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Dean's Message

Exercise more, manage time better, save more, reduce stress… New Year's resolutions are over rated in my opinion. According to one article, 80% of them fail by the time you’re reading this. Another posits that we shouldn’t even bother with resolutions, but instead focus on specific, manageable goals.

February is in many ways the most exciting month in the annual rhythm of the NYC AGO Chapter. The 2018-19 Membership Directory is receiving its final editorial and design edits by the one and only Len Levasseur. Then there’s the President’s Day Conference, the jewel in the crown of our fabulous program year. It takes place on Monday, February 18, with a prelude event on Saturday, February 16. Having organized these events for the past four years I can wholeheartedly guarantee that it will be a splendid day of music, hospitality, and learning, celebrating two of the most iconic buildings and pipe organs in our grand city.

Forget the resolutions and instead make it one of your goals to attend this marvelous conference. It will absolutely be worth your while!

With my very best wishes,

James Kennerley, Dean

Program News

Immediately on the horizon is the Chapter's signature annual event – the Presidents' Day Conference: On the Avenue on Monday, February 18. We
will visit two of the most notable ecclesiastical musical establishments in the country that happen to be just two blocks apart: Saint Thomas Church and Saint Patrick’s Cathedral.

As a prelude to the Conference, Katelyn Emerson will offer the fourth recital of the Grand Organ Series at Saint Thomas on Saturday, February 16 at 3:00 PM. Admission to this is free for all.

On Monday, February 18th we will hear recitals given by the in-house organists Daniel Hyde, Jennifer Pascual, Daniel Brondel, and Michael Hey, each a renowned concert artist as well as consummate church musician. This will be one of the final recitals Mr. Hyde will give at Saint Thomas before taking-up his new post of Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge.

A lecture by John Panning, Vice President and Tonal Director of Dobson Pipe Organ Builders, Ltd., will offer insight to Saint Thomas’s magnificent new organ, Dobson Opus 93, and a church tour by a Saint Thomas docent will detail the genius of the Bertram Goodhue and Ralph Adams Cram building, Lee Lawrie’s carvings, and windows by James Powell and Sons, Whitefriars.

On the balance, Salvatore Basile, author of Fifth Avenue Famous: The Extraordinary Story of Music at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral will present a session on the music of ‘America’s Parish Church’, gleaned from his extensive research and personal experience as a long-time member of the music staff. A tour of the Cathedral will celebrate the architectural legacy of James Renwick, Jr. and the glasswork of Charles Connick.

Monday’s events are free for NYCAGO Chapter and dual members. Tickets for non-Chapter members may be purchased at the door in cash for $40. No pre-registration is required, but please be in touch with any questions: jamesdavswetzel@gmail.com.

**Presidents’ Day Schedule**

**At Saint Thomas Church**
9:00 AM - Catered breakfast in Andrew Hall
10:00 AM - Opening Remarks and Recital by Daniel Hyde
11:00 AM - Organ demonstration with John Panning of Dobson Pipe Organ Builders, Ltd.
11:15 AM - Tour of Saint Thomas Church
12:00 Noon - Opus 93: presentation and discussion with John Panning
12:45 PM - Lunch on your own
2:00 PM - Lecture on the musical history of Saint Patrick's Cathedral by Salvatore Basile, author of *Fifth Avenue Famous: The Extraordinary Story of Music at Saint Patrick's Cathedral*

**At Saint Patrick's Cathedral**
3:15 PM - Tour of Saint Patrick's Cathedral
4:00 PM - Recital by Jennifer Pascual, Daniel Brondel, and Michael Hey, Organists of Saint Patrick's
5:00 PM - Conference concludes

On behalf of the Program Committee, I am looking very forward to seeing you very soon!

Sincerely,

James D. Wetzel, Sub Dean
The Centennial Millennium Fund of NYC AGO is pleased to announce that it has made seven grants this year, to:

**The Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival Hartford** for a concert with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and organist Christopher Houlihan in Mortensen Hall at the Bushnell Center. ($2,000)

**David Bower and Michael Koenig**, for production of a short film (fiction) about the pipe organ, in collaboration with young professionals in film, acting, and organ performance. ($2,000)

**The Canadian International Organ Competition** (Montreal), toward a feature-length documentary about the competition. ($1,000)

**The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine**, for school visit programs featuring artist-in-residence David Briggs ($1,000)

**Camille Amathe, Alexander Straus-Fausto, and Christine Straus** (Montreal), for a jazz organ concert at the Montreal Jazz Festival ($1,000)

**St. Patrick’s Old Cathedral** (New York), for training of docents who lead large numbers of tourists through the instrument. ($500)

**St. John’s Cathedral, Albuquerque, N.M.**, for the cathedral organ festival featuring guests Tom Winpenny, Richard Elliot, Michael Barone, and others. ($500)
We received twenty-one proposals this year, all very worthy, and so the task of the trustees was particularly difficult. The fund was created in 1996 with the proceeds from the national convention held in New York that centenary year. The first chair of the trustees, former chapter dean Keith Tóth, began the work of the fund after it had matured, and the current trustees are Christopher Babcock, Claudia Dumschat, David Enlow (chair), Andrew Henderson, James Kennerley (dean, ex-officio), and Brian Regan. The fund’s mission is to give money to projects that will bring the pipe organ before the general public.

