Visit the NYCAGO Chapter's website.

Help us grow our local audience. Explore events presented by your friends and colleagues and include your own on the member-curated Concert Calendar of our Chapter.

Please submit all material for the newsletter by the 24th of the preceding month.

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From the Editor

This is a corrected version of the June 2020 Newsletter

Dear readers,

Please disregard the version of the newsletter that was sent out earlier this evening. I myself was quite surprised to find it in my inbox, as it was not quite ready for public consumption. Many cooks spoil the broth, as the saying goes.

The most important addendum here below is a link to the biographies of the candidates for the 2020 Chapter elections.

Thank you very much for your understanding and please accept my apologies for the premature transmission.

~J.D.W.

Dean's Message

Get out the vote!

Spring elections are near
Despite the considerable challenges and uncertainty that has plagued the past few months, Board Member and Chair of the Nominations Committee, Janet Yieh, together with her team, Renée Louprette and David Hurd, have assembled an excellent, diverse, and balanced slate of candidates for the upcoming elections that was recently approved by the Board. More information follows below.
Because of the delay and the necessity to have the Board in place by July 1, the current Board voted to reduce the time for write-ins to 14 days (we usually allow 30 days). This will allow 14 days for voting and sufficient time for the votes to be audited before their announcement at the end of June.

I told Janet that her job as Nominations Chair would be important but straightforward. It has been far from straightforward, and I am particularly grateful to Janet, Renée, and David for their hard work. Thanks as well to those who continue to volunteer their time for the good of the Chapter.

**Coronavirus Relief Fund**

The Chapter Board recently voted on a motion to approve an emergency relief fund for current members of the Chapter (all categories, including dual membership) financially affected by the Coronavirus and its aftermath. Funds will be allocated on a first-come basis up to a total of $350 per person. **Applications and disbursements will handled as discretely as possible.** Please email Claudia Dumschat with your request.

**Onwards and upwards**

We have so much to be thankful for—and two awardees to celebrate—in addition to an exciting program year for the 2020-2021 season. While it has been frustrating not to be able to complete the program year this season, I am confident that there is much to be excited about, not least the possibility of actually meeting in person and celebrating the organ and its music in real-time glory!

With my very best wishes, as ever,

James Kennerley, Dean
From the Nominations Committee

**Proposed Slate of Officers**

**2020 Chapter Elections**

**Executive Board**
Dean – James Kennerley *(incumbent)*
Sub Dean – James Wetzel *(incumbent)*
Secretary – Raymond Nagem *(incumbent)*
Treasurer – Patrick Kreeger
Registrar – Larry Long *(incumbent)*
Auditors – Andrew Henderson *(incumbent)*, Paolo Bordignon, and Tyrone Whiting

**Class of 2024 Members-at-large**
Loraine Enlow
Nathaniel Gumbs
Nicolas Haigh
Bernadette Hoke
Jared Lamenzo
Colin MacKnight
Michael Shake
Lena Tharp
Kalle Toivio

**General Notes**

Click here to read biographies of the candidates.

All incumbents of the Executive Board are eligible for reelection. The by-laws call for the election of two Auditors (out of three candidates) and six members of the Class of 2024 (out of nine candidates). For a full description of each Board Member's duties, please read Section V of the Chapter's by-laws.
Write-in Nominations
Anyone wishing to nominate additional candidates may email Secretary Raymond Nagem with a petition signed by at least five members of the Chapter in good standing for inclusion on the ballot. An e-signature for the petition is valid.

Election Schedule
June 1–14    Period of direct write-in nominations to be submitted to the Secretary
June 15      Secure email-only ballot send to all NYCAGO Members in good standing
June 29      Polling closes at 12 Noon
July 1       Election results are announced in the July Newsletter and the new Board's term begins

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Yieh, Chair of the Nominations Committee,
with David Hurd and Renée Louprette, Members of the Committee

Quote of the Month
If an opera cannot be played by an organ grinder, it is not going to achieve immortality.
Editor's note: I initially encountered the glorious musical tradition at Corpus Christi when I first moved to New York in the fall of 2005 to start my undergrad at Juilliard. It was my first experience hearing a professional choral ensemble making music in the Catholic liturgy, and it made a profound, lasting impression. I would like to thank Louise for her role in the vanguard of early music in the City and for her indefatigable advocacy for other arts organizations. I am also grateful to her for compiling the information below.
Corpus Christi Church is a modest-sized Catholic church in the Morningside Heights area of Manhattan. Located on a quiet block, the church is dwarfed by its prestigious neighbors, Riverside Church and Union Theological Seminary and also is situated near the Jewish Theological Seminary, Manhattan School of Music, Barnard College, Teachers College, and Columbia University. The church’s façade is elegant and unostentatious, but the interior is spectacularly beautiful, both visually and acoustically.

