to be assured that *all* are “welcomed at the table,” and that *all* can *feel* the warmth of this special community. This was a relatively easy task because of the frequency of gatherings – most often around tables laden with a variety of delicious food!!

Amidst and beyond any communal gathering is evidence of the major reason that Yale has earned and maintained its reputation. We are here to engage in a quality of life surrounded by – or immersed in – academic excellence! I can hardly wait for classes to meet in order to experience again and again the individual and corporate eagerness of students who are *ready*, extremely *capable*, and *anxious* to accept with appreciation the probing of subject matter at the depth that I require of graduate students. Invariably, students are able to uncover additional areas of concern, and therefore raise questions that extend a portion of the assignment to resources that they did not know existed. As a servant called to the teaching ministry, it is a privilege to engage Yale students in the research, writing, and ultimately publishing process.

I am also grateful for opportunities to worship at Yale as a “participant–recipient” worshiper, which grants me the freedom of being an active participant without serving as leader and constant chorus director! What a wonderful vantage point from which to encounter the Almighty and to reflect while in the designated worship space! Having served in a more active leadership capacity for many, many years at Interdenominational Theological Center, this “transitional time” has taught me how to graciously release certain roles without fear of losing touch with the liturgical community. I can also attest to the importance of the daily Chapel structure as a model for other

theological seminaries. Yale is to be commended for the use of global music and liturgical texts, especially as the global village continues to move into local neighborhoods.

To the community at Sterling Divinity Quadrangle, I can only wish that your blessings may continually abound, as you bless others through graduates in the various ministries encouraged at Yale.

MELVA WILSON COSTEN has been Visiting Professor of Liturgical Studies during the fall semester.

Nuestra Fiesta



On October 27, the Institute held a reception for the artist J. Michael Walker, whose exhibition *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: J. Michael Walker's Life with the Virgin and Saints* was on display with support from Yale Divinity School. The

exhibition was one of the most popular ever, and a group of students from a nearby middle school made a field trip to visit. Mariachi music was provided by Fiesta del Norte.



Photos by Will Cowen

Great Organ Music at Yale

Kendall Crilly, Organ

January 15, 8 pm

Battell Chapel

This season's Great Organ Music at Yale series will continue in 2006 with a recital on Sunday, January 15 at 8 pm in Battell Chapel by Kendall Crilly. The program will include music of Seth Bingham, Sebastián Zubieta, Charles Krigbaum, Suzanne Farrin, Samuel Barber, Yevgeniy Sharlat, Richard Boursy, and Robert Manthey, many of whom have Yale connections.

Kendall Crilly is the director of the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale, a position that he has held since 1994. In his dual roles as librarian and instructor in the Yale School of Music, he oversees all aspects of the collecting and programming initiatives of the library, and he leads classes in the fields of music history and bibliography. Building on his early training as an organist -- his teachers have included Carl Staplin, Peter Hurford, Charles Krigbaum, and Thomas Murray -- he also serves as Co-Director of Music at the First Church of Christ in New Haven, the historic Center Church



on the Green. In the tradition of a former organist at Center Church, Charles Ives, Professor Crilly is an advocate for new organ music, and he has given the first performances of numerous works for the instrument. He last performed on the Great Organ Music at Yale series in 2001 as part of the program commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Holtkamp organ in Battell Chapel.

IMPROVISATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

This ensures that the student will harmonize a melody in creative ways and at the same time begins to expand the student's ability to listen. Students begin to develop their own musical improvisatory voice. My hope is that each student will come up with a new idea each day of the year. And with every new idea comes confidence. Improvisation ceases to be a nerve-wracking experience and becomes a liberating act of creation.