David Enlow

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**Quote of the Month**

"Music is one of the most powerful things the world has to offer. No matter what race or religion or nationality or sexual orientation or gender that you are, it has the power to unite us."

- Lady Gaga

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**Won't you be my neighbor?**

Portland, Maine - your summer escape.

I trust that many of our chapter members have heard that our neighbor, friend, and Dean, James Kennerley, has been appointed as the eleventh Municipal Organist of Portland, Maine. He has just completed his first year in the position. That august succession started in 1912 concurrent with the dedication of the organ when Will C. MacFarlane was appointed the first Municipal Organist. MacFarland's second successor was the brilliant organist and transcriptionist Edwin Lemare. Visit [www.foko.org](http://www.foko.org) where you read about the stoplist and history of the organ and of the Friends of the Kotzschmar Organ (FOKO), a non-profit organization that funds and operates the city-owned instrument.

"The Mighty Kotzschmar" was a gift to the city in 1912 by publishing magnate Cyrus H.K. Curtis. His initials "H.K." stand for Hermann Kotzschmar, the great friend of Curtis' father, and the most prominent musician in Portland at the turn
of twentieth century. On the evening of the organ's centennial, FOKO hosted a special concert at the close of which a crew from the esteemed organ builder Foley-Baker came on stage and began removing facade pipes. The following morning, that crew was at work in earnest, dismantling the hundred-rank organ to the very screws in the floor. The fully renovated organ was returned two years later, gleaming like new, ready for its second century thrilling audiences.

Portland is the largest city in Maine, home to about 64,000 residents. The metropolitan area includes around 250,000. That's quite a comparison to a city like New York, where there are tens of thousands of people riding the subways at any given moment! It's unusual in the wealth of exceptional restaurants, micro-breweries, and lovely sea-side inns. And it serves as the gateway to the legendary rocky coast of Maine which has inspired artists for centuries.

Portland is a six-hour drive from New York City, an easy flight, or a scenic train ride. Why not plan your summer get-away to include some fabulous organ music, a lobster-and-oyster dinner or two, and a leisurely drive up the coast. I'd be happy to recommend some of the gustatory and visual highlights.

James will present a concert for organ and brass on August 2, and on August 23, Peter Krasinski will return to Portland to accompany a silent movie. Follow the website for more opportunities. You're going to love it. And by the way, if you'd like to eat at Fore Street, Portland's best restaurant, you should make your August reservation now. No joke.
From the Editor

Strange times.
Many professional organists have had to endure serving under un-qualified clergy, men and women who are drunk on authority, and leaky on skills, experience, and wisdom. And many of us have suffered humiliation and unjust and unexpected unemployment.

As a nation, and even as a world, we're living in strange, unsettling times. Our country is being led by a troupe of selfish, self-aggrandizing fools of all descriptions and persuasions. This is not the forum for taking sides, but it bears mentioning that during the recent supreme court hearings, I noticed (as a sixty-two year old) that four of the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee were first elected to the Senate when I was in college. That really doesn't reflect Abraham Lincoln's ideal, as stated in the Gettysburg Address, the American be led by "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

It's legend that at the urging of organbuilder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, Charles-Marie Widor was appointed organist at St. Sulpice in Paris in 1870. His was a controversial appointment because of the politics of the day.

Toward the end of the 1860's, tension built between France and Germany as Germans wished to expand their unification and France was worried about the potential upset of the balance of power in Europe. In July 1870, the French Parliament declared war on Germany, playing into the hands of the superior Germany Army which immediately invaded the Northeast of France, signaling the start of the Franco-Prussian War.

Widor had studied with Jean-Jacques Lemmens in Belgium, which was enough to inspire his detractors in Paris to declare that "he plays like a German," encouraging the Rector at St. Sulpice to hire someone else. That was behind the Rector's solution of giving Widor a temporary appointment which ended nearly sixty-four years later.

In spite of the continuing international conflict, the 1870's in Paris was a marvelous time of artistic achievement. Writers like Gustave Flaubert and Émile Zola, visual artists like Monet and Rodin, and composers like Saint-Saens, Widor, and our raft of adored Parisian organists produced some of
history's greatest works of art while their national government and neighboring Germany were working out how to get down from their figurative trees and stop the bloodshed and occupation.

The message is simple. Art reflects all that is good, wise, observant, and creative in the human spirit. Art must keep happening. Go do art.