
Ann Labounsky with Paul Sifler in 1989


Ann Labounsky and Andrew Scanlon


Ann with Marilyn Mason, May 2011

Giuseppe Englert, Ann Labounsky, and Jacqueline Marchal Englert in Paris, May 2002

Dialogue avec une artiste:

A conversation with Ann Labounsky

By Andrew Scanlon

The following conversation, conducted both in person and by telephone in March 2013, explores the career of one of America's most eminent musicians and teachers, Ann Labounsky. Dr. Labounsky was my undergraduate organ teacher at Duquesne University, and she is now in her 44th year as professor and chair of sacred music and organ at that same institution. Some years after completing graduate study and working in church music, I had the privilege of returning to Duquesne as a faculty member, teaching alongside Dr. Labounsky for four years. We maintain a close collaboration, and therefore, I have been in the unique situation of knowing Dr. Labounsky on several levels since we first met in New York City at the 1996 American Guild of Organists Centennial Convention. As a teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend, Ann has challenged, encouraged, and supported me in many ways. In this interview, we discuss Ann's life and career. Several life chapters particularly dominate our discussion: Ann's student days at Eastman as a pupil of the young David Craighead, and the full circle of Ann and David's long friendship; Ann's time as a Fulbright scholar in Paris, studying organ under André Marchal, Jean Langlais, and Marcel Dupré; and finally, Ann's inimitable teaching career in Pittsburgh.

Andrew Scanlon: When people ask me why I decided to learn to play the organ, I most often reply, "Actually, the organ chose me!" Most of your life has been devoted to the organ. What was your first encounter with the organ, and when did the organ first "choose you?"

Ann Labounsky: As a young girl, our family was living in Port Washington, Long Island, and my mother used to take me to a Methodist church across the street from our home. This was before I could read; and I must have heard the pipe organ, but I don't have much of a memory of it.

Later, we attended Christ Church (Episcopal) in Oyster Bay, where Paul Sifler (also a composer) was the organist-choirmaster. My mother, my brother, and I all sang in the choir, and it was then that I became interested. I was fascinated by the way Paul played. I would come early for choir rehearsals or lessons to watch him practice. I began studying the organ with Sifler at age 15. He was a very good teacher for me, and I loved his compositions. One summer, I went away to a camp, where I couldn't play the organ for about two weeks, and I missed it so much. I think at that stage, I knew I would be an organist.

The conventional wisdom seems to be that before learning the organ, a strong piano background is useful, even essential. Were you already accomplished on the piano?

My piano teacher in high school was John LaMontaine, Paul Sifler's partner. He was also a wonderful composer and had a great command of technique. He followed the Tobias Matthay school of relaxation. I would take the train to go to their apartment on 57th Street in New York to take the lessons. It was he who encouraged me to go to Eastman.

Since your piano teacher encouraged you to apply to the Eastman School of Music, did you audition on both piano and organ? What was required for the audition?

Yes, we were required to perform on both instruments. For the organ portion, I remember playing Mendelssohn's *Sonata No. 6*, but can't remember which Bach I played. I do recall that I played a recital my senior year of high school and had played Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* and *Wir glauben all an einen Gott* on that recital, so I must have played one of those works. For the piano portion, they required that you know all scales and arpeggios, as well as the performance of a work by Bach and a Beethoven sonata. I was very nervous for the audition.

Before you went to Eastman, what, if anything, did you know of David Craighead? Did you want to study with him, or were you taking the advice of your teachers?

Well, no; actually, I didn't know anything about David Craighead. But John LaMontaine had studied at Eastman, and he thought it was a very good school. He wanted me to study with Eastman's piano teacher, George MacNabb. (It was from MacNabb that I learned the Brahms *Fifty-one Exercises*, which I still use.) Paul Sifler thought that Catharine Crozier would have been a good organ teacher for me, and I looked into studying with her. However, by the time I entered Eastman as a freshman, Crozier had already left the Eastman faculty for Rollins College in Florida.

Did you audition anywhere else besides Eastman?

No. It always makes me laugh now, because these days, students audition at several schools. But for some reason, I didn't.

Had you given any thought to what might happen if you didn't get in?

No, that didn't occur to me!

