Gehrke Index

+ Acknowledgement +

Special thanks are do Robert J. Kerman and Rodney Gehrke for pulling together these materials and getting them organized. They may be contacted for further information—

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Biography



Hugo Gehrke (1912-1992)

Throughout the twentieth century, Lutheran church music in the United States advanced as a result of the efforts of clergy, parish musicians, and college professors who, steeped in the Lutheran liturgical tradition, conveyed to their students the heritage of composition, performance, and singing in the Lutheran Church. In many

instances, these hard-working visionaries, teaching hundreds of students collectively, had been raised and trained within the Lutheran educational system themselves. These schools may have been "parochial" in orientation, but they imparted solid academic and performance skills to generations of church workers. Hugo Johannes Gehrke exemplified both the ideal Lutheran student—a product of Lutheran schools until graduate school—and the Lutheran college professor, having served much of his career in two Lutheran colleges.

Hugo Gehrke was born on 20 March, 1912, in Mayville, Wisconsin, to Otto and Marie Gehrke, Otto a publisher who had purchased the town paper in 1907 and who had endeavored to involve his children in the printing business, a venture which Hugo had resisted.iii Music was integral to the Gehrke household, Otto singing bass in the church choir, occasionally venturing into "singing operatic excerpts," while Marie Gehrke played piano and just generally appreciated fine music. iv Although Hugo Gehrke would later recall that his early musical training was admittedly minimal, he studied organ occasionally in Maysville at the with local organist Otto Gersmehl, who was also his teacher for eight years at the Lutheran elementary school. Gehrke nurtured a furtive desire to learn theatre organ, imagining himself playing a Mighty Wurlitzer to accompany a silent film, admitting late in life that he would still ". . .enjoy hearing one of those beautiful Wurlitzers, and even playing on 'em." (This notion likely receded with the advent of talkies in 1929.) Enrolling in Concordia Teachers' College (now Concordia University) in Chicago afforded him new opportunities,

studying organ with Andrew Gaertner and Martin Lochner, music professor at CTC for 32 years and musician at neighboring Grace Lutheran Church, whose EM Skinner organ, and Lochner's deft handling of it, inspired Gehrke to acknowledge that his ". . . greatest moments at CTC. . . revolved around the new Grace Church. [Lochner] did such a good job with the new Skinner organ and choir." Gehrke likewise played tenor saxophone in the college band, graduating with his associates' degree in 1932. vii

His first call was to Concordia Lutheran Church in Chicago, where he taught third, fourth, and fifth grades and where Paul Manz, seven years Gehrke's junior, would attend, engrossed with Gehrke's masterful organ playing.viii In 1939, he was called to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, upon Arthur Stellhorn's death, whose "... choirs of well trained youthful voices is said to be one of exceptional quality and it has come to be one of the outsanding musical groups of its type in Milwaukee." Gehrke would continue the choir's touring appearances and radio broadcasts throughout his twelve-year tenure at Immanuel. His duties at the church included playing organ, teaching fifth grade, and directing the other choirs. He further developed developed his singers as the Lutheran Acappella Choir of Milwaukee, as the ensemble came to be known, even singing twice with the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Frederick Stock.xi His time at Immanuel was marked by significant personal milestones, including his marriage to Stellhorn's daughter, Selda, "... a glorious soprano and excellent violinist and recorderist." He finished his bachelor's degree at Northwestern University in 1943, earning his master's degree



Hugo Gehrke and the Milwaukee Lutheran Acappella Choir at Immanuel Lutheran in 1948. (Photo courtesy of Hal Rutz.)

In 1951, California Concordia College called him to establish a music department.^{xiii} Located in Oakland and established in 1906, the college, a six-year institution modeled after the German "Gymnasium" prototype, offered four years of high school with an additional two years of college instruction, all in a semi-classical, Latin-inspired format, not unlike other LCMS institutions of the time.^{xiv} Here he developed the choral program at the college as he had in the Milwaukee church, honing the ensembles' abilities through a rigorous rehearsal and touring schedule.

