

Weekly Update

American Guild of Organists Cleveland Chapter

November 15, 2012



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Dear AGO Cleveland Colleague,

Welcome to the Weekly Update from the Cleveland Chapter of the American Guild of Organists! Each week on Thursday, we publish this email newsletter to help you stay informed about activities and programs of the Cleveland AGO Chapter. Questions or comments? Please let us know: admin@agocleveland.org Have a news item for a future issue? Send to: newsletter@agocleveland.org. The deadline each week is Wednesday at noon for Thursday publication.

From the Dean



Fern Jennings

As I drove to Messiah Lutheran Church last Sunday through a gorgeous fall day with record -breaking temperatures, I was pretty sure few people would opt to be inside singing hymns when the outdoors was so enticing. In fact, when I got there I found parking was at a premium and the church was nearly full. The choristers and instrumentalist were in their places - two choirs totaling about one hundred singers- one in the gallery and one filling the chancel. And what glorious singing there was! Led in a service designed by John Ferguson all who participated- this was no passive be entertained concert but a participatory song fest and worship service- could not but be uplifted and sent back into the darkening afternoon with a joyful spirit.

So many were involved in making this wonderful afternoon but I especially want to thank Barbara MacGregor who did the lion's share of the planning for this event. (Planning these things can turn into full-time jobs.) Also to Brian Wentzel who put together the printed program and got all of the scores together for the musicians. The

Monday evening hymn class was planned and hosted by Don Jackson- a big thank you to Don as well.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at one or more of the weekend events. We got to enjoy lunch and conversation with John on Saturday. Quite a few hung around the punch bowl chatting on Sunday and twenty-five or so attended the hymn playing workshop on Monday. I can report that John is just as dynamic and energetic as I remember from those— quite a few— years ago in Kent. He still bounces around illustrating a tempo and going into the most interesting asides when working with a "guinea pig" (his term for the organists who were playing hymns).

HYMN FESTIVAL THANK YOU



A big thank you to the choirs and their directors who gave their time both on Saturday for the rehearsal and on Sunday coming early and providing such a vibrant experience.

Church choirs represented -

Church of the Saviour, Cleveland Heights, Judith Higbee, director

- First Lutheran Church, Lorain, Brian Wentzel, director

- Messiah Lutheran Church, Westlake, David Gooding, , director
- Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Westlake, Ian Faleer, director
- East Shore Church United Methodist, Euclid, Sarah Dixon, director
- Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Robert Moncrief, director
- The Federated Church, Chagrin Falls, Marcia Snavelly, director
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Medina, Roberta Stamper, director
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Chesterland, Hildred Tornberg, director
- United Methodist Church of Macedonia, James Storry, director

More photos of the hymn festival can be found [here](#). Photos from the hymn playing class can be found [here](#).



Brian Wentzel and the youngest chorister



Tony Bianchi, Max Bunker, John Ferguson,
Barbara MacGregor

Upcoming Cleveland Chapter Events

DECEMBER CHAPTER EVENT



Christmas Concert: Todd Wilson, organist and conductor
Jody Guinn, harp

Wednesday, December 12, 2012 - 12:10 pm

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

2230 Euclid Ave. at East 22nd St. Downtown Cleveland.

Free parking at Trinity lot entrance on Prospect Ave for Cathedral events.

Britten: Ceremony of Carols, treble voices and harp; Carols for harp and organ.

Meet your fellow AGO members for this beautiful seasonal concert and for lunch.

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

January 28 7:30-9pm, First Unitarian Church of Cleveland

NO WEEKLY UPDATE NEXT WEEK

There will be no weekly update next week, November 22. Happy Thanksgiving to all! Look for us again on November 29.

MEMBER NEWS

Max Bunker attended the Hymn Festival weekend and reports that he is back to his church responsibilities following his mild heart attack. **Don Shultzberger** assisted with the Directory mailing a couple of weeks ago and is continuing to improve following his recent stroke.

Congratulations to **Brian Wentzel** on his first published composition now available from Augsburg Fortress. "The Day of Resurrection" is an SAB Easter anthem with the familiar John Mason Neale text set to a rhythmic version of HERZLICH TUT MICH ERFREUEN. Brian writes "I wrote it to be an easy piece for the Sunday after Easter - it doesn't take much rehearsal!" He also will have two short pieces included in Augsburg's Music Sourcebook, to be published soon and a Christmas anthem (SAB arrangement of the wonderful Asian hymn "Midnight Stars Make Bright the Skies",

ELW #280) that should come out in Augsburg's Advent/Christmas batch this coming winter.

HYMN FESTIVAL REVIEW

The Hymn Festival titled "Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving" conceived, directed and performed by John Ferguson began without announcement with a single voice (Brian Wentzel) in the back of the Sanctuary singing the African song "Uyaimose". As he processed up the aisle he was joined by percussion instruments and gradually by more voices. Tony Bianchi read the afternoons "Reflections" which were interspersed between the hymns. The first hymn "Many and Great" was sung in unison without organ with a simple introduction by flute and percussion. Many of the settings of the hymns were beautiful in their simplicity. Organists and worship leaders think, "I could do that!". Other settings were dynamic with virtuosic organ accompaniment. Handbells were used throughout the service, often rung randomly, as in the introduction to the hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King." The random bell ringing was followed by voices piling up "Alleluias" and finally brass and organ joining for a rousing crescendo leading to the first verse of the hymn. Similarly in "Let All Mortal Flesh keep Silence" in addition to random bell ring, part of the choir kept up a drone hum throughout. The hymns were varied by instructions for verses for "men", "women", "choir" or "organ". A humorous touch was given to the organ verse of "Earth and All Star!" when the "Stars and Stripes Forever" theme interrupted the tune. Another bit of Ferguson humor broke out in the introduction to "In a Lowly Manger Born" featuring xylophone, flute and whistling from the choir.