Aside from sheer nerve and an ability to keep cool in the heat of the moment, improvisers must develop the ability to listen deeply or to "actively listen" as they are playing. As active listening takes place, the improviser is memorizing the theme and its variants, memorizing an interesting harmonic or rhythmic idea that unfolded because of the theme, memorizing the key centers traveled through in the course of the improvisation. Perhaps this is better thought of as "total recall." One must develop the ability to totally recall everything that has happened in the course of the improvisation. With this total recall comes the possibility of balance in the improvisation.

So, the study of improvisation begins with the theme. Everything else -- harmony, form, counterpoint, registration -- flows from that. Second-year student John-Eric Gunderson put it this way: "Improvisation is learning the 'building blocks' of creativity. Awareness of mind and body is important as it dictates music. You reap what

you sow; in other words, practice is the only way to perfect improvisation."

New Haven residents will have the opportunity to witness the "illusionist's art" on December 13 at 3:30 p.m. when students will improvise a concert on submitted themes in Dwight Chapel. All students will be given the theme one day in advance but with limited time at the keyboard to work out their plan. The most advanced students will also be given a theme at the time of the concert. This "on the spot" improvisation is one of the most thrilling experiences an audience can have (and, it must be said, one of the most nerve-wracking for the performer)! Come and listen!

JEFFREY BRILLHART
*is Lecturer in
Improvisation at Yale
Institute of Sacred
Music and Yale School
of Music.*



PLACEMENT LISTINGS

CONNECTICUT

St. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BRIDGEPORT

St. John's Episcopal currently has openings for professional section leaders (soprano, alto/counter-tenor, tenor, and bass) for its choir. These positions involve Sunday mornings only (rehearsal at 8:15am followed by one service from 10:00am-11:15am); there are no mid-week rehearsals. Repertoire includes anthems, motets, and masses from all periods. Excellent sight reading skills and the ability to sing straight-tone are required. For further information, please contact Tom Brand, Organist & Choirmaster, at music@saintjohnbridgeport.org or (203) 335-2528.

St. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH, GALES FERRY

Organist/Choir Director. For both Sunday services and seasonal services (i.e. Lessons & Carols, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, etc.) The candidate must have proficient organ skills, experience directing vocal choirs and the ability to work as a member of the music team. This position reports to the Director of Music and has potential for expansion. For more information, e-mail terri@stluke.info. Interested parties should send resume including three references to Terri Meyer, Director of Music, St. Luke Lutheran Church, 1830 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT 06335.

OUT OF STATE

MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, CHARLOTTE, NC

Minister of Music. An ecumenical and progressive American Baptist congregation in Charlotte, NC, with a rich tradition in historical/liturgical music and worship, seeks a superb choral musician with ability to coordinate a church-wide, age-graded music program. Creativity and passion in uniting music and worship toward the spiritual and educational enrichment of an 1800-member congregation is desired. Appropriate degrees and experience required. Resume with reference list to Dr. Stephen Shoemaker, Myers Park Baptist Church, P.O. Box 6006, Charlotte, NC 28207; email: sshoemaker@mpbconline.org; fax 704-372-5150. Website: mpbconline.org.

NASSAU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PRINCETON, NJ

Director of Music (full-time), to begin summer, 2006. Responsibilities include conducting, leading, developing and administering an extensive program of vocal and handbell ensembles. The successful applicant will have a minimum seven years' experience as vocational church musician, and will be a collegial member of the church staff. The candidate must have earned a graduate degree (or equivalent) in music, and possess strong conducting, keyboard and vocal skills, including competence as an organist. The candidate must demonstrate theological grounding that supports and stretches the boundaries of Reformed worship. Deadline for applications is January 31, 2006. For complete application information, visit www.nassauchurch.org/music. Nassau Presbyterian Church is an equal opportunity employer.