One reviewer noted that his choir of "... young people were extremely responsive to Gehrke's quiet commands and these commands were marked by a sense of drama and variety which gave a lot of punch to the program."^{xv} Gehrke taught for five summers at the Concordia Seminary St Louis Schola Cantorum, assisting Robert Bergt, and was

increasingly in demand to perform organ recitals and to teach church music workshops. *vi* In 1964, The Lutheran Hour Choir, directed by Carl Schalk, commissioned Gehrke to compose a setting of the Lord's Prayer for SATB choir, flute, oboe, strings, and organ. *vii* While at California Concordia College, as his children matured musically (three of whom were born in Milwaukee), the "Gehrke Family Concerts" were formed, featuring the family in various musical performances on organ, recorder, voice, and violin, playing around the San Francisco area. During these years, he was organist and choir director at Zion Lutheran, Piedmont. *viii*

As a result of his prominence as an organist, churches often sought his services as a consultant or designer when initiating a new pipe organ project, with most of such efforts concentrated in the Midwest or on the Pacific coast. A press notice for his dedication of the new Reuter organ at First Lutheran Church in Pasadena, CA, in 1966, tantalizingly refers to him as "... one of four outstanding designers for organ[s] in the Lutheran Church," although no mention is made of who the other three might be! Gehrke was one of the first proponents of neo-baroque organ building on the West Coast, and his influence was particularly notable in the LCMS. He designed the 24-rank Austin organ for California Concordia College in 1952, which, although utilizing electric key action, unmistakably exemplifies *Orgelbewegung* principles with tonal color provided through a vertical orientation of mutations, mixtures, and thin-scaled reeds, even lacking an 8 Principal:*xx

Great	Swell	Pedal
8' Gedeckt	8' Konzertflöte	16' Subbass
4' Prinzipal	8' Spitzgamba	8' Prinzipal
4' Rohrflöte	8' Gamba Celeste	8' Rohrflöte
2 2/3' Nasat	4' Spitzflöte	4' Choralbass
2' Waldflöte	2' Prinzipal	II Rauschquinte
1 3/5' Terz	1 1/3' Klein Nasat	16' Fagot
III-V Mixture	II Zimbel	8' Fagot
16' Fagot	8' Fagot	4' Fagot
Chimes	Tremulant	

In 1951, Gehrke developed the specification for the Aeolian-Skinner organ at St John's Lutheran Church in Forest Park, Illinois, which G. Donald Harrison would execute in the creation of Opus 1235, dedicated by Gehrke in 1954. This 54-rank instrument, although not nearly as neo-baroque as the California Concordia College organ, has a cornet on both the Great and the Swell, with independent mixtures on all manuals and pedal. A Schalmey was prepared-for, as was a Positiv with a Quinte and

Scharf.xxi Gehrke knew that most Lutheran churches were unable to afford an Aeolian-Skinner, so he often collaborated with the German builder Werner Bosch to design and build a number of mechanical action, neo-baroque organs on the West Coast. These instruments were particularly attractive due to the favorable exchange rate with West Germany at the time. Of the approximately twenty Bosch organs built between 1959 and the mid-1970s in California alone, seventeen were placed in Lutheran churches, including one mechanical action instrument for Concordia College in Oakland (1966)xxiii and a 28-stop instrument at nearby Our Redeemer Lutheran (1969).xxiii Gehrke's influence secured a number of Midwest installations as well, including a 35-rank instrument built under his direction for Concordia College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1964.xxiv



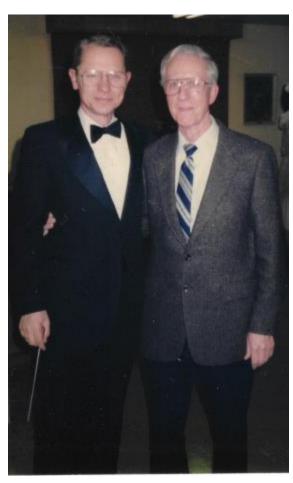
Hugo Gehrke, 1966.

