

Paul Manz

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In Memoriam

Paul Otto Manz, internationally celebrated organist, dean of American church musicians, and composer of the internationally acclaimed motet “E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come” has died in St. Paul, Minnesota at the age of ninety years.

Manz’s life and career were filled with the honors and accolades that many performing musicians strive for yet seldom attain. With a lengthy list of performances at venues like The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., with the National Symphony; Symphony Center in Chicago, with the Chicago Symphony; and Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, with the Minnesota Orchestra, Manz was able to perform the canon of major works for organ and orchestra – a feat that few organists can claim. His charisma at the console made him a favorite of conductors like Leonard Slatkin, Charles Dutoit, and Henry Charles Smith.

While his career as a soloist took him around the world to splendid cathedrals and thrilling concert halls, his charisma as a musician and a servant of the church found its fullest expression in the action of leading people in congregational song. Through his work as an organist and composer, Manz reinvented the classic organ chorale of Buxtehude and Bach, giving it a new voice which spoke clearly and unapologetically with a fresh American accent. His work in this genre led him to play thousands of hymn festivals around the world – playing that excited and invigorated countless organists, church musicians and lay people who came to hear him play. Manz’s work in congregational song and liturgy can be viewed as the spark that eventually became a bonfire in which the standards for service playing and church music in this country were recast.

Even with an enviable career as a concert organist, Manz’s heart was deeply rooted in his work as a parish church musician. “Love the people you have been called to serve” was the surprising answer Manz gave when asked what one piece of advice he would offer to an individual

starting out in the field of church music today. This seemingly simple response belies a depth of experience, wisdom, and faith which was formed and molded in the crucible of service to God's people of the church over the course of a life well lived.

The only child of Otto Manz and Hulda (nee Jeske) Manz, German-Russian immigrants who had come to America to make a better life for their family, Paul Otto Manz was born on May 10, 1919, in Cleveland Ohio. At age five, Manz began piano lessons. Two years later, upon the advice of his first piano teacher, Emily Dinda, Manz began studying piano and organ with Henry J. Markworth at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cleveland, Ohio. In order to study with Markworth, Manz had to agree to take two lessons at the piano for every lesson at the organ. Upon completion of the eighth grade, Manz entered Concordia High School in River Forest, Illinois, eventually matriculating into their teacher training program.

While a student at Concordia, Manz also began private organ studies at the American Conservatory in Chicago with the eminent American organist Edwin Eigenschenk, a student of Bonnet and Vierne. Manz would go on to further study with the eminent Bach scholar Albert Riemenschneider at Baldwin Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, and Edwin Arthur Kraft at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland. Formal studies at the graduate level were pursued by Manz at the University of Minnesota, where he was a student of Arthur B. Jennings, and in 1952 he received his Master's degree in organ performance from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

In 1956 Manz received a Fulbright grant for study with Flor Peeters at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Antwerp, Belgium. An extension of the Fulbright provided Manz with the opportunity to work with Helmut Walcha at the Dreikönigskirche in Frankfurt, Germany. Manz would subsequently return to Belgium for three more summers to study with Peeters. The bond between Peeters and Manz grew so close over the ensuing years that the Belgian government invited Manz to be the official United States representative in state ceremonies honoring Flor Peeters on his 80th birthday and his 60th year as titular organist of the Cathedral of Saint Rombaut in Mechelen, Belgium. At that time, Flor Peeters referred to his former student as "my spiritual son."

In 1943, Manz married Ruth Mueller, a union which was blessed with four children: David, who died at birth; Michael, who died unexpectedly in 2006; John, and Peter. Following the deaths of Ruth's brother, Herbert Mueller, in 1961 and his wife Helene, in 1964, the Manzes took in their four orphaned children, Mary, Anne, Sara, and John, increasing their family number to nine. Through all of life's vicissitudes Ruth was Paul's partner in every sense of the word, and he has been quoted as saying, "Without her I would probably be playing piano in a bar somewhere. Ruth has been the *cantus firmus* in our home and for our children, whom I treasure, while I practiced, taught, played and wrote." Through the course of their 65 years of marriage, Paul and Ruth shared an exceptionally close relationship until her death in July of 2008. Her influence on his work and career cannot be underestimated.

Upon graduation from Concordia in 1941, Manz filled positions as teacher, principal and musician with several parishes in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1946, Manz received a call to Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, where he served as full-time director of Christian education and music, an affiliation that would last for 37 years. Over the course of his service at Mt. Olive, Manz's job description would change several times as the congregation made every effort to nurture and share his gifts with the church-at-large. A man of many sought-after talents, Manz served on the faculties at the University of Minnesota and Macalester College in St. Paul before he accepted a call in 1957 to serve as professor and chair of the Division of Fine Arts at Concordia College in St. Paul. Rather than lose him, Mt. Olive arranged for Paul's duties to be pared down, allowing him to share his gifts at both institutions.