WYOMING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MILLBURN, NJ

Organist / Director of Music. Responsibilities include: Develop a comprehensive music ministry leveraging and evolving the current musical assets; Maintain the "health" of core musical groups through active recruitment, retention, inclusion and fellowship; Supervise the Assistant Director for Children's Music; Provide musical accompaniment for regular worship services each Sunday and special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and additional services on Easter and Christmas Eve, as appointed by session; Oversee the maintenance of the church's organ, pianos, bells and other items related to the music ministry. Contact Eric Spurrier, Wyoming Presbyterian Church, 432 Wyoming Ave, Millburn, NJ, 07041. Email: eric.spurrier@verizon.net

ALUMNI — SEND YOUR NEWS!

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www.yale.edu/ism/alumni/newsform.htm

CORRECTION:

There was a transcription error in the printing of the hymn words by Jeffery Rowthorn in the last issue of *Prism*. The corrected version is reprinted in its entirety on page 7.

In grateful remembrance of Dr. Robert S. Baker,
first Director of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music

A hymn sung for the first time on October 10, 2005
in Woolsey Hall, Yale University

AT THE DAWNING OF CREATION

Tune: UNION SEMINARY (8787447)
Harold Friedell, 1957, adapted by Jet Turner, 1967

- (Choir) 1. At the dawning of creation
 stars and angels sang for joy;
 earth and sky in adoration
 all of time for praise employ,
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 as God's wonders they deploy.
- (All) 2. In the shaping of each nation
 music clothes a people's dream;
 when they long for liberation
 songs of hope become their theme.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Praise to God, our hope supreme.
- (All) 3. In the Gospel's proclamation
 falt'ring words can ne'er suffice;
 singing songs of Christ's redemption,
 we are blessed in praying twice.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Praise his cross and sacrifice.
- (All) 4. In this institute of learning
 treasured be each mind and heart
 and, the Spirit's gifts discerning,
 God be thanked for ev'ry art.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Praise resounds and all have part.
- (Organ) (To honor Dr. Baker on this special occasion, a stanza without words is
 played at this point on the organ according to traditional alternatum practice,
 while the congregation silently meditates on the text of the hymn.)
- (All) 5. At the outset of life's journey
 music bids our faith take wing;
 at its closing hope and mem'ry
 point beyond to God our King.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 "Welcome home," the angels sing.

Jeffery Rowthorn — August 2005

Upcoming Exhibition: *Bread Upon the Waters*



Bread Upon the Waters, a traveling exhibition of Christians in the Visual Arts, will be on display at the Institute of Sacred Music from January 26 – February 22.

Jurors for the collection were Tim High, Associate Professor of Studio Art at the University of Texas at Austin, and Curator - Director of the Visual Arts Ministry of the First Evangelical Free Church of Austin; and Katherine Brimberry, co-founder, co-director and Master Printer of Flatbed Press and Gallery. Of the exhibition, they write:

In an age where acts of unselfish love, service, and generosity are critically in short supply, the Christian artist should consider the unique singularity of works created from the abundant overflow of a pure and thankful heart, embracing the viewer with a spirit of grace, compassion, and understanding. In this way we are able, in some measure, to identify with the heart of Christ as he wept, bled, and died for billions of helplessly confused souls stranded in this vast, pervasive darkness. In our view, at the heart of various distinguishing qualities which should

be expressly evident in contemporary Christian art, is a generosity - winsomely imaginative, rich in diversity, yet economical in the poignancy of image and the significance of its content. In all of the possible forms, contemporary Christian art should reflect the profound differences Christ generously wrought in each of us - whose names are written in blood in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The prints and drawings diversely represent contemplative outpourings of a wide range of subjects, styles, and vocabularies, a fact expressive of the vast multi-national community of artists comprising CIVA today. Allow yourself to be visually and conceptually transported, touchstone-to-touchstone, as you glimpse the unfolding of the rich historical tapestry of Christendom, the deep valleys and mountain tops of human emotion, the tear between flesh and Spirit created by sin, a rift being made whole again ever since the Word first became flesh - the Body of Christ - his new creations.

The exhibition is open weekdays 9 to 4, and is presented with support from Yale Divinity School.



Photos courtesy CIVA



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