January is usually essential recovery time for those of us who have played, conducted, and sung our way through the December madness. 2020 will be a year to remember for a great many reasons, not least because that regular pattern of Christmas concerts and services was, for the most part, replaced by recordings, virtual performances, and Zoom meetings galore. Nevertheless, January is still a good time to take stock of the year passed and look forward to the coming months.

Most significant in the program life of the Chapter is the Presidents’ Day Conference, taking place virtually this year on Monday, February 15. The jewel in the crown of the NYCAGO Chapter, for many years it was the only program event that we produced, a kind of mini convention. Sub Dean James Wetzel and the Program Committee have been working (and reworking) around the
proverbial clock to make this event a worthy and fascinating event, and I am excited to see you all there in virtual form.

**Black History Month**

In June of 2020 the Chapter released a statement in recognition of the racism, discrimination, and police violence that members of our country face, particularly black people and people of color. It is our duty as citizens to understand and discuss the roots, causes, and biases that contribute to those injustices and inequalities. We pledged to pay more than just lip service, and I can report that a subcommittee was formed last summer with the specific task of creating a plan of action for our Chapter to address our own challenges. I am delighted that their efforts have already borne fruit – read more below in the Bulletin Board. Like many of you, I was saddened to read of the virtual destruction by fire of Middle Collegiate Church, along with their Tiffany windows and the Austin pipe and Marshall & Ogletree digital organs. Middle Collegiate is famous, among other progressive social initiatives, for its outreach to communities of color.

**Housekeeping**

Sam Bartlett, our webmaster, is assembling a proposal to provide a significant update to both our website and that of the NYC Organ Project, a major resource that sees a great deal of traffic from home and abroad. Both of these were brainchildren of the late Steve Lawson, and it will be a fitting continuation of his memory that they flourish into the twenty-first century. Along with around 180 AGO chapter leaders around the country, I enjoyed a three day virtual seminar hosted by the AGO National Office this past week. Presenters shared their thoughts on the many and various facets that are involved in chapter leadership, from bookkeeping, reviewing bylaws, programming, and membership growth. It was clear that people are interested in being part of the Guild due to the variety and quality of the programs offered, as well as the opportunity for fellowship and community. Education and outreach initiatives continue to be the principal ways to attract new and younger members. For large, urban chapters such as ours, we must continue to explore ways to fully embrace the diversity this is so richly reflected in our respective populations. These notions will stand as the overarching pillars of thought that will guide our discussions and programs in the future – a future about which I continue to be optimistic.

With my very best wishes for a happy and healthy 2021!

With my best wishes,

[Signature]
Program News

February Chapter Events

Presidents’ Day Conference: French Music in America
(Virtual Only)

Monday, February 15th
3 PM – Panel Discussion: The French Influence in Contemporary Organ Building and Composition
with Didier Grassin, President of Noack Organ Company
Rachel Laurin, composer and former Titular Organist at Notre Dame Cathedral in Ottawa
Stephen Tharp, internationally acclaimed concert organist, recording artist, and Artist-in-Residence of Saint James Episcopal Church on Madison Avenue

5 PM – Lecture-Recital: Performing French Classical Organ Repertoire Today by Dr. Andrew Henderson
Director of Music and Organist at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Chair of the Organ Department at the Manhattan School of Music, and Associate Organist of Temple Emanu-El, Dr. Henderson will examine how to artfully and idiomatically register and perform music of the French Classical tradition on the modern North American organ.

6:30 PM – Zoom Social for NYCAGO Members
An opportunity for fellowship and discussion before the evening recital.

7 PM – Recital from Saint Bartholomew’s Church by Christopher Houlihan
Renowned performer and recording artist Christopher Houlihan, known for his vivid interpretation of French repertoire, will give a recital on the largest instrument in Manhattan, the famous five-manual, 225-rank Aeolian-Skinner organ at Saint Bart’s Church on Park Avenue.

This year’s Conference will be offered exclusively online and may be viewed via our NYCAGO Facebook Page or YouTube Channel. Each of the three sessions will last no longer than one hour. They will be archived on our YouTube Channel for later viewing. More information will follow in a subsequent dedicated email.

Pipe Organs of NYC
(Virtual Only)
Monday, February 8th at 7 PM – Episode 6
Temple Emanu-El
Jack Coen, *Music Director and Organist*
Dr. Andrew Henderson, *Associate Organist*
Daniel Beckwith, *Associate Organist*

Monday, February 22nd at 7 PM – Episode 7
Church of the Ascension (Catholic)
Preston Smith, *Organist and Director of Music*

Saint Joseph’s Church – Yorkville
Alistair Reid, *Organist and Director of Music*

Episode 7 will feature the only two remaining Müller and Abel organs in Manhattan.

This series of virtual programming is a continuation from the Fall and will carry on through the Spring. These videos may be viewed via our NYCAGO Facebook Page or YouTube Channel. All of the prior videos in the series have been archived on our YouTube Channel for later viewing.

**Upcoming Events around Town**

**The Complete Organ Works of Dupré at Saint Thomas Church**
(Virtual Only)
Saturday, January 23rd at 3 PM
Saturday, March 6th at 3 PM
Monday, March 29th at 6:45 PM
Tuesday, March 30th at 6:45 PM
Saturday, April 24th at 3 PM
Saturday, June 5th at 3 PM

Saint Thomas’s Organist and Director of Music Jeremy Filsell will perform the complete works of Marcel Dupré in a series of six recitals, as 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of Dupré’s death. The events are live-streamed at the times above and will remain available on-demand for one month after the performance. They are presented as part of the Concerts at Saint Thomas 2020-2021 season. For more information and to view, click here.