In 1957, you moved upstate from Long Island and began your new life in Rochester. What are your memories of those undergraduate years?

Eastman was a wonderful school. For many years, I stayed in close touch with the friends that I made there because we all struggled together. It was very demanding; in fact, I had nightmares. I was so afraid that I wouldn't do well enough and that David Craighead would make me study with Norman Peterson, the secondary teacher!

Can you recall your close friends and colleagues from that time?

Some dear colleagues included Bill Stokes, Joanna Tousey, Bill Haller, Maggie Brooks, Bruce Lederhouse, Jim Johnson, Gretchen Frauenberger, and Robert Town. Roberta Gary was working on her doctorate and David Mulberry was a senior, but they were beyond me. They were the great legends at the time!

How many students were studying organ then?

I think there may have been about ten—smaller compared to what it is now.

Can you recall periods of particular growth in your playing during the Eastman days, or conversely, any precise struggles?

I don't recall any struggles specifically; everything was difficult. We had to have all our repertoire memorized. I would get very nervous before performances. I wish that I would have found a way to get over that more easily, as I look back now. But all of this contributed to my growth as a musician.

When you arrived at Eastman, in the studio of David Craighead, he was still fairly new to Eastman's faculty, correct?

Yes, he had arrived in 1955, and I entered in 1957. He always told me this funny story about when I first arrived.

André Marchal with Ann Labounsky, May 1972

Jean Langlais, Robert Luft, and Ann Labounsky at Duquesne University, 1976

Evidently I went up to his office and knocked on his door and introduced myself. I said, "I'm Ann Labounsky: Ann without the 'E'!" David said he always remembered that.

What was Craighead like as a teacher in 1957? What aspects of learning did he emphasize as a young teacher?

He was always very precise. At that time in his life, he was rather nervous, quite inhibited. He would tell you all the things that were not right, but you always wanted to strive to do better in the next lesson. We spent a lot of time on the registration. He used the Bonnet *Historical Anthology of Music*, which was highly edited, and not a good edition. He used the Seth Bingham edition of Couperin's music and I hated that music back then; it wasn't until I went to Paris to study with [André] Marchal that I knew what it all meant!

That anecdote reminds us of how David Craighead evolved tremendously, over the years, both as teacher and a performer.

He did. I remember seeing him some years later, perhaps in the early 1970s. He had come to perform in Pittsburgh, and we attended the Pittsburgh Symphony together. He spoke of the *Offertoire* from Couperin's *Mass for the Parishes*, and how he had learned about the *notes inégales*. For Bach, we changed registration frequently and each change was well marked in the score. Also, phrasing was carefully marked. Craighead was meticulous about every detail, but was patient in working with us until we got it right. He was most effective when he would quickly slide onto the bench to demonstrate a passage.

Can you remember your degree recitals?

They were all in Kilbourne Hall on the Skinner organ. For my senior recital, I played the Bach *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor*, BWV 543, and of course, a lot of American music. David Craighead loved the music of Sowerby. I played Sowerby's famous *Arioso*, which was gorgeous on that organ. At Eastman, there was a kind of "shopping list" of music that we all had to work on. Ironically, when we got to Langlais' music, I hated it! I had performed some of the *Hommage à Frescobaldi*, and I didn't like it at all! I also remember playing in the weekly performance class in preparation for my senior recital. At one such class, having completed a play-through of the Bach "A Minor," I remember David Craighead saying, "That was bloody but unbowed!"

When you were wrapping up your days at Eastman, did David Craighead advise you about what you should do in terms of furthering your education?

David Craighead was very different from Russell Saunders, who told the students exactly what they should do. David took a far more hands-off approach. He gave his students the confidence to make their own decisions. I thought about staying at Eastman for my master's degree, but decided to go to the University of Michigan. It turned out to be a very good thing to do that, as I would meet my future husband, Lewis Steele, at Michigan.

After four years at the Eastman School, I imagine that you had a much broader sense of the organ world, and you knew what you wanted?

I certainly knew that I wanted to go on to earn a master's degree, but at that time, I didn't know much about church music or improvisation. I didn't know exactly what I wanted, except that I wanted to learn music.

In few words, can you summarize the church music curriculum at Eastman in those days?

