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Southern California Resident Named One of Top Prize Winners in International Organ Competition

Original Composition Contest Aimed at Promoting Increased Interest in Organ Music

NEW YORK, NY. (January 21, 2008) — Residents of the United States, Germany and Britain, including a USC graduate living in Carlsbad, CA, walked off with top honors in an original composition competition sponsored recently by The American Guild of Organists (AGO).

The prizewinners were:

- 1st prize: "Ornament of Grace" for organ and violin or oboe written by Bernard Wayne Sanders of Muehlheim, Germany.
- 2nd prize: "Toccata Duo" for organ and trumpet, flute or violin written by Paul Ayres of Greenford, United Kingdom.
- 3rd prize: "Reach for the Stars" for organ and oboe written by Jon Naples of Carlsbad, California.

The third prizewinner, Jon Naples of Carlsbad, CA attended the University of Southern California (USC), where, in 1995, he earned his Doctorate in Music. Principal teachers were composers Morten Lauridsen and Frank Ticheli under whose tutelage Naples completed numerous projects leading to several composition awards.

As a frequent contributor of new original repertory through commissions from the Millennium Too! ensemble as well as others, Naples' music is frequently heard nationally in churches and music festivals. Twelve original compositions by Jon Naples can be found on his new art song CD: My November Guest. Naples is Director of Sacred Music at St. Margaret Parish in Oceanside, CA.

The AGO has designated 2008-2009 as the International Year of the Organ (IYO). The IYO 2008-2009 is designed to attract new audiences to the organ and lay the groundwork for future events, fund-raising and membership in the AGO. The 2008 event will begin at the national AGO convention in Minneapolis in June and will conclude with the regional conventions in the summer of 2009.

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Showcasing the IYO will be an Organ Spectacular, during which an estimated 250 organ concerts will be held throughout the world. The event, scheduled to be held on October 19, will be the world's largest organ concert and will feature the organ in its historic and evolving roles as a solo, accompanying and ensemble instrument. The event also will include a commissioned piece by acclaimed American composer, Stephen Paulus.

As part of this yearlong celebration, the AGO incorporated the idea of holding a Composition Competition and received over three-dozen entrants from around the world. Compositions were received from: California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, as well as from Canada, England, and Germany.

The requirements for the competition were to compose an original piece for organ and C instrument, of easy to moderate difficulty, unpublished, and of no more than 5 minutes in length. Mary Beth Bennett, Emma Lou Diemer, and Mark Sedio judged the blind competition.

The first prizewinner, Bernard Wayne Sanders, is a native of DePere, WI and graduate of St. Norbert College. Sanders received his BM degree (Bachelor of Music) in 1979 and pursued graduate study in composition and organ at Wichita State University, which then led to an MM degree (Master of Music) in 1983. Sanders did a postgraduate study in Germany, which earned him a degree in organ performance from the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg in 1989.

Sanders is a full-time music director at the parishes of St. Gallus and St. Mary's in Tuttlingen, diocesan liaison and an official organ consultant for the Tuttlingen area (Baden -Wuerttemberg). He resides with his wife and two daughters in Muehlheim, Germany.

The second prizewinner, Paul Ayres, was born in London and studied music at Oxford University. Ayres works in London as a freelance composer arranger, choral conductor, musical director, organist and accompanist. His recent commissions include works for the BBC Singers and for the Seattle choir, The Esoterics. Ayres is an assistant director of music at London's St George's Church Hanover Square.

The first prize composition will be published by Concordia and discussed and analyzed on the BinAural Collaborative Hypertext (B.A.C.H.) website. The three prizewinners received monetary prizes from Hal Hinkle, an American financier, musician and patron of the arts.

About AGO/American Guild of Organists

Founded in 1896 as both an educational and service organization, the [American Guild of Organists \(AGO\)](#) sets and maintains high musical standards and promotes understanding and appreciation of all aspects of organ and choral music.

The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members.

For more information about the AGO, please visit the association's website at <http://www.agohq.org/home.html>.

