Gehrke Index
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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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. 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. 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.

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. 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 outstanding 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 his singers as the Lutheran A cappella Choir of Milwaukee, as the ensemble came to be known, even singing twice with the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Frederick Stock. 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
In 1951, California Concordia College called him to establish a music department. 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. 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.” 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.**xvi** 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.**xvii** 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.**xviii**  

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,”**xix** 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**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Great</th>
<th>Swell</th>
<th>Pedal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8' Gedeckt</td>
<td>8' Konzertflöte</td>
<td>16' Subbass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4' Prinzipal</td>
<td>8' Spitzgamba</td>
<td>8' Prinzipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4' Rohrflöte</td>
<td>8' Gamba Celeste</td>
<td>8' Rohrflöte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2/3' Nasat</td>
<td>4' Spitzflöte</td>
<td>4' Choralbass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2' Waldflöte</td>
<td>2' Prinzipal</td>
<td>II Rauschquinte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 3/5' Terz</td>
<td>1 1/3' Klein Nasat</td>
<td>16' Fagot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III-V Mixture</td>
<td>II Zimbel</td>
<td>8' Fagot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16' Fagot</td>
<td>8' Fagot</td>
<td>4' Fagot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimes</td>
<td>Tremulant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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.\textsuperscript{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)\textsuperscript{xxii} and a 28-stop instrument at nearby Our Redeemer Lutheran (1969).\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{xxiv}

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.\textsuperscript{xxv} 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. He ventured into vocal study at Milwaukee State Teachers College, piano pedagogy at San Francisco State University and Mills College, and performance practice at Stanford University. His educational sojourns even took him to study choral conducting with F. Melius Christiansen at that iconic conductor’s annual summer “Christiansen Choral Schools.” He, Selda, and 16 year old son Rodney spent 1971 on sabbatical in Hereford, Germany, where they studied at the Westfälischen 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. 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
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 chorale 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. . .”\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{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

\[\text{Endnotes are found at the end of this index.}\]
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
   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

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**Liturgical Compositions**

[See “Easter Descants” below]

Gradual for Christmas Day
  SSAATTBB acappella
  Composed 1940
  Unpublished

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**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  
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
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

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i “Biographical Sketch,” 1982. Handwritten manuscript.
ii 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”
v 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.


“Biographical Sketch.”

Obituary.

The Concordias were often organized as a high school with the option of staying for two years in college, students receiving an associate’s degree, usually in teaching or in preparation for ministry. See “Silver Jubilee Planned,” *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California), 24 October, 1931.


See obituary and “Biographical Sketch.”

“Gehrke Index” compiled by Barry Bobb, Center for Church Music, Concordia Chicago.

“Biographical Sketch” and Obituary.


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.


“Organist at UC,” *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California), 16 September, 1962.


Obituary.


Email correspondence with Dr James Freese, 10 February, 2020.

“Biographical Sketch.”


“Concordia University Endowments,”

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

Obituary.

Ibid.


Email correspondence with Dr James Freese, 10 February, 2020.