



THE NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER
of the
American Guild of Organists
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John Bishop, editor

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Don't miss events presented by your friends and colleagues.
Visit the Concert Calendar of the NYC Chapter,
and attend some concerts!

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Dean's Message

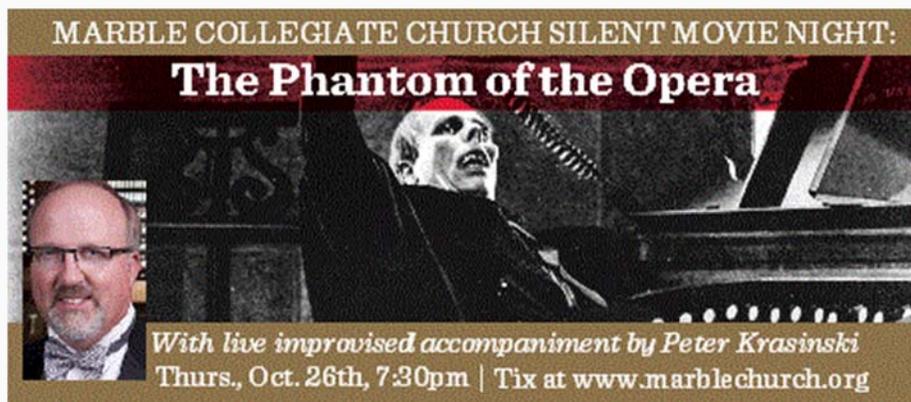
Dear Colleagues,

We begin our new series of chapter events this month. Please plan on attending as many as you can, as there are some really fantastic things in store.

Some members of our board are working on outreach lately, trying to get in touch with organists and organ music lovers who don't yet belong to the chapter. Could you help us by inviting a friend or colleague to an event you think might be appealing?

With our best wishes for a music-filled autumn,

Yours truly,
David Enlow,
Dean



Program News

The 2017-18 season is going to be a great one! Our first event of the season is on **Monday, October 9 at 6:00 PM** featuring our Chapter competition winner **Alessandro Pittorino in recital**, followed by a champagne reception. The event will take place at Christ Church Methodist on Park Avenue (Steve Pilkington, host). Alessandro knows the IV/76 Casavant instrument well from his time as Organ Scholar there, and will be sure to deliver a thrilling performance. Admission is free to NYC AGO Chapter members and \$10 in cash at the door for all others. [Click here for directions.](#)



On **Sunday, November 12 at 3:00 PM** we will hear Sophie-Véronique Choplin in concert at the Church of St. Vincent Ferrer (James Wetzel, host), one of NYC's most majestic buildings replete with two Schantz instruments in a splendid acoustical environment. Sophie-Véronique Choplin is one of France's most prodigious organists, and she is currently co-titular of the Grand Orgue of Saint Sulpice Church, Paris. We are also hoping to arrange a masterclass with Ms. Choplin. [Click here for directions.](#)

In addition to our these exciting performances, the Chapter is holding various **educational activities** for children, adults, amateurs, and professionals. Our first education event is our **AGO certification preparation workshop** for those preparing to take AGO diploma certifications this season. David Enlow, Andrew Henderson, and James Kennerley will lead workshops and give coachings on **Saturday, November 18, 2017 from 4:00-6:00 PM** at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. You must pre-register for this event so that we are able to plan the workshop according. Pre-register by [clicking here](#). It's a fabulous and FREE resource so please take advantage! Registration is open to all those of the Chapter who are considering taking an exam, and for those who are confirmed to do so. [Click here for directions.](#)

The **Presidents' Day Conference** is the Chapter's landmark event. This year, we will be celebrating the installation of the magnificent relocated/enlarged Noack Opus 111 from its original home in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts to historic Saint Paul's Chapel in downtown Manhattan. As a prelude to the festivities **Benjamin Sheen**, Associate Organist at Saint Thomas Church, will give a recital on the Taylor and Boody instrument at Saint Thomas Church on **Sunday, February 18 at 5:15 PM**. Admission is free. [Click here for directions.](#) On **Monday, February 19 beginning at 9:15 AM** we will spend the day with the Grammy Award-winning Trinity Choir, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, who, together with Jonathan Ambrosino, Avi Stein, Peter Sykes, Julian Wachner and others will lead us in a day of celebrating the old and the new, with thrilling performances and unique sightseeing possibilities. The event is free to NYC AGO Chapter members, and any potential attendees are encouraged to join the Chapter. [Click here for directions.](#)

Our **Improvisation Festival** will take the form of a **silent movie featuring David Briggs**, Artist in Residence at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine (Kent Tritle and Ray Nagem, hosts) on **Saturday, February 24 at 7:30 PM**. David will improvise the soundtrack to the epic 1927 silent movie, King of Kings on the cathedral's landmark IV/146 Aeolian-Skinner instrument. Tickets will be required, and a link to reserve (free for NYC AGO members) and purchase (\$20 for all others) will be made available closer to the performance. [Click here for directions.](#)

Following the announcement of James David Christie as winner of the **2017 International Performer of the Year Award**, we are currently in negotiations to present him in concert in the spring. Details will be shared as soon as they are available.