Since his undergraduate days, Gehrke had fervently pursued further educational opportunities for himself, garnering an impressive, eclectic pedagogical lineage.

Perhaps satiating his latent desire to play theatre organ, he studied with acclaimed Hammond organist Porter Heaps, a student of Dupré, at Northwestern University, while he also coached with Frederick Marriott at the University of Chicago.** He studied with Leo Sowerby, the "Dean of American Church Music" at the American Conservatory

in Chicago, while masterclasses at the Methuen

Organ Academy afforded him the opportunity to coach with E. Power Biggs and Carl Weinrich. xxvi He ventured into vocal study at Milwaukee State Teachers College, piano pedagogy at San Francisco State University and Mills College, and performance



Tom Gieschen and Hugo Gehrke. (Photo courtesy of James Freese)

practice at Stanford University.xxvii His educational sojourns even took him to study choral conducting with F. Melius Christiansen at that iconic conductor's annual summer "Christiansen Choral Schools." xxviii He, Selda, and 16 year old son Rodney spent 1971 on sabbatical in Hereford, Germany, where they studied at the Westfaelischen Landeskirchenmusikschule, living in a home supplied by the Lutheran cathedral. Here Gehrke was assistant organist and accompanist to Arno Schoenstedt, his organ professor, and friends with with great

contralto, Frauke Haasemann. xxix In Gehrke's recollection, "It was a wonderful year of music making, visits with many dear people, trips to Holland, England, Austria, Switzerland, Bavaria, East Germany, and Denmark. Many organ factories were visited, and many organs tried out." Only a few months before their scheduled return,

California Concordia College announced its closure, corresponding to the subsequent establishment of a new Concordia to be built at Irvine. xxxi

Thus, in 1973, Hugo Gehrke was called to succeed Donald Busarow at Concordia College in Milwaukee, then a two-year institution, to teach music and to direct the choirs, as he had his entire career. He led the choir in annual spring tours, taught advanced organ and piano students, oversaw the service playing and curated the campus organs. During this time he served on the planning committees for Lutheran Book of Worship (1978) and Lutheran Worship (1982). He retired in 1983, moving back to California to be closer to his children. The recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, he was awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree in 1979 from Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, was presented the Spiritus Christi distinguished alumnus award by Concordia College, River Forest, and was made an honorary life member of the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Guild of Organists in 1983. In 1987, under the guidance of Kenneth Kosche, who had replaced Gehrke in 1978 as music department chair, Concordia University Wisconsin established the Hugo J. Gehrke Parish Music Endowment, benefitting promising sacred music students. xxxii He died on 15 February, 1992. xxxiii



Hugo Gehrke with Kenneth Kosche (L) and Bob Kaun (R) in 1980. (Photo courtesy of Kenneth Kosche.)

As a composer, the concerns of the parish organist greatly motivated Hugo Gerhke, and he produced organ chorale preludes, choral anthems, instrumental music, as well as descants intended for practical use. His several dozen organ choral preludes, many of which were published in *The Parish Organist* series by CPH, demonstrate a simple, neo-classical style which maintains a clear declamation of the *cantus firmus*. His choral anthems are centered around the liturgical year, particularly the seasons of Christmas and Easter. He consciously dedicated his ". . . creative energies to the improvement of the quality of church music in the Lutheran church. He always

inscribed 'Soli Deo glory' (To God be the Glory) on his music and his recital programs. . . "xxxiv Former student Harold Rutz, whose own career would be spent teaching organ and sacred music at Concordia College in Austin, TX, remembered Gehrke as ". . . a consummate church musician and a true gentleman. . . he was by far the most influential person in my development as a church musician and I truly admired him."xxxv Dr. James Freese, Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Master of Sacred Music program at Concordia Wisconsin similarly recalled, "I considered him to be one of the most influential people in my life. He was one of the kindest individuals I have ever known."xxxvi Gehrke's life exemplified that of a church musician in service to his students, congregations, and audiences, catechizing and nurturing the faith of all ages through the great sacred music of the Church.

