



**THE NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER**  
of the  
**American Guild of Organists**

www.nycago.org



Volume 74, Number 7

June 2024

## Table of Contents

- [Dean's Message](#)
- [Program News](#)
- [From the Secretary](#)
- [Bulletin Board](#)
- [Member News](#)
- [Quote of the Month](#)
- [NYCAGO Chapter Information](#)

## Dean's Message

### Already Midsummer?

#### Johannestag

Richard Wagner's masterpiece *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* premiered in 1868 at the National Theater in Munich. The three act opera is set in 16th century Nuremberg and tells the story of Walther von Stolzing, a young knight who, with the help of poet-cobbler Hans Sachs, must win a singing competition so that he can marry his beloved Eva.

The curtain rises as the exquisite overture ("Prelude to Act I") seamlessly [transitions](#) into the opening action on stage: a congregation singing a hymn. Wagner ingeniously uses the pipe organ and the orchestra in dialogue, with the orchestra commenting on the phrases of the chorale, much as Bach did in his chorale preludes.

The set is specified by Wagner as that of [Saint Catherine's](#), an actual church in Nuremberg which was founded by the Dominicans and later was the home of the Nuremberg Meistersingers between 1620-1778. The building was largely destroyed during World War II.

The faithful are celebrating the Eve of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (Saint John's Eve or Midsummer's Eve or Johannestag), which is June 23. The following day, on the Feast itself, the people will gather for a grand festival in the meadows outside of the city walls. The climax of the fete will be the singing contest. Like Lady Day or Michaelmas, Walpurgisnacht or Lammas, Midsummer's Day held much more significance both religiously and culturally in centuries past than it does now. (Both [Mendelssohn](#) and [Widor](#) wrote music about Saint Walpurga's Eve, for example.)

Later in Scene 3 of Act I, Eva's father Pogner, while explaining the Mastersinger's contest, sings an ode to midsummer and music, which begins:

*That beautiful festival, Saint John's Day,  
as you know, we celebrate tomorrow:  
on the green meadow, by the flowery grove,  
with games and dancing at the feast;  
secure in a joyous heart,  
all cares forgotten,  
everyone enjoys himself as he pleases.  
Their solemn song-school in the church nave  
the Masters themselves give up;  
with merry music out of the gate  
and on to the open meadow they proceed,  
in the din of the brilliant festival;  
they permit the people to listen  
to the open singing with their laymen's ears.*

Here is a [recording](#) sung by Peter Lagger.

## **Transcription**

Two of the most glorious and effective organ transcriptions, both by Lemare, are taken from this opera. Some of you may remember the heroic [performance](#) of the Prelude to Act I that Daniel Hyde gave at the inaugural recital on the Dobson organ at Saint Thomas. The Prelude to Act III is much more technically accessible, but nevertheless demanding to register. Both are worth exploring!

## **Prize Song**

No mention of *Meistersinger* would be complete without Walter's Prize Song, the third and final verse of which is given below. The audience hears this song develop over the course of the opera, reaching final maturity in the contest by which he does indeed win Eva's hand. (Yes, this Wagner opera does end happily!)

*Most gracious day,  
to which I awoke from a poet's dream!  
The Paradise of which I had dreamed  
in heavenly, new-transfigured splendor  
lay bright before me,  
to which the spring laughingly now showed me the path;  
she, born there,  
my heart's elect,  
earth's loveliest picture,  
destined to be my Muse,  
as holy and grave as she is mild,  
was boldly wooed by me;  
in the sun's bright daylight,  
through victory in song, I had won  
Parnassus and Paradise!*

Here is a [recording](#) sung by Ben Heppner.

With that, may you all have a happy and relaxing Midsummer's Day! Maybe with a good Bavarian pretzel.

Sincerely,



James D. Wetzel, *Dean*



---

## Program News

### Events around Town

#### King of Instruments 2024 Summer Organ Series

Tuesdays at 7 PM

[The Riverside Church](#)

490 Riverside Drive at 122nd Street

July 9 – Michael Hey

July 16 – Nicole Keller

July 23 – Clark Wilson

July 30 – Alan Montgomery

August 6 – Eddie Zheng

Visit the Church's [website](#) for more information and to purchase tickets.