It didn't exist!

Your next move was from Rochester to Ann Arbor. Tell us about what life was like at the University of Michigan in 1961.

In those days, the president of the AGO was Roberta Bitgood. She did a wonderful thing for the new students at U. of M. When we got off the train in Detroit, she met all the students. She had gathered members of the clergy from churches in the area that were looking for organists. She introduced all of us, and as a result, I began a church job right away in Dearborn, Michigan, about an hour from Ann Arbor.

U. of M. was a very different school than ESM. My teacher there was Marilyn Mason. Mason was less of a teacher for me, but more of a coach. David Craighead had really formed my technique—so she didn't have to work on that. We worked on musical details and interpretation. We always had our lessons on the organ in Hill Auditorium.

Were there other organ teachers?

Yes. Ray Ferguson and Robert Noehren were on the faculty at that time.

Besides organ playing, were there any other memorable aspects of the Michigan graduate degree program that helped you grow?

The courses at Michigan were wonderful! I especially recall Hans David the musicologist, and Louise Cuyler, and I learned a great deal from both of them.

You mentioned that you also met your husband while at Michigan?

Yes, I earned the degree in one year and two summers, and I was getting ready to play my recital. I met Lewis Steele on the steps of Marilyn Mason's studio. I needed soloists to sing in my church every Sunday since we didn't have a summer choir. I heard his resonant voice, and asked him to sing a solo. That's how our romance started!

Would you care to elaborate?

Well, three children and four grandchildren later, we are very happy together.

I could never have done the things I have done without Lewis's support. He always said that in a marriage, it's not a 50/50 partnership, rather it's 100/100. You have to give all of yourself, all the time. He did so much in raising the children. I had no idea even how to change diapers. He taught me. So many of the things I didn't have (for example, expertise in theology, scripture, choral directing), Lewis did have. It has been a wonderful partnership over the years. I always remember what Marilyn Mason said: "I'd marry him for his laugh!"

David Craighead, Ann Labounsky, and Andrew Scanlon, in 2005

Can you sum up the church music curriculum at U. of M. in those days?

They had two tracks. You could earn the MM in organ, which I did, or the MM in church music. However, it seemed to me that the only difference was you didn't have to memorize the recital if you were in the church music track. All students took Robert Noehren's course in organ building, which I almost failed! You had to know the composition of mixtures, which was too much for me! He was a very good teacher, though. He had a significant influence in the organ department there at that time.

As your time wound up in Michigan, the next big step would be the Fulbright process. What were you doing in Michigan to prepare for the program in France?

By the time I got to Michigan, I knew I wanted to go to France for additional study. In fact, I had applied for a Fulbright while still an Eastman student, but I didn't get it. I applied a second time while at U. of M. I had been passionate about the French language and was determined that I would go to France one way or another. Every week, I would get together with Deedee Wotring, one of André Marchal's former students. We would meet for coffee, and she would force me to speak French!

But your love of France and the French language had begun long before Michigan, through your beloved Aunt Julia, correct?

I'm glad you mentioned Julia. You knew her and played at her funeral. She had studied art in Paris after the war, and following her arrival back home in New York, she spent every weekend with us in Long Island. Julia was determined to teach me how to speak French! My father (a geologist and engineer who worked on the Manhattan Project) was Russian, his second language being English. I was determined I was going to Paris to study, even if I had to be an *au pair*.

In April, having applied for a Fulbright, saying I wanted to study with Marchal, but not yet knowing my fate, I went to a recital at St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, performed by Jean Langlais, whom I met for the first time. I told him I had played his *Miniature* on my graduate recital at the University of Michigan, and that I hoped to soon be in Paris studying. He replied that he hoped he would see me! When I returned home to Long Island from that recital, I found out I had gotten the Fulbright grant! That was such a great blessing to be able to go, with everything paid for; it was just a marvelous thing.

I should speak a little bit about how we got to France. The first time we went over was on the "Queen Mary," and on the "France" a number of times. It took five days, and there was no jet lag, because each day you changed the clocks only one hour. It was a wonderful way to travel. Ruth Woods (Harris) and I went together, both studying with Marchal on a Fulbright grant. We remain close friends.

