Dean's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Our competition winner’s recital followed by a champagne reception was an energetic start to our Chapter’s program year, a welcome chance for members to greet each other! I am so pleased that we were able to have an event at Christ Church, Methodist on Park Avenue and grateful to their home team who made everything run so smoothly under the direction of your Sub-Dean James Kennerley.

A distinguished guest from Paris, Sophie-Véronique Choplin, is our next performer, on Sunday, November 12th at the mighty Schantz of the Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, where James Wetzel is always a generous host. You can read more about that event in this issue, and there will of course be special program notices.

In the background, your board is at work preparing to plan for several things yet to come: the annual directory, the examinations for Guild certification, and the coming election are all in process.

I hope you are having a pleasant autumn, now that the weather has begun to feel more proper to the season. With best wishes for your musical enjoyment of the season,

Yours truly,

David Enlow,
Dean

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**Marble Lunchtime Organ Recitals**
Mondays 12:30pm - 1pm
5th Avenue at 29th Street
Free Admission

*featuring Juilliard Students*
Alexander Pattiva on 11/6
Yuejian Chen on 11/13
Ryan Kennedy on 11/20
Sophie Véronique-Choplin will give a concert at the Church of Saint Vincent Ferrer on **Sunday, November 12 at 3 PM**. Admission is free to all Chapter members.

**Program News**

The 2017-18 season got off to a great start at our first event featuring Chapter competition winner **Alessandro Pistorino in recital**, followed by a champagne reception. Many thanks to Alessandro for playing, and to Steve Pilkington, our host.

Our next event is on **Sunday, November 12 at 3:00 PM**, when 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-titulaire of the Grand Orgue of Saint Sulpice Church, Paris. 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.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming events this season:

**Presidents' Day Conference** is the Chapter's landmark event. As a prelude to the festivities **Benjamin Sheen** will give a recital at Saint Thomas Church on **Sunday, February 18 at 5:15 PM**. Admission is free. 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 celebrating the installation of the new instrument at St. Paul's Chapel.

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**.

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).

The final event of the season is an **Evening at Saint Thomas Church** with Daniel Hyde and Benjamin Sheen on **Monday, June 19**.

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,

[Signature]

James Kennerley  
Sub-Dean & Chair of the Program Committee
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
Quote of the Month
"Music is well said to be the speech of angels; in fact, nothing among the utterances allowed to man is felt to be so divine. It brings us near to the infinite."
-Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)
Won't you be my neighbor?

In the 1920's, Russian pianist and composer Sergei Rachmaninoff owned a five-story townhouse at 33 Riverside Drive, on the northeast corner of Riverside Drive and West 75th Street in Manhattan. Rachmaninoff opened his home to countless guests, and the residence was known as an international cultural center. Konstantin Stanislavsky and his Moscow Art Theatre stayed in the Rachmaninoff home during their 1922-1923 stand in New York. When Rachmaninoff sold the house in 1925, it was razed to make way for the construction of the large apartment building that stands at that corner today.

Designed by architect George Pelham, and comprising 143 apartments, the building was a quick success as prominent New Yorkers bought apartments there, including George and Ira Gershwin, who were among the first residents, purchasing adjoining large penthouse apartments. Following in the neighborhood tradition established by Rachmaninoff, the Gershwins’ apartments were the sites of legendary parties. The young stenographer and aspiring actress, Ethel Merman, recalled feeling that being invited to a Gershwin party at 33 Riverside Drive was the break that started her career.

Just imagine the parties. Here’s a photo taken in New York
(in Gershwin's apartment?) on March 8, 1928 showing Maurice Ravel at the piano, and (left to right), the German conductor Oskar Fried (the first conductor to record a Mahler Symphony), mezzo-soprano Éva Gauthier, violinist Manoah Liedet-Tedesco, and George Gershwin. It was Ravel's birthday party. Gershwin's relationship with Ravel started when Gershwin was in Paris and he applied to study with Ravel, who replied, "Why should you be a second-rate Ravel when you're already a first-rate Gershwin?"

Take a look at StreetEasy. There are three apartments available today at 33 Riverside Drive, priced at $450,000, $2,750,000, and $3,200,000. I wonder if one was a Gershwin residence? Nice neighborhood. Close to the trains. Nice place for a party.

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Joke of the Month

How do you know when a bag piper has perfect pitch? When he can toss a set into a pond without hitting any of the ducks.
From the Editor

Back in the 1970's, I was working in Jan Leek's workshop where our routine included listening to WCLV, classical music from Cleveland. Albert Petrak, the morning host, was quite a personality and was able to hold our attention from day to day.

Petrak created quite a hoopla in anticipation of the station's first broadcast of a compact disc recording. It must have been weeks during which he repeated the tantalizing invitation, and Jan and I looked forward to it. Of course, we were listening on the same tinny workshop radio, and couldn't tell much of a difference.

I had a friend who was determined to have the first CD player in our circle. He did, and he paid nearly $2000 for it. I was shopping for a car at that time when a new Triumph Spitfire cost $2995.

Recently, and not for the first time, Wendy and I resolved to sort our combined collections of CDs. We have two homes, and have moved several times in recent years, so they're scrambled and mostly in boxes. I've gotten far enough to have unpacked all the boxes we have in Maine onto a table in my office - far enough to realize how much we've spent building a library based on that technology.

As I leaf through the collection, I'm reflecting on how much the recording world has changed. Today, just about the only time I open a CD is when I'm copying it to iTunes, which allows me to play recordings in my car, and through bluetooth speakers.

The other day, I stumbled on a video recording of Bach's Cantata 29 (okay, I admit it was on Facebook) that caught my eye and ear. Since it was openly published there, I assume it's fair for me to share it with you here. This recording stands out for several reasons. *Wir danken dir, Gott* is one of Bach's "organ heavy" Cantatas, with its dazzling Sinfonia, and lovely organ obbligato in the alto aria. And what an organ they're using on this recording - the spectacular instrument built by Arp Schnitger in 1692 at the Martinikerk, Groningen, the Netherlands, played by Leo van Doeselaar. The choral and
solo singing is lovely, and the period instruments are marvelous and marvelously played. It's quite a trick to trill on valveless trumpets.

Many of us have spent a lot of time thinking about how musical performance sounded in past centuries, and watching and listening to this recording, I wonder just how much this sounds like it did when Bach himself was performing.

He didn't have a video link for watching the conductor from up in the gallery behind the Ruckpositiv. Singers weren't trained with knowledge of the physiology of the human voice. We can assert that the actual physical musical instruments used here create the same tones as in Bach's day. The organ is a solid fact - while Bach never saw it, it was built when he was a child. A modern organist draws the same stops and plays the same notes blowing same pipes that blew 325 years ago. It must be authentic.

I imagine that the wind and stringed instruments are a mix of authentic antiques and modern reproductions. If reproductions, I expect the builders had the original instruments in their hands. But excepting the organ and harpsichord, how can we know that the tones are the same? Three hundred years of study and understanding must have changed how a musician holds the reed in his mouth, how she draws the bow across the strings. And what about the tempo?

The recording includes program notes, interviews with the musicians, the "cast of characters," and the text. It's a nice package, and a long way from a CD. It's a fun romp to hear Bach's music presented this way, in so many dimensions. I hope you take the time to listen.

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