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Don’t miss events presented by your friends and colleagues. Visit the Concert Calendar of the NYC Chapter, and attend some concerts!

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In Memoriam [Ring out, wild bells]

- Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
   The flying cloud, the frosty light:
   The year is dying in the night;
   Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
   The year is going, let him go;
   Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind
   For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
   Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
   And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
   With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
   The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes
   But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
   The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
   Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
   The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
   Ring in the Christ that is to be.
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 Saint 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 18**.

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,

James Kennerley
Sub-Dean & Chair of the Program Committee
Quote of the Month
"Music is everybody’s business. It’s only the publishers who think people can own it."
- John Lennon

Won't you be my neighbor?

Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) was a leading proponent of the Art Nouveau movement. Tiffany lived his entire life in the five-story house built by his father, the jeweler Charles Tiffany, on the corner of Madison Avenue and East 72nd Street, a couple of doors up from St. James’ Church.

He is best known for his opulent windows and lampshades, having developed innovative methods for handling, texturing, and coloring glass, and was widely sought after as an interior decorator. In 1881, Mark Twain commissioned Tiffany to decorate his home in Hartford, Connecticut. That work is still in place but one of Tiffany's most prestigious jobs was removed after only twenty years. President Chester Alan Arthur hired Tiffany to redecorate the Ceremonial Rooms in the White House, which included the installation of heavy patterned wallpaper, and a monumental glass screen in the entrance way. President Theodore Roosevelt reversed all that, returning the White House to its original Federal Style architecture.

Tiffany was a music lover, and admirer of the work of the Aeolian Company. In 1902, Tiffany ordered an eleven-rank organ from the Aeolian Company to be installed in his home, and in 1907, engaged Aeolian to add a seven-stop, twelve rank (Serafieno Dolce V) Echo Organ.
with Harp and Chimes. These organs were installed in his fifth-floor studio which had a forty-five foot ceiling! You can see the vertical Swell Shutters of the organ in the upper right-hand corner of this photo. (Photo, thanks to Steve Lawson.) Think about that for a moment - a forty-five foot ceiling on the fifth floor at Madison & 72nd. The next time you’re shopping at Lauren’s (Madison & 72nd), look skyward and imagine that opulent room.

Ernest Martin Skinner
Ernest Martin Skinner died in Dorchester, Massachusetts on November 30, 1960 at the age of 94. Mr. Skinner was a towering figure in the history of the pipe organ, joining Aristide Cavaillé-Coll as masters and leaders of organ builders whose innovations drove the creativity of generations of musicians. Take a moment to reflect on what the modern pipe organ would be like without Mr. Skinner.
Joke of the Month

[Image of a report card being held by a reindeer with grades ranging from A- to B+]

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From the Editor

Bombshell
Several times during my career, I've had fun working on organs with automatic roll-players, those spectacular devices developed in the early decades of the twentieth century primarily as playthings of the rich and famous. Tycoons like Andrew Carnegie, Charles Schwab, George Eastman, Henry Clay Frick, and John D. Rockefeller installed huge pipe organs in their homes equipped with those marvelous machines. In addition to the automatic functions, owners of these organs engaged the great organists of the day to play for parties, receptions, family events, even when they were getting up in the morning. Harold Gleason played regularly at the George Eastman House in Rochester as Mr. Eastman was waking, dressing, and breakfasting.

Earlier in this newsletter, I mentioned the lovely Aeolian Organ in Louis Comfort Tiffany’s studio on Madison Avenue.

In a time when a worker in the Aeolian factory was paid $11 per week, Andrew Carnegie paid over $15,000 for his forty-four-rank organ, the equivalent of twenty-seven years of that worker's salary.

I've marveled about the sophistication of their design and the intricacies of their mechanisms as I've worked on them. Ernest Skinner was interested in expanding the number of independent musical lines that could be played at once, so his system involved more functions, and therefore more rows of holes in the paper roll than were practical because of the instability of paper. He solved this by devising an ingenious system in which the first three rows dictated codes that could redefine the function of other holes. For example, a hole in the paper roll would activate a switch to turn and latch on a stop, then release the switch allowing the same hole to go back to playing notes. When the music was finished with that stop, the hole would be re-instructed to return to stop action duty.

Accepting a little poetic license, this is a good way to describe how multi-plexing works, a logic-based system that reduces a complicated matrix of data into a clock-driven stream to travel across a single wire. That's how a multi-plex organ console system works – all the outputs of the console (keyboards, stops, swell shutters, etc.) are turned into a data stream. I've had lengthy conversations with colleagues, wondering how Skinner's ingenuity may have led to the modern computer. And looking at it from another angle, an electro-pneumatic mechanical combination action with a set button on a Skinner console, such as at St. Thomas' Church on Fifth Avenue in New York City (1912) is a user-programmable, commercially available binary computer.

Last night, Wendy and I saw *Bombshell*, the new documentary on the life of Hollywood
heartthrob Hedy Lamarr. She gained international stardom in the 1930's because of her unusual beauty and grace, and tenacity in finding her way to Hollywood's power elite. The film magnate Louis B. Mayer signed and promoted her, forcing her into a heavy production schedule that included the use of stimulants in the morning and relaxants in the evening. The stories of Mr. Mayer's relationships with starlets in his employ are eerily reminiscent of current news about Harvey Weinstein.

But Lamarr's real genius lay elsewhere. She was an avid inventor, maintaining a laboratory and workshop in her home, and with the support of her friend and sometimes date, Howard Hughes, installed a compact facility in her rooms at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. As World War II progressed, she was disturbed by news reports about the ability of the German Navy to jam Allied radio signals, and she imagined a system using rapidly changing and synchronized radio frequencies to circumvent the jamming.

She enlisted the help of her friend George Antheil, a pianist who was familiar with the functions of player-piano rolls, and using identical technology, developed and patented a “Secret Communication System.” Lamarr's system could theoretically allow a torpedo to be accurately steered from the ship that launched it without being led off course by jammed signals. She presented it to the United States Navy, but was refused ostensibly because the Navy seldom accepted innovations from civilians, but more likely because she was a woman.

Years later, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and after Hedy Lamarr's patent had expired, her secret system was installed on the United States Ships involved, and was subsequently used to control the military's first aerial drones. As the documentary ends, it's stated that her piano-based invention forms the basis of the technology behind Bluetooth, Wifi, and Gps, estimating that had she been given timely credit, her patent would have brought her more than $30,000,000,000. It's interesting to suppose that the Skinner and Aeolian roll-players led to Hedy Lamarr's secret system, and on to the magic of the newest technologies which have influenced our lives so profoundly.

*Bombshell* had a short run ending on November 30 at the IFC Center on 6th Avenue in West Village. I assume that it will soon be available through one of the streaming sources. I recommend you watch out for it. You've got to admit, a movie that combines the life of a sultry screen actress and piano-based technology is worth a look!