Though you are perhaps best known as the leading American disciple of Jean Langlais, when you set off for France, your initial intent was to study with André Marchal, and you did. Tell us about studying with Marchal.

When I heard Marchal play for the first time, it was at Oberlin. He played in a way I had never heard anyone else play. Each line breathed. I heard music differently when he played, and I wanted to learn what he knew. Fortunately, my French was good enough that I didn't need a translator, but his daughter Jacqueline often translated for the other students. Lessons were in his home at 22 Rue Duroc. I also wanted to study improvisation. Even though Marchal improvised very well, at that time he no longer taught improvisation. He said: "Well, you may study improvisation with Langlais."

You must understand about the teachers all over Europe at that time: they were very possessive of their students. You were not able to simply study with anyone you wanted; definitely not several teachers! You went abroad to study with ONE teacher. I studied organ repertoire with Marchal, but Marchal gave me his permission to study with Langlais. After that time, while continuing to study with Marchal, I would then go to Ste. Clotilde in the evenings for my lessons with Langlais, which was wonderful. Playing on the organ that Franck, Tournemire, and Langlais knew so well, and hearing their music on that instrument, made all the difference in learning that music.

What musical facet did Marchal underscore the most in how to play the organ?

The touch. He had a way of phrasing each line independently. And he had such a concept of the whole piece. I remember working on Bach's great *Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor* (BWV 542) with him. He had the whole piece completely engraved in his mind—every voice. It was amazing to me that this blind man knew music so well. For example, if you used a fingering that was not effective, he could tell!

You mentioned having studied Couperin as an undergraduate at Eastman. I know that with his interest in early music, Marchal would make the classical French school an essential part of what you studied. How did your point of view evolve with respect to this music?

Marchal just knew that music. I don't know how—because he had studied with Gigout, and of course, everyone was playing completely legato then. Marchal attributed his style of playing to studying the harpsichord, saying that as a result, he had learned a different way of playing. And in the 1960s, no one else was playing like that. We usually associate Marie-Claire Alain as a leader in the early music revival for the organ—but even in the 1940s when Marie Claire Alain was very young, it was Marchal who was the first great leader in this movement. There was something about the way he played that helped me understand that "this is how you play!" With Marchal, I studied all Couperin, as well as all the music of de Grigny, Clérambault, Daquin, etc.

I recall from other conversations over the years that you recall practicing constantly during the time you were in France. You learned a great deal of music—how much repertoire did you absorb in two years?

In addition to all I mentioned just above, with Marchal, I studied all the Bach trio sonatas, all the big preludes and fugues—tons of repertoire! With Langlais I studied all of Franck's music, much of Tournemire, and other pieces, too. In terms of how lessons worked, with Marchal (and Donald Wilkins said it was the same with Duruflé), you brought in a piece to a lesson, one of these big pieces, and they told you everything you needed to know. If you brought in the same piece again to another lesson, they said, "Well, I already told you everything I know about it last week!" We knew that we wouldn't be there forever with those brilliant musicians. Our goal was to cover as much repertoire as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Do you still play the pieces you studied with Marchal or Langlais the same way as when you learned them? Or do you perform them differently now?

Wonderful question. I think that the spirit is the same; some things changed a little. I'm constantly trying to think in a fresh way, but the spirit of what I learned from Langlais and Marchal has stayed with me.

Concerning Marchal's teaching, did he have any idiosyncrasies?

Many have said of Marchal that if a student was not gifted, he would be very lenient with that student; but the more diligent a student was, he would be much more strict. And that certainly was true. One funny story was about phrasing in one of the trio sonatas. I had asked why he played it that particular way, and he thought for a long time. After quite a long period of silence, finally he answered: "Because it pleases me!"

Many people are very well acquainted with your work and expertise on the music and the life of Jean Langlais. Much of this information can be learned from your book, *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music* (Amadeus Press, 2000), as well as from the liner notes on your CD recordings. Would you share with us, in a broad sense, what it was like to be Langlais' pupil, and how that relationship developed over many years?

Langlais was extremely supportive. He always made you feel that you could do anything! If you made a mistake, he knew, but he was just thinking about the music. Always so encouraging and supportive, he was continually trying to find places for his students to play, and to help them in whatever way he could. As I learned his music, I became more and more interested, and I wanted to learn as much as I could.

