



THE NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER
of the
American Guild of Organists

www.nycago.org



Volume 71, Number 1

September 2020

Table of Contents

- [Dean's Message](#)
- [Program News](#)
- [Bulletin Board](#)
- [Member News](#)
- [From the Editor](#)
- [Getting to Know You](#)
- [Quote of the Month](#)

Dean's Message

Sweet Airs That Give Delight

*Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again. And then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
I cried to dream again.*

(Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act 3, Scene 2)

One of my most favorite lines from my most favorite of Shakespeare's plays is uttered by the most unlikely of characters. It is uttered by Caliban, an island "monster" who is "civilized" by the exiled magician, Prospero, his master. He is comforting two attendants from a ship belonging to the Duke of Milan which becomes stranded on the island. Caliban's eloquence in explaining the provenance of the "sweet airs" is a remarkable meditation on the powerful

otherworldliness of music. How many of us have “cried to dream again” of the time when we could once make music, attend concerts and services, or take a flight without being hampered by the realities of the coronavirus? March seems like a lifetime ago, and a return to “normal” still seems an eon away.



Fortunately, with thanks to the Internet and the brilliance of our Sub Dean, James Wetzels, and his Program Committee, we have an imaginative season of digital events planned. The September newsletter is all about the program year, and I will leave it to James to communicate the details of the next few months’ worth of events. Suffice to say that we have a great deal to look forward to over the next few months.

The Chapter Board has been busy during the course of the summer. Among other things, we established a sub-committee to consider preliminarily some practical ways in which the Chapter can best serve as a welcoming, supportive place for people of color. Webmaster Sam Bartlett made suggestions concerning the long-overdue updating of our website, together with the maintenance and continued growth of the New York City Organ Project. The Membership Directory is in the proofing stages and will be printed and mailed later this month. It contains, among other things, two fascinating articles on our 2019 and 2020 award winners that are worthy of publication by themselves.

We have so much to be thankful for, and so much to look forward to as a Chapter. While the isle of Manhattan (and Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx!) might not be full of the noises of pipe organ concerts and events at the moment, they will be soon enough. In the meantime, our program of digital events is sure to inspire and entertain.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James".

James Kennerley, *Dean*

Program News

Online Initiatives for Fall 2020

General Overview

The Program Committee decided that all fall 2020 programming will be exclusively online. Apart from a save the date for our annual **Presidents' Day Conference on Monday, February 15, 2021**, we will not announce the spring events until later this year.

The Chapter will offer an online event at **7 PM on Monday nights this fall, beginning on October 5th**. A link to the individual programs will be distributed each week via email and Facebook, along with supplementary details. All of these events will be archived on an NYCAGO YouTube page which will be launched on October 5th.

Behind the Pipes: Organ Building in NYC

[First Monday of the month, beginning October 5th](#)

In the last generation there has been an enormous amount of organ building and restoration within the Chapter done by firms from all over the globe. We also count world-class organbuilders and technicians as local neighbors.

This series of interviews and panel discussions will examine the City's organ scene, address the challenges of installing an instrument in the unique environment of Manhattan, and consider how such organs can be maintained in today's climate.

Pipe Organs of NYC

[Subsequent Mondays of the month, beginning October 12th](#)

There are few cities in the world with a richer assortment of pipe organs than our own, as the NYC Organ Project showcases. Beginning this fall, in lieu of actually going in person, we will start a virtual tour of NYC organs.

Via YouTube and Facebook, we will "visit" several significant instruments from within our Chapter each Monday, with the house organist(s) offering roughly 10 minutes-worth of repertoire. The initial viewing will be webcast as a compiled video of about 40 minutes; that is, three or four locations per show.

Subsequently, we will link each organ's individual portion to its corresponding page on the NYC Organ Project, thus creating an audio-visual counterpoint to the technical and historical information compiled by Steve Lawson et al.

This project will continue at least into the spring of 2021.

Program Committee

James D. Wetzel, *Chair*

Andrew Henderson, Michael Hey, James Kennerley, Larry Long,
Donald Meineke, Raymond Nagem, and Janet Yieh, *Members*

For suggestions and comments, please email [James Wetzel](mailto:James.Wetzel@nycago.org).

Bulletin Board

Coronavirus Relief Fund

The Chapter is providing an emergency relief fund for current members of the Chapter (all categories, including dual membership) financially affected by the Coronavirus and its aftermath. Funds will be allocated on a first-come basis up to a total of \$350 per person. Applications and disbursements will be handled as discretely as possible. Please email [Claudia Dumschat](#) with your request.

Classifieds

For sale: collection of organ music. All classical/sacred; approximately 40 volumes plus some single pieces; most are used. \$1 per volume. Highlights include: Bach (8 volumes), Buxtehude (4), Stanley (3), Franck (3), Willan (2), Brahms, Bruhns, Lubeck, Mendelssohn, Sweelink, Widor, and more. Ideal for a church organist or an organ student. Cash and pickup only. For inquiries, email Chapter member [Eric Daffron](#).

For free: a pair of men's size 11.5 organ shoes. After wearing several times, they did fit well; so since they are now nonreturnable, they are being offered to anyone who can use them. Contact [Stewart Holmes](#), Northern New Jersey AGO Chapter Administrator, for more details.