Benjamin Kolodziej

Dallas TX

February 2020

[Endnotes are found at the end of this index.]

Organ Compositions (Preludes, descants, & intonations including organ with instruments)

ANTIOCH [not in archive]

In Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

COWPER [not in archive]

In Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

DEN SIGNEDE DAG

"O Day Full of Grace"/LW 163 In Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

DEN STORE HVIDE FLOK

"Behold a Host Arrayed in White"/LW 192
Published in the Concordia Hymn Preludes Series, Vol. 12 (1982)

DIADEMATA

"Crown Him with Many Crowns"
Several versions including one for trumpet

EIN FESTE BURG

"A Mighty Fortress"

Alternate harmonization or intonation
Unpublished

ERSTANDEN IST DER HELIG CHRIST

"The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done"/WS 740

Published by CPH 1972 in Preludes for the Hymns in the Worship Supplement, Vol. II.

FREUT EUCH IHR LIEBEN

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed"/TLH 59 Intonation

intonation

Composed in 1974

Unpublished

GLORIA [not in archive]

In Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

GREENSLEEVES [now in archive]

In Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

HERR, ICH HABE MISSGEHANDELT

Chorale prelude

"Lord, to You I Make Confession"/LW 233

Unpublished

Hymn Descants

"Praise to the Lord"/ LOBE DEN HERREN

"To Shepherds as They Watched by Night" / PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"/ CORONATIONS 1978

"Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" / WEBB 1978

"Thou, Whose Almighty Word" / ITALIAN HYMN 1950

"Let Children Hear the Mighty Deeds" / NUN DANKET ALL

"From Heaven Above" / VOM HIMMEL HOCH [2 Bb trumpets]

ICH STERBE TÄGLICH

"I Come, O Savior, to Your Table"/LW 242 Published *in Hymn Preludes for Holy Communion*, Vol. 1 CPH 97-5486

IN DULCI JUBILO

"Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"/LW 47 Fauxbourdon and harmonization Unpublished

JESU KREUZ, LEIDEN UND PEIN

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"/LW 109 Chorale prelude Composed in 1980 Unpublished

Jesus, Who Didst Ever Love Me

TUNE: <?>

Written in 1968 as procession for the wedding of daughter Marie Gehrke to Walter Krueger at Zion Lutheran Church, Piedmont (Oakland) CA Unpublished.

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Descant for trumpet "From All that Dwell below the Skies"/TLH 15 Composed in 1980 Unpublished

LOBT GOTT DEN HERREN, IHR

"All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above"/TLH 19 Organ with oboe or trumpet Composed 1967 Unpublished

MEINEM JESUM LASS ICH NICHT (Darmstadt)

"Come, O Precious Ransom"/LW 34

Published in Concordia Hymn Prelude Series, Vol. 1

MENDON [not in archive]

In Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

MIT FRIED UND FREUD

"In Peace and Joy I Now Depart"/TLH 137

Composed 1966

Unpublished

NUN DANKET ALL'

"This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made"/TLH 10

Chorale prelude

Dedicated to Jan Bender

Composed in 1975

Unpublished

O DASS ICH TAUSEND ZUNGEN HÄTTE

"Oh, that I Had a Thousand Voices"

Chorale prelude

Unpublished

O WELT, ICH MUSS DICH LASSEN

"Now All the Woods Are Sleeping"

Uses TLH 554 rhythm

Organ with obbligato instrument

Composed in 1978

Unpublished

PAX (ACK BLIV...)