The Chapter's **Organ Day for Pianists** will be held on **Saturday, April 7 from 10:30 AM-1:00 PM** at the **Church of the Transfiguration** and **Marble Collegiate Church** (Claudia Dumschat and Ken Dake, hosts). These occasions are great for introducing keyboardists to the thrills (and challenges!) of playing the organ, and we will have a host of generous and welcoming teachers. Many thanks to Ryan Jackson, Mark Pacoe, and James Wetzel for managing the outreach committee for this event. Please share this event with your piano-playing friends! [Click here for directions.](#)

The final event of the season is an **Evening at Saint Thomas Church** with Daniel Hyde and Benjamin Sheen on **Monday, June 19**. We will be entertained by the two maestri after which we will have a splendid cocktail reception and dinner. The musical proceedings begin at 6:00 PM with dinner at 7:00 PM. Tickets cost \$75 (including a generous subsidy by the chapter) and will be made available via online reservation closer to the date.

The season will be rounded out in June with a splendid finale **Cocktail Reception, and Dinner** at Saint Thomas Church, preceded by a **duet recital by Daniel Hyde and Benjamin Sheen**. [Click here for directions.](#) Tickets cost \$75 (including a generous subsidy by the Chapter) and will be made available via online reservations closer to the date.

We look forward to welcoming you to many of these wonderful events!

With my very best wishes, on behalf of the Program Committee and the IPYA Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

James Kennerley
Sub-Dean & Chair of the Program Committee



A selection of this season's performers, clockwise from top left: Sophie-Véronique Choplin, Daniel Hyde, Julian Wachner, Claudia Dumschat, Trinity Choir and Baroque Orchestra, Benjamin Sheen, Alessandro Pittorino, Peter Sykes (center).

2017 International Performer of the Year Award winner

We are delighted to announce that **James David Christie** has been chosen by the membership to be the **winner of the 2017 International Performer of the Year Award**. We had a superb slate of finalists and the race was extremely close. It also saw the highest level of participation from the Chapter, which is always encouraging. Jim will be the twenty-first winner of the coveted award, which was created in 1978 to recognize excellence in organ performance and to increase public awareness of the organ and its performers. The award is considered by many to be the highest honor given to organists by a professional musicians' guild in the United States.

Jim is well known to many of us in the AGO and the national and international organ scenes. He has performed, literally, around the world with symphony orchestras and period instrument ensembles as well as in solo recitals. He was the 1979 First Prize

winner of the Bruges (Belgium) International Organ Competition and was the first American to win First Prize in this prestigious competition as well as the first person in the competition's eighteen-year history to win both the First Prize and the Prize of the Audience.

Dr. Christie was awarded an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the New England School of Law for his outstanding contributions to the musical life of Boston and the New England Conservatory honored him with their Outstanding Alumni Award. He has served on international organ competition juries in Paris, St. Omer-Wasquehal, Chartres, Biarritz, Béthune, St. Albans, Amsterdam, Lübeck, Bordeaux, Dublin, Worcester, Calgary, Montréal, Columbus, Dallas, Leipzig, Erfurt, Weimar, Merseburg, Speyer, Tokyo, Moscow, Kaliningrad, Astana, Lausanne, Pistoia, Boston, Bruges and several others.

He holds positions as Chair and Professor of Organ at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, OH, Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA, and serves as College Organist at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA. He has served as organist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1978. He has previously held positions at Boston Conservatory, Harvard University, M.I.T. and Boston University.

Many thanks to Chapter auditors Chelsea Chen and Steven Lawson for dutifully checking the results of the vote, which were submitted both electronically and in paper form.

With our best wishes,

The International Performer of the Year Award Committee

James Kennerley, chair

Jared Lamenzo

Renée Louprette

Stephen Tharp



James David Christie, winner of the 2017 International Performer of the Year Award

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Quote of the Month

"Musicians don't retire; they stop when there's no more music in them."

- Louis Armstrong



David Enlow, FAGO
Juilliard Faculty
Organ Lessons, Coaching,
AGO Exam Preparation

Won't you be my neighbor?

