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and attend some concerts!

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Dean’s Message

Dear Colleagues,

2018 is an election year for the chapter. I hope that everyone interested will take advantage of the nominating process to make known his or her willingness to serve the NYC AGO.

We are also heading into a busy time for the program committee. We have a wonderful Presidents’ Day conference and improvisation event approaching, about which you can read more later in this issue.

Let us make a New Year’s resolution to get more involved in the city chapter and take advantage of the professional development opportunities our dues and donations make possible!

Yours truly,

David Enlow,
Dean
It’s that time of the year again! The Presidents’ Day Conference, the Chapter’s landmark event, will soon be upon us, and this year is set to be particularly exciting.

Our conference is entitled Chapels Royal: a celebration of music and organs old and new. We’ll be celebrating a great deal in just 24 hours, including a new instrument installation and an inside view of one of New York’s most prestigious and reviewed institutions.

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 and open to all.
On **Monday, February 19, beginning at 9:00 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 magnificent relocated/enlarged Noack Opus 111 to historic Saint Paul’s Chapel in downtown Manhattan from its original home in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

The Grammy Award-winning Trinity Choir, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, together with Jonathan Ambrosino, Avi Stein, Peter Sykes, Julian Wachner, and others will lead us in a day of celebrating the old and the new, with thrilling performances and unique sightseeing possibilities, including One World Trade Center, the Oculus, and Trinity Church and its renowned bell tower.

Join us for what is sure to be a stunning event. Admission is free for NYCAGO Chapter members and dual members. Tickets for non-Chapter members may be purchased at the door in cash for $50.

**Presidents’ Day Schedule:**

From 9:00 AM: Breakfast, catered by New York’s renowned Balthazar Bakery

10:00 AM: Guided tour of the Noack instrument by consultant, Jonathan Ambrosino, and Trinity Music Director, Julian Wachner.

11:00 AM: Open rehearsal featuring the Trinity Choir, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and Julian Wachner, music director.

12:00 PM: Concert performance featuring the Noack Opus 11: Bach Cantatas, BWV 29 and 146, plus Duruflé’s Messe Cum Jubilo. Featuring the Trinity Choir, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and Julian Wachner, music director.

1:00-2:00 PM: Lunch on your own

2:30 PM: “All the stops”: organ concert by Peter Sykes

3:45-5:30 PM: Afternoon activities: These included a guided tour of the historic Trinity Church bell tower, One World Trade Center (guided group tour; $40 additional fee), shopping at Century 21, a visit to the Oculus, the historic Woolworth Building. Please email reservations@nycago.org for more information about the guided tour of the
Trinity Church bell tower and to sign up for the World Trade Center group tour (maximum 40 people).

5:30: PM Festive cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres with lecture by consultant, Jonathan Ambrosino: “Organs old and new at Trinity”

6:30 PM: Conference ends.

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**.

Join us as international concert organist and master improviser David Briggs partners with one of the greatest pipe organs in the world’s largest gothic cathedral to provide a live, improvised score to King of Kings, the 1927 epic silent movie.

**The King of Kings** is the Greatest Story Ever Told as only Cecil B. DeMille could tell it. In 1927, working with one of the biggest budgets in Hollywood history, DeMille spun the life and Passion of Christ into a silent-era blockbuster. Featuring text drawn directly from the Bible, a cast of thousands, and the great showman’s singular cinematic bag of tricks, *The King of Kings* is at once spectacular and deeply reverent—part Gospel, part Technicolor epic.

Chapter member and virtuoso international organ soloist Stephen Tharp had this to say about a previous performance by David Briggs: "**KING OF KING**stonight at Riverside Church demonstrated how to do the art of film accompaniment with a panache, uniformity, style, subtlety and CLASS that should be the example for the rest. It’s that simple. Just brilliant and intelligent and, as a result, engaging in a way that was communicative and worthy of tremendous respect. Bach at the Garden of Gethsemane, the Agnus Dei chant at an appropriate moment and shadows of Mahler were but a few of the interwoven thoughts. It really doesn’t get much better than this."

Tickets are free to NYC AGO Chapter members and $20 for all others.

Click here to purchase your tickets now!
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
The Organ Blower
-- Oliver Wendell Holmes

DEVOUTEST of my Sunday friends,
The patient Organ-blower bends;
I see his figure sink and rise,
(Forgive me, Heaven, my wandering eyes!)
A moment lost, the next half seen,
His head above the scanty screen,
Still measuring out his deep salaams
Through quavering hymns and panting psalms.

