

Member Spotlight – Bob Glick: A Return Engagement

Many of us look forward to a return engagement by a favorite performer or conductor. Some members of our chapter knew Bob Glick when he was Choir Director/Organist at Greenville's First Presbyterian Church in the 1980s. We followed his career when he left, and we were happy for his return engagement to our city and our chapter in 2016.

Bob is a native of Lebanon, PA—in the epicenter of the Pennsylvania Dutch (Pennsylvania German) country. He started studying piano when he was 7, and the teacher was his great-aunt. She provided his family with an old piano for their practice at home. His oldest sister was organist at their church while she was in high school. At the end of her senior year, the church needed another organist. “It was proposed in late Autumn that if I took organ lessons and practiced REALLY HARD over the summer, that perhaps I MIGHT be her replacement. So, I started lessons and practiced really hard and, indeed, became our church's organist – ‘Acting Organist’ was actually my title.” He was only 13 years old and can only imagine how patient the people in that moderate-sized church must have been. His starting salary of \$30 per month was increased to \$35 and then went up to \$40. Bob muses, “At that point I was no longer their Acting Organist.” With very few lapses, he has been at an organ console every Sunday ever since – 57 years by now. What an impressive tenure!

Bob received his undergraduate degree (music education) in 1973 at Lebanon Valley College (Annville, PA), studying organ with Pierce Getz. He served for one year as middle school music teacher in Ellicott City, MD. He recalls, “I enjoyed working with youth and loved teaching; but middle-school-level music had little to do with the kind of music I wanted to make. What to do?? Another year of public-school teaching was out of the question, but as I was already deeply in debt, entering a master's degree program seemed equally impossible. Providentially, a Lutheran church not far from my hometown was looking for its first full-time Choir Director/Organist – someone WITHOUT a master's degree! I applied and, by the grace of God, was hired. I spent five wonderful years there – Advent Lutheran Church in Reading, PA.”

After Reading, Bob moved to Dallas (TX) and earned the Master of Sacred Music degree at Southern Methodist University, studying with Robert Anderson, Lloyd Pfausch, and Jane Marshall. And after SMU, Bob came to Greenville's First Presbyterian Church. Four years later, he felt the call to seminary and obtained a

Master of Divinity degree at Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West (SC). When finishing that degree, he was asked to remain at Erskine as their first Professor of Church Music, and that began a 28-year tenure of teaching Church Music, Christian Worship, and running the Seminary's chapel program. Opportunities also arose to teach at the college; and he became Professor of Organ, staff accompanist, and taught courses in Music Theory and Church Music. He also served as Professor of Organ at Lander University (Greenwood, SC). In 1990, Bob became organist at the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwood, a position he held for thirty years until December of 2020. In his retirement, he serves as organist at St. George the Martyr Anglican Church in Simpsonville.

When asked about important influences in his life, he mentions the people at his home church who demonstrated what simple honest Christianity was all about and adds, "Musically speaking, my chief influences were Pierce Getz, my college organ teacher, and Eugene Ormandy, legendary conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Both demonstrated the subtleties of music making – the worlds of expression that go miles beyond the notes on the printed page."

Bob is a published composer and arranger of organ and choral music; his works appear in the catalogs of Augsburg, Hope, Paraclete, and Warner Brothers. He is also the author of a book summarizing what he "...observed in life about the links between Old Testament Worship, New Testament Worship, Modern Worship, and Right/Left Brain Theory." The book is entitled, "With All Thy Mind: Worship that Honors the Way God Made Us," and is published by the Alban Institute.

When asked about Greenville then and now, Bob writes, "My music ministry at First Presbyterian was from 1981-1985. Life then took me to other places until my return to the city in 2016. While, frankly, I was not overly impressed with the city in 1981, I was very much aware of its development as I watched from 60 miles away in Greenwood. The changes are profound, and I am very proud and excited to be a part of one of the most exciting small cities I know."

Bob has been a member of the AGO since his college years. He says, "The regional and national conventions are instructive and give opportunities to explore new cities. But primarily, I truly enjoy being with people who understand and share so many of my deepest interests – we know how few of us there are!" He continues, "My other mania is the life and writings of C. S. Lewis. I taught a course on Lewis at Erskine as well. I love travel – especially going places I have never been before.

Especially exciting were two European Organ Tours – one to Paris, and another to Northern and Central Germany. To actually play the organs of Bach, Buxtehude, Dupré, Widor, Franck...well, you know!”

In closing, Bob writes, “John Lennon once said (or sang??), ‘Life is what happens to you while you were making other plans.’ This has been immensely true in my life. I studied Music Education, but only taught one year in public schools. I studied Sacred Music, but only served full time in churches a total of nine years. I got a Master of Divinity degree, but never pastored a church. Yet, I needed all this training to finally do what I did for 28 years at Erskine College and Seminary. It’s amazing what God can do with a jumble of loose ends!”

We are thankful that Bob is active in our chapter during this return engagement.