Over the years, how much cumulative time did you study with Langlais?

I have no idea. I usually had a weekly lesson on Wednesday evenings, when the church was closed. In addition to that, on Saturday afternoons, we were at the

David Craighead and Ann Labounsky. Picture taken for Volume X of *The Complete Organ Works of Jean Langlais*. Ann and David recorded together both of Langlais' "Double Fantasies" at Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Denver, in October 2000.

Schola Cantorum, and that's where we worked on improvisation. Over the years, I returned many more times to study.

After remaining in France for an extra year, what path did your career take upon returning to the States?

Langlais asked me to be his guide for his fall 1964 American tour, and I did that. Shortly thereafter, I took a job in a very large Roman Catholic church in New Hyde Park, Long Island. I had a choir of men and boys that I had to develop and direct. That was hard work.

How did you end up in Pittsburgh? Did you move there to take up your position as organ teacher at Duquesne University?

In 1967, Lewis and I moved to Pittsburgh to take up a joint church position at Brentwood Presbyterian Church. Lewis was the choir director, and I was the organist. We had only one child, six months old. Two years later, in 1969, the head of graduate studies at Duquesne University called and asked if I would like to teach organ at Duquesne—but I had never heard of Duquesne! Honestly, I was not thinking about teaching in a college and university. I had done some private teaching, but had not thought beyond that. I wanted to be a church musician and recitalist. Looking back on it, I don't know why I hadn't considered university teaching. I was busy at the church and raising our kids. So, in 1969, I began teaching part-time, and it initially cost our family money for me to teach at Duquesne, because I had to pay for child care! At that time, there was a degree program in organ, but no sacred music program or sacred music courses.

In 1972, around the time of the birth of our third child, the dean of Duquesne's school of music at the time, Gerald Keenan, called me into his office and said they wanted to hire me full-time. After that time, I was the only organ teacher.

What was your strategy for building up the sacred music degree programs at Duquesne?

I didn't really have a strategy. I worked slowly, adding courses as it made sense. Even before I was full-time, I had brought Jeanne Joulain to Pittsburgh for a recital and workshop—in that way, I was already developing a tradition of guest artists. The first class that I started was the "Service Playing" course. I was always interested in improvisation, having studied it with Langlais, and I had won the very first AGO improvisation competition in 1966 in Atlanta. I began an improvisation course, focusing on rather simple aspects of improvisation.

For a few years, we moved along slowly, trying to figure out the curriculum and course requirements. In 1976, the 25th year of the Duquesne School of Music, I decided that Langlais should come to Duquesne. This coincided with the official establishment of the sacred music degree programs. While Langlais was in residence, we awarded him an honorary doctorate, and we had a whole week of concerts featuring premieres of his music. This started things off in a huge way, attracting a lot of national attention. Gradually, more and more students wanted to come to Duquesne, continuing over the years. I couldn't say in what specific year things really blossomed. Another aspect of our program's emphasis in church music came after I realized there had been a huge void in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council—no choirs, no hymnals, a very low level of music. I saw that Duquesne had a responsibility and an opportunity to take a lead in this area. The dean, Robert Egan, agreed with me, and we worked for several years on strengthening the program. I called many people at different universities to see what other programs were offering. In those early days, I taught all the courses myself, as we didn't have that many students.

For many years, you have been a serious campaigner for the cause of the AGO certification program. From where did your advocacy of this program emerge?

Initially from Walter Hilse. I met Walter while we were both students in Paris. Walter, also from New York, was studying composition with Nadia Boulanger and organ with Maurice Duruflé. On Wednesday afternoons, Boulanger taught an analysis class for foreigners at her apartment, for which she had a huge following. She had a small house organ, having been a student of Vierne. Students would play pieces (Fauré, for example), and then she would pull the pieces apart and ask questions. She was a huge personality. I still have the scores. (We had to buy the ones she was going to discuss.) At these classes, Walter Hilse encouraged me to become certified. I distinctly remember him saying "You really should take the AAGO [Associate of the AGO] exam." He has always been a huge promoter of the exams and has had many private students. Anne Wilson and Todd Wilson, for example, prepared for the exams with Walter. While my husband and I were still living on Long Island, I decided to do this. Once I began teaching at Duquesne University, it occurred to me that those skills were so vital to all students, that they should be learning these skills while studying for university degrees.