No priest that prays in gilded stole,
To save a rich man's mortgaged soul;
No sister, fresh from holy vows,
So humbly stoops, so meekly bows;
His large obeisance puts to shame
The proudest genuflecting dame,
Whose Easter bonnet low descends
With all the grace devotion lends.

O brother with the supple spine,
How much we owe those bows of thine!
Without thine arm to lend the breeze,
How vain the finger on the keys!
Though all unmatched the player's skill,
Those thousand throats were dumb and still:
Another's art may shape the tone,
The breath that fills it is thine own.
Six days the silent Memnon waits
Behind his temple’s folded gates;
But when the seventh day’s sunshine falls
Through rainbowed windows on the walls,
He breathes, he sings, he shouts, he fills
The quivering air with rapturous thrills;
The roof resounds, the pillars shake,
And all the slumbering echoes wake!

The Preacher from the Bible-text
With weary words my soul has vexed
(Some stranger, fumbling far astray
To find the lesson for the day);
He tells us truths too plainly true,
And reads the service all askew,—
Why, why the-- mischief-- can’t he look
Beforehand in the service-book?

But thou, with decent mien and face,
Art always ready in thy place;
Thy strenuous blast, whate’er the tune,
As steady as the strong monsoon;
Thy only dread a leathery creak,
Or small residual extra squeak,
To send along the shadowy aisles
A sunlit wave of dimpled smiles.

Not all the preaching, O my friend,
Comes from the church’s pulpit end!
Not all that bend the knee and bow
Yield service half so true as thou!
One simple task performed aright,
With slender skill, but all thy might,
Where honest labor does its best,
And leaves the player all the rest.

This many-diapasoned maze,
Through which the breath of being strays,
Whose music makes our earth divine,
Has work for mortal hands like mine.
My duty lies before me. Lo,
The lever there! Take hold and blow!
And He whose hand is on the keys
Will play the tune as He shall please.

David Enlow, FAGS
Juilliard Faculty
Organ Lessons, Coaching, AGO Exam Preparation

Won’t you be my neighbor?

80 Washington Place

Wendy and I have an ebullient three-year-old Goldendoodle named Farley. When we’re at our place in Maine, at the end of half-mile dirt road with a large lawn, he can run free outside, where he delights in finding sticks (there are more than 300 trees in the yard), and frolicking in the snow. In warmer weather, he chases sticks thrown into the water - he can keep it up for hours. Life is different for Farley in the city. We typically take him out three times each day, usually going west on East 9th, turning right on University, right on 10th (where we sometimes meet Alec Baldwin with two little dogs in Burberry jackets), right on Broadway, and right again to our door. But each time we approach 9th and University (the Knickerbocker is on that corner), Farley looks left, because he knows that’s the way to Washington Square Park, where he loves chasing balls in the dog run.

Just past the dog run is Washington Place, a little two-block street that starts at the west end of the park, crosses 6th Avenue (St. Joseph’s, with the new Létourneau organ, is on that corner), and ends at Grove Street. 80 Washington Place is halfway down the first block, on the left, as you leave the park. The plaque on the wall announces it as the home of the iconic American band leader and composer of marches, John Philip Sousa.
Sousa is well known for his timeless compositions, *The Stars and Stripes Forever, Sempre Fidelis, The Liberty Bell March*, and more than 130 other marches. He is less well known for his 1902 novel, *The Fifth String*, in which Satan provides a magic five-string violin to a young musician. Predictably, the fifth string is fatal, and is finally played in concert to acknowledge unrequited love. (Stick to the Cornet, John.)

Sousa is also lesser known as a champion trapshooter, with a record of more than 13,000 official recorded “kills.” He founded the first association of trapshooters, and competed for the U. S. Navy in events against Army. His biography in the Trapshooting Hall of Fame includes this quote: “... about the sweetest music to me is when I call ‘pull,’ the old gun barks, and the referee in perfect tone announces, ‘dead.’”

Click on the photo to see a 2013 real estate advertisement, touting a price reduction to $29,900,000, with a lavish photo gallery and floor plans, proving that for that kind of money, anyone can live like a King (A March King) in the West Village.