The gallery choir was featured in the lively Andre Thomas arrangement of "Walk in the Light". Meg Matuska was the accompanist for the gospel piece. Later in the service they sang Ferguson's lovely arrangement of "Jesus Loves Me". The center of the hymn sing was a journey through the church year. We all sang the carol "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" introduced by more bells and the choirs singing "Gloria" from "Angels We Have Heard on High". The Chancel Choir, directed by Brian Wentzel, sang the Holy Week anthem "Lamb of God" by F. Melius Christiansen. We all sang "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" introduced by John Ferguson's own "Easter Introit". One of the most creative moments of the Festival was the reading of the story of Noah from the Bible to an improvised musical accompaniment. The organ supplied a musical depiction of God's displeasure, building of the ark and the tumult of the waters followed by the quiet ascent of the dove. I wonder how many caught the bit of musical depiction in the hymn "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less". In the text that reads "when all support are washed away", the organ literally stopped, removing all "support" from the singers. More tone painting was heard in the organ verse of the hymn "A Mighty Fortress". Low dissonant buzzy reeds were used for the text "Though hordes of devils fill the land". The afternoon ended with the evening hymn "God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven". Many of the hymns were sung entirely in unison with only the melody line printed in the program. Only two hymns were specifically listed for harmony singing. It seemed a shame with this large congregation of singers not to have more part singing. A small quibble, however, with a glorious event presented by one of our foremost champions of hymn singing in America.

Next update- some notes from the hymn class.

Fern Jennings

THIS DATE IN MUSICAL HISTORY



1738 Birth of German astronomer, organist, oboist and composer Sir William Herschel in Hanover. He lived in England from 1755 where he was the organist at a fashionable chapel in Bath. He was also the discoverer in 1781 of the planet Uranus, which led to his position as private astronomer to the king. Here is the link to his Wikipedia biography which includes a fascinating account of his scientific work, which also included the discovery of infrared radiation, and his early years in a military band and a subsequent charge of desertion. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Herschel

Concerts of Interest

Some of our concert listings have been gleaned from ClevelandClassical. For a complete list of concerts plus previews, reviews and more from Cleveland's classical music scene click the link www.clevelandclassical.com.

Friday, November 16 7:30 p.m. Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland MOZART BY CANDLELIGHT. Benefit for Music and Art at Trinity Cathedral. All Mozart Program. Clarinet Concerto in A major, K. 622. Louis Gangale, clarinet. Exultate Jubilate, K. 165. Judith Overcash, soprano. Requiem, K. 626. The Trinity Cathedral Choir, The Trinity Chamber Orchestra. Todd Wilson, conductor. \$50, includes concert and dessert reception.

Friday, November 16 8:00 p.m. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 50 North Prospect Street in Downtown Akron, Ohio. Christian Lane, organist.

Sunday, November 18 3:00 p.m. Samantha Gossard, mezzo-soprano, Kirsten Docter, viola & Karel Paukert, organ & harpsichord. Music by J.S. Bach, Eben, Franck, Honegger & Britten. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Hts. Freewill offering.

Sunday, November 18 3:30 p.m. St. Sebastian Church, 500 Mull Avenue, Akron, Ohio 44320. St. Sebastian Organ Dedication Concert. Lynn Frey-Steward, CAGO, MM, Director of Music/Choirmaster/Organist, ARCO, Parish Choir and String Quartet

Sunday, November 18 4:00 pm. Stephen Tharp will play a concert at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist, 627 McKinley Avenue NW, Canton, Ohio. He will play works of Arthur Wills, Edward Elgar, Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms and Alexandre Guilmant on the 78 rank 2004 Kegg Organ.

Sunday, November 18 4:00 p.m. Christopher Houlihan, organ. J.S. Bach's Passacaglia & Fugue in c, César Franck's Grand Pièce Symphonique & Louis Vierne's Symphony No. 6 in b. E.M. Skinner organ. Stambaugh Auditorium, 1000 5th Avenue, Youngstown. Tickets: 330.747.5175

Sunday, November 18, 4:00 pm Cleveland Messiah Chorus presents its 90th annual performance of Handel's Messiah. Virginia Wieland-Mast, director; Christopher Toth, organ; Janine Porter, soprano; Andrew Lipian, counter tenor; David Wittmer, tenor; Jason Fuh, bass; Traci Nelson, trumpet. Grace Lutheran Church, 13001 Cedar Rd, Cleveland Heights. Freewill Offering.

Monday, November 19 at 6:00 p.m. B'nai Jeshurun Congregation, 27501 Fairmount Boulevard, Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. Rather than a prayer service, it is a festival of the artistic abilities reflected in the different faith traditions of northeast Ohio.

Tuesday, November 20 8:00 pm - Oberlin College Choir & Treble Ensemble, Jason Harris, conducting. Program to be announced. Finney Chapel, Oberlin College, 90 N. Professor St. Free

Wednesday, November 21 12:15 pm - Robert Myers, organ. "Ending the Church Year". Music Near the Market Series. Beckerath organ. Trinity Lutheran Church, W. 30th & Lorain, Cleveland. Freewill offering

Quick Links

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About Us

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.

Contact Us

American Guild of Organists
Cleveland Chapter
21600 Shaker Blvd
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122
216-751-2320

A Note About Job Postings

Gerry Mass, our Cleveland Chapter Placement Officer collects and updates job openings in the area. Although they are not listed in the weekly updates, there is a link in the "Quick Links" section every week that will take you to the

updated list on the chapter website. Questions or need help finding a position? Email: placement@agocleveland.org



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