Did the desire to help students become fluent with keyboard skills such as those tested on the AGO exams prompt you to require the AGO exams as part of the sacred music degrees at Duquesne?

In the early 1980s, I was on the National Committee on Professional Certification. Only one other school in the country was making it a requirement to take the exams. So, I decided to initiate the exams at Duquesne. When you tell people they have to do it, then they just do! Not everyone passed, and people took different exams, depending on their level of expertise. I met many wonderful people on that committee, including Max Miller, Sister Theophane Hytrek, John Walker, and David Schuler, for example. Different years, various others rotated on and off that committee, such as Todd Wilson.

When did you ultimately attempt the Fellowship exam?

Since I had already made the exams a degree requirement at DU, and I was the National Councillor for Education, I decided that it was time. You can't just say to someone, "you should do this!"—you need to set an example. During a very busy time, when I had three children, was teaching full time, playing recitals, and was on the national board, I worked with two former students in Pittsburgh, John Miller and Robert Kardasz, to prepare together for the FAGO. Eventually, we all passed! It gave Pittsburgh more people with the FAGO diploma, where previously only Charles Heaton and Don Wilkins had earned it. We needed more highly certified people for a city our size.

Why do you consider it so important to take the certification exams?

There are a number of reasons:

1) In order to keep growing you need both long-term and short-term goals. As a student, it's a short-term goal. Before earning a degree, it helps you have a point of arrival.

2) After my student, John Henninger, graduated from Duquesne, he went on to Westminster Choir College for graduate school and had applied for a church job in Princeton. He had passed the CAGO while at Duquesne, and he was appointed to the job because of having the Colleague Certificate.

3) The exams represent a very structured way of testing both theoretical and practical skill. You can work at your own pace, and everybody I know who has done this, whether or not they have passed, has profited by it. It seems like a natural thing to do this, when you consider that so many other professions offer certification.

4) Earning an AGO certificate is a way that we show we're at a certain level in our profession.

5) Earning certification does level the playing field and sets a high standard.

Our professional organization is extremely important. I get upset with people who complain about aspects of degree programs, churches, even the AGO—when the only thing you can do is to get right in the trenches to make things better!

Several graduates of Duquesne have gone on to earn the highest AGO certification. How has that made you feel?

Very proud. You [Andrew Scanlon] being one of them, and now even serving on the national exam committee—that has made me especially proud. My current colleague, Ben Cornelius-Bates, has recently earned the FAGO also.

Reflecting on your almost 45 years of teaching at Duquesne, how would you say your teaching and playing has evolved?

On teaching, David Craighead always said that you learn so much from your students, and I really have. In the beginning, I felt I didn't know much, but I learned along the way. I found some things that worked well, and I fought the scars of things that didn't work well. I have found it important to document what each student does. Recently, I got a computer in my studio, and using the "Blackboard" tool has been

Duquesne students and faculty at Solesmes in 2013

transformative. I have begun taking notes for each lesson and posting them for each student to view.

In the early days of my teaching, I was still very much in the mode of the teachers I learned from in Paris—Langlais, Marchal, and Dupré. They were very directive. They told you exactly what they wanted you to do. Initially, I taught the way they taught, because it was so fresh in my mind. As things have evolved, I have wanted to help each student find his own voice. I might not always agree with the student, but feel strongly that it's in the best interest of each student to let them develop their own musical instincts.

Ironically, when I performed all the recitals that Langlais had organized for me, I still felt I was his student. Langlais said, "You have to do this the way you want to do it." But he had not taught that way. For example, he was known for saying so emphatically in his teaching that "Franck is tremendously free—just like this!" In improvisation, he taught the *Thème libre*, which, of course, is not free at all!

As you grow older, you grow in wisdom. You learn a lot from your children, also. They keep you humble, and they really tell you when you mess up!

