

The 2014 Schoenstein Competition in Hymn Playing

Competition Rules

1. Objective

The goal of the Schoenstein Competition in Hymn Playing is to promote excellence in hymn playing on the organ as an aid to congregational singing.

2. Eligibility

The competition is open to anyone born on or after March 20, 1981. The winners are responsible for visas and other legal requirements to earn money in the United States.

3. Prize

A jury of three judges will award a First Prize of \$3000 and a Second Prize of \$1000. The prizes are generously sponsored by Schoenstein & Co., Organ Builders, San Francisco, CA.

4. Application Requirements

Application Forms are available in PDF format from www.hymnplayingcompetition.org. Applicants should submit their completed Application Form with the recording outlined below and the Application Fee. All components must be received by March 20, 2014 at the following address: Schoenstein Hymn Playing Competition, c/- Dr. Stuart Forster, Director of Music and Organist, Christ Church Cambridge, 0 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Application Forms should be submitted in hard copy with the Application Fee. Certified Mail is recommended. An email acknowledgment will be sent when an application is complete.

5. Application Fee

A check in the amount of \$25 should be made payable to Christ Church Cambridge, noting "Hymn Playing Competition" in the memo line.

6. Recording

The recording round is designed with flexibility to accommodate the various hymnals, repertoire, and liturgical requirements of different congregations. Early planning is recommended so that appropriate selections may be prepared in a worship setting. Recordings should be submitted as audio CDs with the Application Form and Application Fee. Recordings should consist only of three hymns, as separate tracks, played by the applicant on an organ, accompanying live congregational singing after September 1, 2013. There may not be a conductor or other instruments. The hymn text may come from any hymnal currently used by the congregation singing; hymn tunes should be selected as one each from three of the following categories:

- i. A plainsong hymn composed in Italy before 1500.
- ii. A metrical psalm from the Netherlands, Belgium, Scotland, or France, composed in the period 1500–1650, in the style prominent in *The Genevan Psalter*, *The Strasbourg Psalter*, or *Souterliedekens*.
- iii. A chorale-style hymn composed or adapted in Germany in the period 1600–1800.
- iv. A hymn composed or adapted in England in the period 1800–1906.
- v. A hymn or song composed or adapted in Northern America since 1900.

Each hymn should include an organ introduction and at least three verses of singing. No verses should be omitted from the recording if they were sung on the day of recording, and

no editing is permitted. The accompaniment may be in any style the applicant chooses. All authors, composers, and arrangers should be acknowledged by name on the Application Form. If a choir is present, the microphone(s) should be placed closer to the non-choir portion of the singing congregation than the choir. It is your responsibility to ensure that the recording is of sufficient quality for the judges to evaluate your hymn playing with an unrehearsed congregation.

7. Final Round

Up to four applicants will be selected from the recorded portion of the Application Requirements. All applicants will be sent notification by April 30, 2014, and will be informed of three hymns they will be required to play in the final round. The final round will be open to the public, who will form the singing congregation, and will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 22, 2014 (one day before the National Convention of The American Guild of Organists, held in Boston) at Christ Church, 0 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA. Competitors will play the 2006 3-manual Schoenstein Organ. Specifications of the Christ Church organ are available online at <http://cccambridge.org/ministries/music/the-organs/organ-specifications/>. The results will be announced following the deliberation session after the final contestant has played. Each hymn may be played in any style chosen by the competitor, and should include an introduction and at least three verses, which will be specified in the above-mentioned notification. Each competitor will be offered up to one hour of preparation time with the instrument in the days preceding the final round. This time will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis by contacting Stuart Forster at stuartforster@aya.yale.edu. Coaching from personnel not involved in the competition is permitted, but not on the competition instrument. No one will be permitted into the church during the preparation time other than the performer, church staff, and competition organizers; no one will be permitted in the vicinity of the organ console, except for the competitors, during the competition. One memory level on the organ will be assigned to each finalist. Use of any musical material composed by someone other than the hymns' composers or the competitor is optional, and must be disclosed in writing to Stuart Forster by May 31, 2014. No reimbursement is offered for expenses incurred by competitors.

8. Judging Criteria

The judges will consider, among other factors:

- i. the ease of singing with the organist;
- ii. leadership;
- iii. sensitivity to the words of each hymn;
- iv. sensitivity to the musical style of each hymn;
- v. use of the instrument and acoustic;
- vi. dynamics and colors appropriate to the text and the congregation

9. Judges' Decision

The judges' decision will be final, and will not be subject to appeal. Applicants who engage in conduct that is contrary, in the opinion of the judges, to the spirit of the competition, may be subject to disqualification. The jury reserves the right to award both, either, or none of the prizes.

10. Publicity

The finalists' names and images may be used in future publicity.