Consider adding your events to the [Concert Calendar](#) for the season. Email submissions to Sam Bartlett [here](#).

Email suggestions and comments for the Program Committee [here](#).

---

## From the Secretary

### 2024 Chapter Elections

#### Election Email

The 2024 Chapter Elections are now ongoing. An electronic ballot was emailed to all Chapter members in good standing on Monday, June 10. The voting period will conclude on Monday, June 24.

If you did not receive an email, or if you did receive an email but believe this to be in error, please notify us [here](#).

#### Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee (Eva Sze (chair), Steven Frank, and Gregg Petrino) produced a slate of officers and Members-at-large for the Class of 2028 for the biennial elections, with the new term to begin on July 1, 2024.

#### Proposed Slate of Officers

**Dean:** James D. Wetzel (*Incumbent*)

**Sub Dean:** David Shuler (*Incumbent*)

**Secretary:** Raymond Nagem (*Incumbent*)

**Treasurer:** Christopher Creaghan

**Registrar:** Lena Tharp

**Auditor:** Paolo Bordignon (*Incumbent*)

**Auditor:** Andrew Henderson (*Incumbent*)

#### Members-at-large, Class of 2028 (for three positions)

Rebecca Ehren

Gabriel Evans

Alan Montgomery

Jason Roberts

Yilun Wang

Respectfully submitted,  
Raymond Nagem, *Secretary*



---

## Bulletin Board

### NYCAGO Directory Available Digitally

Just as a reminder, the Chapter Directory was emailed to everyone in the directory (every member of the Chapter) earlier this spring. It is only being offered in this digital format; hard copies are no longer being printed and mailed out to the membership.

If you did not receive your copy, please [email](#) Registrar Larry Long, and he will email your copy to you directly. Please remember that the Chapter Directory is not to be shared nor used as a means to add addresses to the mailing lists of outside organizations.

### Advertising in the Monthly Newsletter

We are once again accepting ads for this monthly Newsletter. Consider advertising your upcoming events here; we enjoy a readership of over 1,500. Please write to [the editor](#) for rates and details.

*Send Bulletin Board submissions to [the editor](#) for publication.*

---



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

---

## Member News

### In Print

An [article](#) by NYCAGO member, International Performer of the Year recipient, and chair of the Juilliard School Organ Department Paul Jacobs entitled "The Instrument New York Doesn't Want You to Hear" appeared in BBC Music Magazine's *Classical Music*, on June 13.

*Submit news items (professional appointments, retirements, marriages, births, obituaries, etc.) to [the editor](#) for publication in Member News.*

---

**Grace Church in New York**  
**ORGAN**  
**MEDITATIONS**  
<https://music.gracechurchnyc.org>

---

## **Quote of the Month**

*Not to your ancestors, however worthy,  
not to your coat-of-arms, spear, or sword,  
but to the fact that you are a poet,  
to that you owe today your highest happiness.*

Excerpt from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868)  
~Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

---

## **NYCAGO Substitute Organist List**

The New York City Chapter of the AGO maintains a list of its members willing to serve as substitutes. This list contains information which has been self identified by those who have chosen to be included in this roster. *The information has not been confirmed by the NYCAGO nor is the NYCAGO able to ensure that the individual is appropriate for any particular situation.* Only members in good standing of the Chapter are included on this list.

(The link has been updated!)

Visit the NYCAGO Sub List Information by clicking here.

---

## NYCAGO Chapter Information

### General Inquiries

[Chapter Contacts Page](#)

[Chapter Committees and Appointments](#)

### Newsletter

James D. Wetzel, *editor*

The newsletter is published at the beginning of every month, September–June. Please submit all material to [the editor](#) by the 24th of the preceding month.

### Executive Board

**Dean:** James D. Wetzel

**Sub Dean:** David Shuler

**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, Jared Lamenzo, Sándor Szabó, and Lena Tharp

**At-large (Class of 2026):** Daniel Beckwith, Caitlin Dowling, James Hopkins, Maria Rayzvasser, Michael Shake, and Eva Sze

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

Visit the NYCAGO Chapter website by clicking here.

---



Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