When I look at David Craighead, I keep thinking of how he was when I first studied with him at Eastman. Then, he was a new teacher. I had the joy of knowing him so well for the last 14 years of his life, and he had changed so much. He started by telling the students when they had made mistakes, but ended up changing lives. I try to do that too. I try to be a mentor, to do everything I possibly can to encourage my pupils, and help them get along well together. Music school can be almost like a monastery, when you're all working together, and it's so important to have a good rapport with your colleagues, to show great compassion for one another.

Secondly, in answer to your question about my own playing, several things have contributed to the way I have played over the years. One of these was earning my Ph.D. in musicology, and beginning my biography of Langlais as the dissertation. All my years of teaching, the wisdom I gained from colleagues such as Robert Sutherland Lord and Don Franklin, making all the Langlais recordings—all of that contributed to the evolution of my playing. Other factors include the 1985 Bach Year, when I was asked to play an all-Bach recital on the Beckerath organ at St. Paul's Cathedral in Pittsburgh. I changed my approach to Bach playing, using all toes, and different fingering. Change was in the air at that time.

Have there been still more recent developments?

Yes. I have been working with Don Franklin on the tempo relationships in Bach preludes and fugues. We have been looking back to Kirnberger's tempo relationships. I am constantly trying to learn more. If you have everything figured out, you may as well just retire, and I'm certainly not ready to retire!

In addition, after being asked a few years ago to do a peer review of a string methods class, I became fascinated with the violin. I realized that I had always wanted to play the violin, but I was afraid to try! I started taking violin lessons with David Gillis, a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony, and I'm still studying! I'm working on the Vivaldi sonatas, Opus 2, which I love! It's a whole other world.

The most recent development is the establishment of Duquesne's chant schola under the direction of faculty member Sister Marie Agatha Ozah, HHCJ. We study the St. Gall notation to incorporate those interpretive elements into our singing. In May 2013, I led a study trip to Paris to play the important organs there and gave a short concert at the Benedictine Abbey in Solesmes.

How do you know what to say when a student plays? What not to say?

Always, I do it by intuition, and I think David Craighead did too. I'm careful not to say too much, and not say too little.

How do you decide not only what to say, but how to say it? How do you break through?

Teaching is so dynamic, because you have to figure out where the student is and how the student will perceive what you say. You always have to be honest, but you need to be helpful—not damaging. You can't say something is good when it's not. Some teachers are more didactic, but I find that I do almost everything by intuition.

Realizing that you could retire, what keeps you going?

I love what I'm doing. I'm finally at a point when I can do it more easily.

I still have a lot to give to the students. I can still make a difference in their lives, and I still enjoy it. When we look around the country, and see the teachers who have retired, only to see their programs eliminated, that is always a danger.

What are your hopes for the future of Duquesne's sacred music and organ programs?

We are working very hard to get a world-class organ on campus! We have plans, and hope to be able to do this in the near future. The last piece of the puzzle is to put a doctoral program in place. That has been in discussion for many years, and it has been very challenging because there are many hoops to jump through. Our library holdings have been critical, but we now have many sacred music collections (the Langlais Collection, the Craighead Collection, the Boys Town Collection, the Richard Proulx Collection, to name a few). We have the faculty, and the quality of teaching, but we need more financial support.

What else would you like to say?

Duquesne University has always been a religious institution. Our mission is to train church musicians. There are other schools whose main issue is getting students ready for competitions, which is wonderful, and I admire them very much. But even David Craighead agreed that he wished the Eastman School had done more with church music and preparation for the AGO exams. I want to prepare students to be musicians in churches of all denominations. We are trying to evolve, as the church continues to evolve. Students have to learn both pastoral skills and musical skills. These are difficult to teach. Our internship, for example, is a requirement partially because of NASM accreditation, but it's also a critical area that we use to help each student in that very way.

Ann, thank you for sharing these details of your life in teaching and performing. Albert Einstein said, "I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." My experience of you as a teacher and mentor has been just so. You always gave the students exactly the right amount of guidance, and offered the right words precisely when they were needed; and yet you always allowed each student to discover his own path. You have led the way gracefully, setting a high bar and leading by example. Most importantly you have shown me the importance of constant, ongoing learning. I look forward to many more years of collaboration and friendship and wish you many blessings for continued joy in your work. ■

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