Position Available

Music Director (Part-Time Position)
Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church
178 Bennett Ave
New York, NY 10040
[More information here.](#)

Editor's Note

In last month's *Getting to Know You* column, the dates of Frederick Swann's title as Organist at The Riverside Church should have read 1958-1982. Also, I neglected to give compositional credit of the feature article to Christopher Johnson and Christopher Creaghan, respectively Director of Music and Organist and Associate Organist of The Riverside Church. Many thanks for their excellent contributions.

Member News

Recent Appointments

[Diane Meredith Belcher](#)

as Director of Music of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Central Park West at 66th Street), home of the renowned Bach Vespers series.

[More information here.](#)

David Enlow

as Music Director of Park Avenue Synagogue (50 East 87th Street), where his predecessors include Colin Fowler and McNeil Robinson.

David will also continue to serve as Organist and Choir Master of the Church of the Resurrection (119 East 74th Street).

[More information here.](#)

This column used to appear regularly, and we are resuming it now. Chapter members are invited to submit news items (professional appointments, retirements, marriages, births, obituaries, etc.) to [the editor](#) for publication.



David Enlow, FAGO
Teaching, AGO Exam Prep.
Accompanying, Concerts

From the Editor

Ad fontes

September is the time for newness in the musical world. New concert seasons, new academic terms, new choral rosters, new organ repertoire from summertime practice sessions. Maybe a new boss or a new job. Hopefully new determination, new resolutions for punctuality and organization, new approaches to ongoing problems.

Every September, we begin a new volume of the newsletter. The Chapter was founded in 1950, so here is number one of volume 71. (Actually, the first newsletter was not published until 1959; more on that below.) With this new leaf, I have introduced a few modest modifications to the newsletter's format, including a new font. And in that same spirit, I would like to encourage all of our Chapter members to reinvigorate their participation in this forum by more regularly sharing news of appointments, upcoming concerts, and the like. A publication such as ours does not exist exclusively as a vehicle for the Board to communicate the Chapter's "official" programming, but also to serve as a platform for the membership to share the activities *of* its members.

Please consider ways in which the Chapter, particularly through this newsletter, can be a better font of collective wisdom, experience, and inquiry,

especially when personal interactions are still curtailed. Let me know what sort of articles you would like to see appear herein.

Submitted for our mutual enrichment in these days, may I remain,

Sincerely,



James D. Wetzel, *Sub Dean*



Getting to Know You

The New York City Chapter

Editor's note: Since we are beginning a season with a new board and a new volume of this newsletter, I thought a brief history of the Chapter instead of one of its institutions might be of interest.

The American Guild of Organists was organized on April 13, 1896 in New York City with 145 founding members. The Pennsylvania Chapter was formed in Philadelphia in 1902 and the New England Chapter in Boston in 1905, with many other localized chapters following suit. It was not until October 9, 1950, however, that the New York City Chapter was made independent from the former Headquarters Chapter. The officers of the new Chapter, which had 745 members, assumed their duties on January 1, 1951. The first public meeting, a recital and service which included the installation of officers, took place on January 9 of that year at the Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal) on East 31st Street in Manhattan.

The Chapter has hosted several conventions: the [1956 National Convention](#) (June 25-29, 1956); the [1958 Annual National Midwinter Conclave](#) (December 29-31, 1958); and the Centennial National Convention (July 7-11, 1996). Before the Chapter was organized, the [1935 National Convention](#) (June 24-28, 1935) was held in New York City.

The Chapter's first newsletter, *The AGO Times*, began publication in 1959 as a listing of concert events. In 2003, the newsletter was renamed *Double Open* and made available in PDF format, allowing distribution via email. Also in 2003, the Chapter launched its website. The newsletter was changed in 2006 to its current format. Archived issues are available on the website.

[The International Performer of the Year Award](#) was first granted in 1978 (to Robert Noehren) and has continued for most but not all years following; the

award is considered by many to be the highest honor given to organists by a professional musicians' guild in the United States. [The Distinguished Career Award](#) was created in 2016 to honor people for exemplary service to the organ, choral music, and related fields. The two awards are now given in alternate years.

The Chapter, the largest in the Guild, currently has approximately 400 members.

(Information adapted from the NYCAGO website.)

Quote of the Month

It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future.
~Yogi Berra

NYCAGO Chapter Information

General Inquiries

[Chapter Contacts Page](#)

[Chapter Committees and Appointments](#)

Newsletter

James D. Wetzel, *editor*

The newsletter is published on the first of every month. Please submit all material (advertising, announcements, classifieds, etc.) to [the editor](#) by the 24th of the preceding month.

Executive Board

Dean: James Kennerley

Sub Dean: James D. Wetzel

Secretary: Raymond Nagem

Treasurer: Patrick Kreeger

Registrar: Larry Long

Auditors: Paolo Bordignon and Andrew Henderson

At-large (Class of 2024): Loraine Enlow, Nathaniel Gumbs, Bernadette Hoke, Colin MacKnight, Jared Lamenzo, and Lena Tharp

At-large (Class of 2022): Sam Bartlett, Gregory D'Agostino, Donald Meineke, William Randolph, Jason Roberts, J. David Williams, and Janet Yieh

The biographies of the board members are provided [here](#).

Visit the NYCAGO Chapter website by clicking [here](#).



Copyright © 2020 NYC Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

