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of the
American Guild of Organists

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John Bishop, editor

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and attend some concerts!

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Dean's Message

Dear Colleagues,

At the time of writing, spring has consisted largely of snowstorms and complaining. I am looking forward to summer, even if we must go directly from Nor'Easters to 100-degree heat without the intervening civilization, to borrow a phrase.

In the chapter's common life, we are closing the season with our colleagues on Fifth Avenue's midtown Anglican branch, to see a giant of the profession, our most recent International Performer of the Year, James David Christie, and to have a nice dinner. Tickets are required; try not to leave it too late.

Yours truly,

David Enlow
Dean



Program News

Many thanks to James Wetzel, Ken Dake, and Claudia Dumschat for hosting and teaching on the **Organ Day for Pianists** earlier in April. It was an excellent way to introduce non-members to the Chapter, and to the pipe organ in general. Bravi tutti!

Our final event of the year is the **Concert by James David Christie**, 2017 International Performer of the Year winner, at Saint Thomas Church on **Monday, June 18 at 6 PM**. The concert, performed on the 1996/2015 Taylor and Booday gallery instrument, will be followed by the award presentation and



a festive dinner, catered by renowned Executive Chef, Heidi Thomas. Many of us will remember Heidi's incredible food from our dinner there a few years ago – it's quite something. **Tickets for the concert are free and open to all but must be reserved by clicking here.** Tickets for the dinner are \$75 per person, available here. Please note that there is a 60-person limit for the dinner so be sure to purchase yours now! Guests are always welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you to this fabulous event.

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, flowing style.

James Kennerley
Sub-Dean & Chair of the Program Committee



James David Christie, winner of the 2017 International Performer of the Year Award, will play a concert on Monday, June 18 at 6 PM. See above for more details.



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Quote of the Month

"One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain."
-- Bob Marley



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

Won't you be my neighbor?

Have you ever wondered where the block of stone came from for iconic sculptures like Michelangelo's *David*? That bad boy is over seventeen feet tall and weighs 12,478 pounds. Do you suppose that the original block weighed twice that? It came from a marble quarry in Carrara, Italy, about a hundred-forty kilometers from Florence. That was quite a moving job for material handlers around the year 1500. They had to wait for the rainy season to be over.



A similar feat was accomplished between 1899 and 1903 in our neighborhood. In 1899, the Bodwell Granite Company of Vinalhaven, Maine signed a contract to deliver eight granite columns for the Choir of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, each fifty-four feet tall and six feet in diameter. The stone would be supplied by the Wharff Quarry which was located on a hillside, making it easier to remove such huge pieces, but when workers placed a fifty-five-foot piece of granite on a lathe (stop and think about that for a moment, that must have been some machine), it cracked in half. In the end,

the columns were made of two pieces, the lower part eighteen feet tall, weighing forty tons, the upper at thirty-six feet tall, weighing ninety tons.

Vinalhaven is a picturesque island in the middle of Maine's Penobscot Bay. Today, it's reached by ferry from Rockland. It's a popular location for summer homes, and there's a year-round population of around 1100. Quarries on Vinalhaven supplied stone for the Brooklyn Bridge and dozens of other notable structures, but in the early days of the twentieth century, as steel became the building material of choice, business dwindled for the quarries and the last closed in 1931. Today, the island's principal industries are fisheries and tourism.

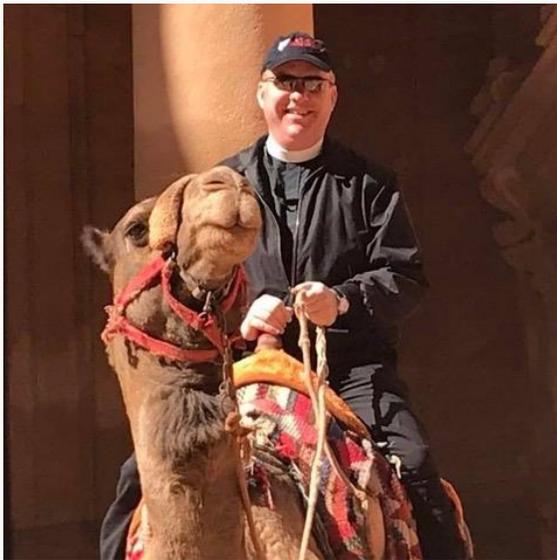
The massive columns for the Cathedral were turned and polished, and loaded onto the barge *Clara Clarita*, the first two arriving in New York in 1903. They were unloaded onto a pier on the Hudson River, placed on wheeled carriages, and towed by tractors to the Cathedral on Amsterdam Avenue. There must have been dozens of engineers and hundreds of workers involved, creating the necessary equipment, and hoisting the huge columns into place. The project was completed in 1904, and the Cathedral Choir was consecrated in 1911. Ernest Skinner's Opus 150 (four manuals and eighty-four ranks) was installed in the Choir in 1906.

Sitting in the Cathedral today, it's hard to imagine the place without those massive but graceful columns. But borrowing from the unofficial motto of the state of New Hampshire, "don't take them for granite."

ARTHUR LAWRENCE
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Joke of the Month



Organ Guys with Animals

Top left: Fr. George Hafemann, Chair of the Liturgical Music Commission, Archdiocese of New York, and Pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Goshen, NY during a trip to the Holy Land in early 2018.