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**Joke of the Month**

Jesus and Satan were having an ongoing argument about who was better on the computer. They had been going at it for days, and God was fed up: “Okay, you two. I’ve had enough. I’m giving you a two hour test of your computer skills, and then we’ll know who’s best.”

Satan and Jesus sat at their keyboards, the bell rang, and they got to work.

They moused.

They faxed.
They e-mailed with attachments.
They downloaded apps.
They created spreadsheets.
They wrote reports.
They merged documents.
They printed envelopes.
They printed on both sides.
They changed fonts.
They created mailing labels.
They created charts and graphs.

Ten minutes before the time was up, lightning flashed across the sky, and the power went out. Satan stared at his blank screen and screamed. When the power came back on, they restarted their computers. Satan searched frantically. "Oh no! It’s all gone! I lost everything!"

Jesus quietly started printing out all of his files from the past two hours of work.

When Satan saw that, he screamed again. “Wait! He cheated! Why does He still have His work and mine vanished?”

God replied, “JESUS SAVES.”
From the Editor

The Power of Music

The other day, Wendy and I attended a performance of the Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre production of *Farinelli and the King* at the Belasco Theatre. Written by Claire van Kampen, and starring her husband Mark Rylance (who recently appeared as the yacht skipper in the movie *Dunkirk*), this is a uniquely rich theater experience with special relevance to our world of music.

King Philippe V of Spain (1683-1746) was born at the Palace of Versailles, the grandson of King Louis XIV, and served two tenures as King of Spain. He was a classic “Mad King,” suffering from bipolar disorder most of his life, including long periods of depression during which he refused to move from his squalid bed.

Farinelli (1705-1782), aka Carlo Maria Michelangelo Nicola Broschi, was a celebrated Castrato, regarded as one of history’s greatest opera singers. Having sung to King Louis XV at Versailles, he traveled to Madrid where he was introduced at the Spanish Court. Elisabetta Farnese, the Queen, believed that Farinelli’s singing could cure Philippe’s depression, and he was appointed Chamber Musician to the King in 1737, ending his public career.

In program notes, Van Kalken wrote, “I read so much about the impact of music on the neurological activity of the brain, but I also knew something of Pythagoras, who believe that melodies in different planetary ‘modes’ caused shifts in human behaviour.” She created a venue in which Philippe’s madness swirls freely, the Queen’s unflagging devotion barely holds him together, officials of the court come and go, frustrated at their inability to depose the King, and the almost mystical Farinelli sings to sooth the savage beast.

Creative tricks of staging make this all possible. As part of the King’s therapy, we are treated to nine arias from Handel operas. The actor who plays Farinelli is not a singer - when the music swells to begin an aria, the countertenor (the mutilation that created “post-op sopranos” has been illegal since about 1870) wafts on to the stage in identical costume to provide the drama as an alter-ego. They’re accompanied by an energetic, sometimes rowdy ensemble of seven musicians in period dress in a gallery above the stage, playing period instruments and led from a harpsichord, sometimes participating directly in the action on stage. The musicians are a delightful and integral presence throughout the production.

There are two alternating countertenors, Iestyn Davies and James Hall (we heard Hall at a Saturday Matinee). The stage lighting is real candles. We argued a little, until we
witnessed scores of new candles replaced during halftime, lit with little chips of wood (there were no Bic lighters in the 18th century Spanish court).

The music is spectacular, the staging is ingenious, the writing is profound.  (How does one write credible lines for a madman?)  There are several hilarious moments, and at least one gloriously campy fairy-dust scene.  You’ll love it.  It's playing through March 25, and there are two performances on many days.  belascotheatrenewyork.ticketoffices.com/Farinelli+and+the+King

I urge you to see this show for many reasons, some of which I’ve already shared.  Simply, it’s wonderful theater, and it's refreshing to get out of church and see artists doing something different.  The musical performances alone are worth the price - it’s a great band and beautiful singing.  A cast of eight actors projects the full gamut of human emotion, and it’s all live.  That's the thing about theater, there’s no such thing as “TAKE SEVEN.”  You get it right the first time, or not at all.

But the real message is especially dear to our hearts as organists.  Music matters to people.  You’re not just grinding through “Jesu Joy” or “Pachelbel Canon” for the thousandth time.  Every time you play, you reach someone, even if you think they’re crazy.  Go ahead.  Make them cry.

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