"O God of Love, O King of Peace"/WS 787

Published by CPH in *Preludes for the Hymns in the Worship Supplement*, Vol. IV 1973

PICARDY

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"/LW 241

Published in the Concordia Hymn Preludes Series, Vol. 2 (1982)

"For Richard"

ST. DENIO

"Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise"/LW 769

Published by CPH in *Preludes for the Hymns in the Worship Supplement*, Vol. IV

1973

ST. GEORGE, WINDSOR [not in archive]

Published in *The Parish Organist*, CPH 97-1437, p. 154 Published in the *Concordia Hymn Prelude Series*

SEPTEM VERBA [not in archive]

Published in the Concordia Hymn Preludes Series

SONNE DER GERECHTIGKEIT [not in archive]

Published in the Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

SUSSEX CAROL

Organ prelude Composed 1941 Unpublished

THE FIRST NOEL [not in archive]

Published in the Concordia Hymn Prelude Series

Two Organ Preludes

MARTYRDOM MEINEM JESUM LASS ICH NICHT Unpublished

Liturgical Compositions

[See "Easter Descants" below]

Gradual for Christmas Day SSAATTBB acapella Composed 1940 Unpublished

Choral Compositions

All Glory, Laud, and Honor
2-pt mixed setting of stanza 4
TLH 160
Composed in 1973
Unpublished

Christ Died for All

SAB choir, organ

Based on 2 Corinthians 5:15

Written for 40th anniversary of Rev. Frank A. Jacobsen (pastor at Zion Lutheran, San Francisco)

Composer in 1977

Unpublished

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

SSA a capella

Published by CPH in 1953 in their Concordia Treble Series CTS 49

LLANFAIR

Coventry Carol

SATB, organ or piano

Unpublished

Easter Descants

I Know that My Redeemer Lives DUKE STREET

Christ, the Lord, Is Ris'n Today REDHEAD

Awake, My Heart, with Gladness AUF, AUF, MEIN HERZ

The Dresden Amen

Hallelujah and Sentence for Eastertide

Composed 1940

Unpublished

Joseph and Maria

SSAATTBB, organ

RESONET IN LAUDIBUS

Composed 1939

Unpublished

Manger Carol

SATB, three recorders, organ

Composed 1942

Unpublished

Noel Bourguignon

SATB

Text translation by Dr. Richard DuBrau

Often accompanied playing of the Daquin "Noel X" (Grand Jeu et Duo)

Composed 1952

Unpublished

On Christmas Eve

Medley of carols for SSAATTBB---"Of the Father's Love", "Come Hither, Ye Children", "Lo, How a Rose", "What Child Is This", "Silent Night", "The First Noel" and "O Come, All Ye Faithful". Unpublished

On Christmas Night

Sussex Carol

SATB

"For Dr. Thomas Gieschen"

Unpublished

Psalm 134

SATB/SSAATTBB Composed 1938 Unpublished

The Lord's Prayer

SATB choir, flute, oboe, strings, organ

Text: Martin Franzmann, 1959

Commissioned for The Lutheran Hour Choir, Carl Schalk, director, as part of a series of radio broadcasts with sermons on the Lord's Prayer by Rev. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann Includes commemorative recording made in 2008 by the choir of St. Francis Episcopal Church, San Francisco.

Wake, Awake

2-pt mixed choir WACHET AUF TLH 609, st. 2 Unpublished

What Child Is This

SATB <or perhaps recorders?>, organ GREENSLEEVES Choir part is lost Unpublished

Were You There

SATB choir acapella For the Concordia Chapel Choir Composed in the 1960s Unpublished

Original Hymn Tunes

Thy Word, O Lord, before Me Lies
Text by Rev. H. Brauer
Composed 1956 for a "Day of Spiritual Music" at Zion Lutheran Church, Wausau, WI.
Unpublished

Instrumental Music

Arioso String sextet Unpublished

Overture on Christmas Themes OVERSIZE
Full orchestra
Written for his MMus in composition, Northwestern University
Unpublished

EDITIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Bach, J. S. Now Thank We All Our God (Cantata 79)

Transcription for organ

Bach, J. S. Andante from "A-minor Sonata for Violin"

Transcription for organ

Katt, John All That Wondrous Christmas Night
Portuguese carol
SA + men, SATB, organ
Unpublished

Martini, Giovanni On the Mount of Olives SSA chorus, acapella Published by CPH <?>

Speaks, Oley "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"
Soprano solo with SATB choir
Unpublished

RECORDINGS

California Concordia College Choristers 1960, 1961, 1963

MISC

Autobiographical essay

Probably written at the request of someone at Concordia University Wisconsin

Choral Vocal Exercises

Unpublished. Possible prepare for church musicians' workshop at Concordia Oakland in 1970s; also possible additions after his time in Germany with Ehmann & Hausemann.