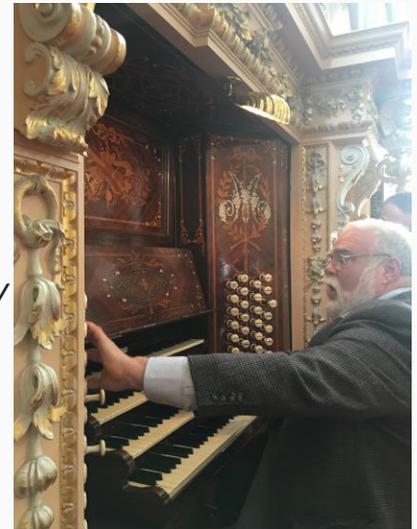
Top right: Organbuilder John Brombaugh, traveling in Morocco, March 2018. Photo credit: Organbuilder Gene Bedient.

Bottom: John Bishop, director of the Organ Clearing House and editor of NYC AGO Newsletter, traveling in Thailand, September 2009.

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From the Editor

In January of 1908, City Hall in Portland, Maine was destroyed by a fire that, ironically, started in the new electric fire alarm located in the City Electrician's office. The city leaders wasted no time. Prominent New York architects, Carrère and Hastings were engaged, and the new City Hall was dedicated on August 22, 1912. Portland native, Cyrus H. K. Curtis, publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post*, donated a 100-stop concert organ by the Austin Organ Company to be installed in City Hall's auditorium. Mr. Curtis presented the organ to the city during the dedication of City Hall, in memory of Hermann Kotzschmar, Portland's most prominent musician, who was Curtis' father's great friend, one of Curtis' teachers, and his namesake, hence the middle initials, "H.K."



During a budget crisis in the late 1970's, the City Council elected to discontinue funding the instrument, and a group of local enthusiasts founded the Friends of the Kotzschmar Organ as a non-profit corporation dedicated to the maintenance and promotion of the iconic instrument. I joined FOKO's Board of Directors in 2007 and was chair of the Organ Committee and Clerk of the Works through the Centennial Renovation of the organ. At the end of 2017, Ray Cornils retired after serving 27 years as Municipal Organist, and it was my privilege to sit on the Search Committee under chairman Larry Rubinstein.

After rounds of recorded and live auditions, the committee unanimously selected James Kennerley, organist at St. Ignatius of Antioch, sub-dean of the NYC Chapter of the AGO, and well-known "musician about town" in New York, as Portland's 11th Municipal Organist in June of 2017. His appointment was confirmed by unanimous vote of the Portland City Council on September 18, 2017, and he started his duties on January 1. Coincidentally, Raúl Prieto Ramírez, played his debut concert as the only other Municipal Organist in the United States at the Spreckels Pavilion in San Diego, California on January 7, 2018.



James played his debut concert, *Overtures*, at Merrill Auditorium before an enthusiastic audience of nearly 750 on April 18. He opened with his transcription of Rossini's *Overture to William Tell*, his first measures played as Municipal Organist appropriately depicting a sunrise, and the energetic and beloved *March of the Swiss Guards* thrilling the audience. Cesar Franck's *Choral No. 2 in B minor* was a wonderful choice, showcasing the organ's vast symphonic capabilities, and featuring not one, but two different

Vox Humanas. The great symphonic organist, Edwin Lemare, was Portland's Municipal Organist from 1921 – 1923. James presented Lemare's transcription of Wagner's *Overture to Die Meistersinger* without hesitating to add complexity and depth in his "transcription of the transcription."

The second half of the concert opened with a nod to James' British heritage as he presented Alfred Hollins' *Concert Overture in C Minor*, a colorful compelling Victorian swoop, and Jonathan Dove's *The Dancing Pipes*, written for James' teacher and organist for the City of Birmingham, Thomas Trotter. Edwin Lemare's *Andantino in D-Flat Major* followed, a treacly sentimental melody made famous by the copyright-busting song writers, Daniels and Black, under the title, "Moonlight and Roses." (Lemare did get a settlement!) The announced program ended with James' transcription of Leonard Bernstein's *Overture to Candide*, an energetic experience showcasing the Kotzschmar Organ's comprehensive collection of percussions and toys and James' commanding sense of rhythm.

Before James came to Portland, I had heard and known him as a serious musician, especially able as singer, keyboard player, and conductor in countless performances of early music, so I was dazzled during his audition, along with the rest of the committee, by his reading of Zequinha de Abreu's *Tico-Tico no Fubá*. He repeated it as the encore to his opening concert, revealing the extent of its improvisatory content through the many and significant differences between the two performances. His imaginative and virtuosic use of the organ was proof of a nascent affinity between musician and instrument, with the promise of great things to come.

It's interesting to note that the Franck Choral was the only piece James offered from the great standard organ repertory, and was also the earliest composed piece on the program. By far, the greater part of the concert was music not originally for the organ. The delighted audience bounded to its feet with enthusiastic ovations. I know James will present lots of the great repertory during his tenure, but his concert was a terrific start in that secular and public position.

I invite James' friends and colleagues to join me congratulating him in this exciting role. Visit www.foko.org to keep up with the schedule of upcoming concerts, and while you're there, make a contribution that will help support the life and use of this grand concert. Better yet, come to Portland to hear James play the Kotzschmar Organ. The city is alive with terrific restaurants, micro-breweries, and the beauty of the Maine coast. You know you want to!