The parish was founded in 1906, and the first church building opened the following year on the present site. This edifice was replaced in 1936 with a more substantial and distinctive steel-framed structure of red brick exterior designed by Wilfrid Edwards Anthony. (Anthony earlier served as Bertram Goodue's assistant, was responsible for most of the interior appointments at Saint Vincent Ferrer on Lexington Avenue, and was the principal architect for Saint Catherine of Siena on East 68th Street.)

Corpus Christi’s building stacks a high-ceilinged auditorium in the basement level below the sanctuary and a parish school and now-empty convent above, described as a “cab-over-engine” approach by the art historian Joseph Masheck.

Thomas Merton’s legacy is of great significance for Corpus Christi. As a graduate student at Columbia University, Merton converted to Catholicism and was baptized in the church in 1938. He described the building in his well-known *The Seven-Story Mountain* (1948), “It had a kind of seventeenth-century Oratorian character to it, though with a sort of colonial tinge of simplicity.”

**History of the Music Program**
The building of the church was overseen and inspired by Fr. George Barry Ford (pastor from 1935-1958) who came to the parish after serving as chaplain at Columbia University for the previous ten years. Together with William
McDonald, organist and director of music (1936-1969), they created an innovative liturgy, musically distinguished by the use of Gregorian chant Propers and Ordinaries, along with Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical polyphony performed by a well-trained choir of men and boys.

The New Testament scholar Monsignor Myles M. Bourke, pastor of the church from 1966-1992, continued the commitment to liturgical music of the highest merit, working closely with Louise Basbas who was appointed director of music and organist in 1975. She established the current professional mixed choir. Notable, too, are the terms of Fr. Raymond M. Rafferty (1998-2013) and the current pastor, Fr. Daniel P. O'Reilly, who is also the director of Columbia Catholic Ministry.

During her tenure, Ms. Basbas has supplemented traditional polyphony with more than thirty commissioned works from twelve composers, including Catherine Aks, James Bassi, Harvey Burgett, Jackson Hill, and Louise Talma.

**Current Music Program**

The professional choir sings for 65 Sundays and feast days throughout the year with nine singers from early September through the Feast of Corpus Christi and a group of three singers during the summer months. To assure the continuity of and funding for the choral tradition, a not-for-profit organization, The Friends of Liturgical Music, was established in 1989 at the end of Msgr. Bourke’s pastorate, under the aegis of Fr. Peter F. Bannon and parishioner John Thornton.

Many organists have presented recitals for the Friends’ biennial gala fund-raising event: David Briggs, Harvey Burgett, Jon Gillock, Gerre Hancock, Judith Hancock, Chere Ko, Henry Lee, Raymond Nagem, Christa Rakich and Peter Sykes.
The Organ

Walter Holtkamp, Sr.’s three-manual, 29-rank organ (Job 692) was installed as the first Holtkamp in New York City and was dedicated on October 7, 1956. The organ has been maintained as faithfully as possible to its original concept, with a recently duplicated setterboard combination action replacing the original. Long under the care of the late Randolph Gilberti, Peter Batchelder has maintained the instrument since 2008.

Chapter Member at the Church

Louise Basbas, Director of Music and Organist, conducts the Choir of Corpus Christi Church, an ensemble which specializes in historically informed performance. She is the founder and executive director of Music Before 1800, now in its 46th season. This organization presents programs by outstanding local, national, and international early music performers and ensembles in the acoustically and aesthetically superb setting of the church. Music Before 1800 is the longest-running early music concert series in New York City.

Ms. Basbas is an active advocate for organ, vocal, and chamber music, particularly early music. She is a former board member and Dean of the NYCAGO, past president of the Saint Wilfrid Club, and a former board member of Chamber Music America, Early Music America, and the Musicians Foundation. She is currently president of the Bohemians (New York Musicians Club) and is a board member of Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS-NY) and the Friends of Liturgical Music at Corpus Christi Church. She has been a panelist for numerous grant-making organizations, including the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Philadelphia Music Project of the Pew Charitable Trusts.
Visiting Online (and eventually) in Person

Church Website

Music before 1800

Joke of the Month

A Franciscan friar and a Jesuit priest, after arguing with each other over whose order was greater, prayed to heaven for an answer. The Father Almighty himself responded:

My sons,

Please stop bickering about such trivial matters. Both orders are equally great and good in my eyes.

Sincerely,

God, O.P.

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