Funeral service, sermon and gravestone information

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco. Rev. Gerry Miner, preacher.

Burial: St. John's Cemetery, Maysville WI

Lecture notes from HJG's sabbatical studies at Stanford University.

Photo at the Chapel Organ, California Concordia College 1960s

Recital programs (organ dedications)

St. John Lutheran, Forest Park IL May 1976 First Lutheran Church, Long Beach, CA June 1976 Zion Lutheran Church, Akron OH January 1977 Grace Lutheran Church, Racine WI June 1977

¹ "Biographical Sketch," 1982. Handwritten manuscript.

[&]quot;The Representative (Fox Lakes, Wisconsin), 29 November, 1907.

iii Hugo Gehrke Obituary, St Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, 21 February, 1992.

iv "Biographical Sketch"

[∨] Ibid.

vi Ibid. For Lochner, see "Martin Lochner Dies in Street; Noted Organist," *Chicago Tribune,* 7 February, 1945.

vii "Biographical Sketch."

viii Personal recollection from Dr James Freese in correspondence on 10 February, 2020.

ix Ibid.

- * For a description of the choir as Stellhorn had left it, see "Sacred Concert to be Given on Sunday," *The Oshkosh Northwestern* (Oshkosh, Wisconsin), 21 April, 1954.
- xi "Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee Will Sing Here Sunday," *The Sheboygan Press* (Sheboygan, Wisconsin), 3 May, 1951.
- xii "Biographical Sketch."
- xiii Obituary.
- xiv The Concordias were often organized as a high school with the option of staying for two years in college, students receiving an associates' degree, usually in teaching or in preparation for ministry. See "Silver Jubilee Planned," *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California), 24 October, 1931.
- xv "Oakland's Concordia Singers Continue Tradition of Fine Lutheran Choruses," *The Sacramento Bee,* 2 April, 1955.
- xvi See obituary and "Biographical Sketch."
- xvii "Gehrke Index" compiled by Barry Bobb, Center for Church Music, Concordia Chicago.
- xviii "Biographical Sketch" and Obituary.
- xix "Dedication of New Organ Slated at First Lutheran," Pasadena Independent (Pasadena, California), 30 April, 1966.
- xx From the Organ Historical Society Pipe Organ Database.

https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=13869 (accessed February, 2020). After the closure of the college, in 1974, the organ was moved to St John's Lutheran Church, Napa, California, at which time an 8 Principal was added.

- xxi http://aeolianskinner.organhistoricalsociety.net/Specs/Op01235.html (accessed February, 2020)
- xxii <u>https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=9241</u> (accessed February, 2020)
- xxiii https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=2263 (accessed February, 2020)
- **** https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=2446 (accessed February, 2020) Concordia Teachers College in Seward, NE, also commissioned a 6-rank Bosch tracker organ.
- ** "Organist at UC," Oakland Tribune (Oakland, California), 16 September, 1962.
- xxvi "Dedication of New Organ Slated at First Lutheran," *Pasadena Independent* (Pasadena, California), 30 April, 1966.
- xxvii Obituary.
- xxviii "A Capella Choir Sings Here Sunday," San Francisco Examiner, 27 November, 1954.
- xxix Email correspondence with Dr James Freese, 10 February, 2020.
- xxx "Biographical Sketch."
- xxxi "Lutheran College Moving to Irvine," Daily News-Post (Monrovia, California), 17 April, 1971.
- xxxii "Concordia University Endowments,"

https://www.cuw.edu/about/offices/advancement/giving/ assets/endowment-list.pdf (accessed February, 2020)

- xxxiii Obituary.
- xxxiv Ibid.
- xxxv Personal letter from Harold Rutz, February, 2020.
- xxxvi Email correspondence with Dr James Freese, 10 February, 2020.