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Michael Bedner To Receive Lifetime Achievement Award

Santa Monica, Ca., 03/23/07 – Michael Bedner, CEO of Santa Monica, Ca.-based hospitality design firm HBA/Hirsch Bedner Associates, is set to receive the distinguished International Interior Design Association's (IIDA) Lifetime Achievement Award at a sold out black tie gala dinner on March 27th, 2007 at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

With 12 offices and 430 employees worldwide, HBA/Hirsch Bedner Associates ranks 10th on *Interior Design* magazine's list of the Top 100 firms in the country. The firm holds the #1 spot on the "Top 10 in Hospitality Design" list and the #2 spot on the "Top 10 With Foreign Projects" list.

The IIDA is a professional networking and education association with more than 10,000 members in eight specialty forums, nine regions, and more than 30 chapters around the world.

Bedner started the firm in 1964 with his friend and partner, Howard Hirsch. The company started with a focus on hospitality design, then a virtually non-existent industry category, and quickly gained client, and critical acclaim worldwide.

Bedner's vision has been to expand the discipline into a functional art form that continues to evolve. His creative energy and design influence can be seen in hundreds of the finest hotels throughout the world, including: The Beverly Hills Hotel, Beverly Hills, California.; Park Hotel, Chennai, India; The Fullerton, Singapore; Mandarin Oriental, Miami, Florida; St. Regis Hotel, Shanghai; and The Ritz Carlton Millenia, Singapore.

Under Bedner's leadership, HBA has raised the bar in every area of hospitality design and developed extraordinarily strong teams for graphic design and art consultation. He has lectured extensively at institutions in North American and Asia, hosted hospitality design classes conducted through UCLA's Extension program, and set up a Design Competition and Awards Program at UCLA to honor his partner and HBA's co-founder, Howard Hirsch.

Throughout his career, he has remained committed to the three principles on which he and Howard Hirsch based the business: to have fun, learn and grow from every experience and to produce the best design possible for each project.

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For Immediate Release

**WESTERN DENTAL TO PROVIDE FREE SCREENINGS, INFORMATIONAL
LITERATURE AND GIFT PACKS AT FIESTA BROADWAY**

Annual Ethnic Celebration on April 30 Expected to Attract More than 500,000

ORANGE, Calif. (April 26, 2006) – Western Dental Services, Inc., California’s neighborhood dentist and the largest provider of dental services in California, will be a major participant in the City of Los Angeles’ 17th Annual Fiesta Broadway festival celebrating “Cinco de Mayo.” The festival is being held on Sunday, April 30, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. in downtown Los Angeles over a 36-square-block area. It is the largest Hispanic event in Los Angeles County, celebrating the city’s rich Latino heritage through a wide array of day-long activities.

As in previous years, dental care professionals from Western Dental will be present to meet and greet attendees and distribute educational literature and gift packs containing a variety of oral care products. The company also will host a “wheel of fun” at its booth where festival attendees can win a number of entertaining and educational prizes.

Free dental screenings will be provided throughout the day, with dentists and support personnel on hand to provide tips on proper brushing and flossing, how to prevent cavities and tooth decay, and ways to ensure healthy gums. Pearly White, Western Dental’s very own live, five-foot-tall tooth mascot also will be at the festival to meet and greet the crowd and pose for photographs.

“We are delighted to participate in Fiesta Broadway and show our company’s appreciation for the ethnically diverse culture of this area and the unique contributions that have been made to Southern California by our Hispanic and Latino friends and neighbors,” said Samuel H. Gruenbaum, president of Western Dental Services. “A number of our offices are located in Hispanic neighborhoods, with bilingual staffs to better serve our patients. We recognize the significance of Cinco de Mayo here and are pleased to support this festival.”

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Gruenbaum added that Western Dental's participation in ethnic events like Fiesta Broadway is a way for the company to help promote better oral hygiene among all families, including those in city's large, vibrant Hispanic communities. "Because there is a high incidence of tooth decay and oral disease among our youth in California, we want to make every effort to reach out and educate them and their families on this vital issue," he said.

Western Dental, he noted, has been active for several years in city and county health fairs, school health programs and other community events and ethnic celebrations such as Fiesta Broadway to better educate the public about oral hygiene. "Community outreach is extremely important to us and we are firmly committed to it," he noted.

Headquartered in the city of Orange, Calif., Western Dental Services is one of the nation's leading dental health maintenance organizations. It currently operates more than 190 dental centers throughout California and Arizona.

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