Manz would serve for many happy years at Concordia. Noteworthy among his numerous accomplishments during his tenure was his establishment of a sound program of music studies with a well-trained and distinguished faculty. His ultimate achievement at Concordia was the fulfillment of the dream that the Fine Arts Division of the school would have its own facility replete with rehearsal rooms, classroom space, and an auditorium complete with a concert pipe organ – designed by Manz, as well as well-designed studios for the art department. Shortly after the realization of this dream,

Manz would find himself caught in the whirlwind and cruel chaos that enveloped the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod at that time. His own convictions, coupled with deeply personal connections to the fray, left Manz with little choice but to resign his position at Concordia. He returned to full-time parish service, this time as Cantor at Mt. Olive with a specific mandate from the parish to use his many gifts in the service of the church catholic.

In 1983, after 37 years of service at Mt. Olive, Paul and Ruth Manz pulled up stakes and began a new chapter of ministry in Chicago, where Manz received a double call to serve as Christ Semine Professor of Church Music and Artist in Residence at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and as Cantor at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Luke. Manz retired from LSTC in September of 1992, but this retirement was merely a change of direction that provided an opportunity for friends and colleagues to encourage him to share his wealth of knowledge through workshops and master classes throughout the country. The dream was formalized with the creation of the Paul Manz Institute of Church Music based at the Church of St. Luke in Chicago. The Institute enabled him to continue to give lavishly and selflessly to others in the church, drawing from his own wealth of education and experience.

After a lifetime of faithful service as a church musician, in 1999 Paul Manz retired from the Paul Manz Institute of Church Music and St. Luke Church at age 80. The Manzes moved back to Minneapolis to be closer to family and friends.

Although it was Manz's intent to keep performing from his base in Minneapolis, his life would soon take another direction. In May of 2000, while in North Carolina preparing to dedicate a new organ at an Episcopal Church in Hendersonville, Manz was stricken with sepsis. While Manz's life was spared, his hearing was greatly compromised. After months of difficult recuperation it became apparent that he would not be able to play again.

The esteem and respect with which Paul Manz was regarded is seen in the numerous honorary doctorates, and honors he received over the course of his career. Northwestern University, his alma mater, presented him with the prestigious "Alumni Merit Award"; Trinity Lutheran

Seminary of Columbus, Ohio bestowed the "Joseph Sittler Award for Theological Leadership"; The Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago presented him with the distinguished "Confessor of Christ Award"; The Chicago Bible Society presented him with the "Gutenberg Award"; and the Lutheran Institute of Washington, DC honored him with the first "Wittenberg Arts Award".

Paul Manz's organ and choral works are internationally known and are used extensively in worship services, recitals, and teaching, and by church and college choirs. His motet "E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come", having sold over one million copies, is regarded as a classic and has been performed and recorded in the United States and abroad. Manz's life and work is the subject of a doctoral dissertation, published in 2007 by MorningStar Music Publishers in St. Louis, Missouri as *The Journey Was Chosen: The Life and Work of Paul Manz*.

Composer, recitalist, teacher, minister of the Word, clinician, author, organ consultant, faithful servant -- all facets of Paul Manz's life shone as sure and faithful reflections of the hope, joy and peace which God has promised to us. Paul is survived by his children, daughter-in-law Patricia Manz (Michael, deceased) of Spokane, John Manz (Ellen Anderson Manz) of Saint Paul, Mary Mueller Bode (Joel, deceased) of Saint Paul, Peter Manz (Stephanie Cram) of Portland, Anne Mueller Klinge (David) of Saint Louis, Sarah Mueller Forsberg (Dale) of Minneapolis, and John Mueller of Spokane. Twelve grandchildren: Erik Manz (Kimberly), David Manz (Caitlin) Rachael M. Manz, Rachel C. Manz, Rebekah Manz, Sarah Bode Selden (Dave), Katherine Edmonds, Erin Klinge Eftink (David), Jessica Klinge Hemmann (Scott), Laura Klinge, Peter Forsberg, Anna Forsberg, and five great grandchildren; many treasured friends, colleagues, former students, and legions of people in the pews. Through the example of his life, through the legacy of his family, and ultimately through the legacy of music that he graced us with to stir our souls, to excite our imaginations, and to enable our prayer and proclamation, we hear Paul Manz say,

*Thank you for the grace of singing with me across the years in good times and in bad,
when our words have stuck in our throats and when our eyes have overflowed with joy.
It has ever been a Song of Grace: 'Love to the loveless shown that we might lovely be.'
I have just been the organist. Thank you for letting me play.*