When I was a teenager in suburban Boston and given my wings to take the train into the city on my own, I loved to hang out at the music stores along Boylston Street, in the block between Tremont and Charles Streets. There were three; Carl Fischer, Charles W. Hohmeyer, and the Boston Music Company. Each was housed in a comfortable building with two-story ceilings, surrounding balconies, and open stairways. It was stimulating to leaf through bins of sheet music, discovering new treasures, and learning about the succession of composers. There was a clerk name George Kerr at Hohmeyer's who was always willing to chat about famous musicians who had been in and out in recent weeks, and who gave me freebies, making me think I was a special customer. Later, I realized he was giving me the third-string stuff he couldn't sell, but I learned a lot of it anyway.



When we're unable to talk ourselves out of it, Wendy and I spend time in a gym that's spacious and airy, well equipped, and just around the corner from our apartment. The staff is courteous and helpful, though sometimes in private sessions they try to kill us, and with the help of books on tape, I spend strenuous but pleasant hours there.

The spacious and airy part has a certain familiarity to it, along with the surrounding balcony and gold-painted iron stairways – that's it, it's just like the interior of Charles W. Hohmeyer in Boston where I spent those youthful hours. You guessed it. We're in the Carl Fischer Building at 62 Cooper Square, the original company's name stilled heralded in bronze letters above the door to the gym. Besides the New York Health & Racquet Club on the first floor, the building was converted to luxury condominium residences. StreetEasy reports that one apartment is for sale at moment priced at \$29,500,000, and the average price of the most recent eighteen sales is \$4,778,888.

I prefer the treadmills on the balcony, where I have a view of the interior expanse. It's fun to imagine it as a Temple of Music, with row after row of shelves and bins full of musical mysteries and delights. I can picture the sales counter with a bank of steel file cabinets

behind, and clerks calling their customers by name as they leaf through the stacks looking for just the right masterpiece for the moment. Worshipers at the temple must have included all the luminaries of the music world who lived in or traveled through New York. Look, there's Leonard Bernstein with a sheaf of pages under his arm. I wonder who else might have wandered through? Isaac Stern, Maria Callas, Alec Wyton, David McK. Williams, T. Tertius Noble, Arturo Toscanini? Luciano Pavarotti?

It's sad to realize that besides the small shop at Juilliard, there is no full-scale independent retailer of published music in New York. What was once a temple of music, is now a temple of physical fitness and self-awareness.

- John Bishop

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Joke of the Month

"Some people ask about the secret of our long marriage. We take time to go to a restaurant two times a week. A little candlelight, dinner, soft music, dancing. She goes Tuesdays, I go Fridays."

-Henny Youngman

From the Editor

The Municipal Organist.

The City Council of Portland, Maine held its regularly semi-monthly meeting in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call of Council Members, the regular opening feature welcomed a troupe of African drummer/dancers, who thundered into the chamber in brilliant costumes, and paraded back and forth making joyful noises, both percussive and vocal. Then, in a brief display of Parliamentary Procedure, the Mayor adjourned the meeting of the City Council, opened a meeting of the Portland Fish Exchange (a non-profit daily fish auction) to enact a change in bylaws revising residency requirements of Board members.



The City Council meeting was re-convened to act on several Mayoral Proclamations, including naming the city's Employee of the Month, and the stage was set for the really important work of the evening. Peter Plumb, longtime Portland attorney and patron of the arts (and former organ student of Charles Dodsley Walker) presented James Kennerley to the Council for appointment as the Eleventh Municipal Organist of the City of Portland.

James will succeed Ray Cornils who has served with distinction for 27 years. Ray will end his tenure presenting the wildly popular *Christmas with Cornils* programs in December, and James assumes the post on January 1, 2018.

New York City members of the AGO know James well through his enthusiastic leadership of the Chapter as sub-dean, and his versatility as a performer. In the public secular role of Municipal Organist, James will accompany silent films, and present multiple concerts each year to include the masterworks of traditional organ literature, orchestral transcriptions, and novelties, all exploring the tonal resources of the newly renovated, 100-stop, five manual Kotzschmar Organ, complete with toy counter - all the bells and whistles.

Though the City of Portland owns the organ, its maintenance and use are the responsibility of the Friends of the Kotschmar Organ, which raises the necessary funds, enhanced by an annual contribution from the city. James' appointment is the result of an eight-month process, during which the Search Committee heard dozens of recorded auditions, and narrowed the field to six candidates who traveled to Portland for live



auditions and interviews.

The Mighty Kotschmar Organ is the perfect vehicle for this exciting new appointment. Fresh from the Centennial Renovation renovation completed by Foley-Baker, Inc. in 2014, it's in perfect condition, and beautifully set in the 1800-seat Merrill Auditorium.

And the Portland area is the perfect place for a weekend get-away or vacation. Renowned for outstanding restaurants and micro-breweries, and of course, for the famous Maine lobster, it offers many cultural experiences, and the beauty of the Maine seacoast. Watch FOKO's website for yet-to-be-determined new programming, and plan your trip early and often.