**Harmonium and Pipe Organ Recital at the Basilica of Old Saint Patrick’s Cathedral**
(Virtual Only)
Friday, February 5th at PM
A concert on three historic harmoniums by Artis Wodehouse with Basilica Organist Jared Lamenzo on the 1868 Henry Erben pipe organ. This special presentation will include additional in-depth videos about the harmonium and its music. For more information and to view, click here.

**Lenten Recital Series at Saint Vincent Ferrer**  
(In Person and Virtual)  
**Sundays of Lent at 4:15 PM**  
Saint Vincent Ferrer’s Director of Music and Organist James D. Wetzel will offer a series of 45-minute organ recitals as part of a larger program of Sunday Lenten devotions at Saint Vincent Ferrer (Lexington Avenue at 66th Street). These recitals will be offered in person (for free) and via live-stream. For more information and to view, click here.

**Transcriptions at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral**  
(In Person and Virtual)  
**Sunday, February 28th at 3:15 PM**  
Saint Patrick’s Associate Director of Music Michael Hey and violinist Christiana Liberis will offer a recital of transcriptions of Johann Sebastian Bach and Johannes Brahms. This recital will be offered in person (for free) and via live-stream. The Cathedral is located at Fifth Avenue at 51st Street. For more information and to view, click here.

Please email suggestions and comments for the Program Committee here.

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**In memoriam**
The Chapter is saddened to announce the death of John Weaver, one of America’s finest concert organists, a musician of incalculable influence in the life of this City, and a dear friend, mentor, and colleague to many. Dr. Weaver was Director of Music at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church from 1970 to 2005. He was Head of the Organ Department at the Curtis Institute from 1972 to 2003 and Chair of the Organ Department at The Juilliard School from 1987 to 2004. More information will follow. Requiescat in pace.

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**Bulletin Board**

**The Centennial Millennium Fund (CMF) of the NYCAGO**

This year, the CMF will entertain grant applications for between $500 and $5,000 for programs which promote the general public’s interest in the pipe organ. Grant proposals shall be one page in PDF format, please, and the deadline is March 15th for grants for programs happening this calendar year (2021). Next year we anticipate returning to a normal timeline and cycle.

Because of the extraordinary world situation, grants are only to be awarded this year to programs which are demonstrably ‘Covid-proof’, i.e. not reliant on artist travel or a particular lock-down status.

*Please send your proposals to:*
David Enlow, Chair
NYCAGO Centennial Millennium Fund Trustees
david@davidenlow.com

The Centennial Millennium Fund was created with proceeds from the 1996 National AGO Centennial Convention held in New York City.

**February: Black History Month**

The NYCAGO Board has established a committee to address issues of diversity within the Chapter. The committee members are Janet Yieh, Sam Bartlett, Nathaniel Gumbs, and Larry Long. In observance of National African American (Black) History Month, the Committee has compiled a list of resources for organ music by African-American composers.

Please consult this useful list available [here](#). It will remain available on our Chapter website as well. If members know of other works, please email them to Larry Long, and they will be added to this list.

**Harlem’s All Saints Organ to Be Saved**

Originally built in 1892 by Frank Roosevelt, and rebuilt and enlarged in 1931 by Welte-Tripp, the famous Harlem organ’s fate was uncertain since the former All Saints Church was deconsecrated in 2017. The Paulist Church of Saint Paul the Apostle near Columbus Circle, New York (Fr. Rick Walsh, Pastor; Daniel
Ficarri, organist) has purchased the instrument. The Organ Clearing House will dismantle the organ in February and place it in storage while plans for its renovation proceed.

**Church Website**
**NYCAGO Organ Project**

**Middle Collegiate Church**
On Saturday, December 5th, the 1891 sanctuary of Middle Collegiate Church at 112 Second Avenue between 6th and 7th Streets in the East Village suffered a devastating fire, gutting the interior and destroying the historic Tiffany windows and the digital Marshall and Ogletree organ, Opus 4. The famous “New York Liberty Bell” which dates from 1729 and is rung on important national occasions, survived, as did the belfry and Second Avenue stone facade.

**Church Website**
**New York Times article about the fire**

**Saint Peter's Church, Citicorp**
On Monday, January 4th, a City water main running under Lexington Avenue broke and flooded the sanctuary of Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in the Citicorp Building at 54th Street. The two-manual, 43-rank Klais organ from 1977 sustained water damage and is being removed by the Organ Clearing House to C.B. Fisk in Gloucester, Massachusetts for restoration. Cantor Bálint Karosi has posted two videos on YouTube detailing the situation: Part 1 and Part 2.

**Church Website**

**92nd Street Y Online Class: “Organ: The King of Instruments”**
On January 11th, the 92nd Street Y’s School of Music presented a conversation with organists Paul Jacobs, Chair of the Organ Department at The Juilliard School; David Hurd, Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, and former professor at General Theological Seminary; Rachel Laurin, composer and former Titular Organist at Notre Dame Cathedral in Ottawa; and Greg Zelek, Principal Organist of the Madison Symphony Orchestra in Wisconsin. It was hosted by Naomi Lewin, the former weekday afternoon host on WQXR, and is still available for listening [here](#).

**Brooklyn AGO Chapter Scholarship**
Brooklyn AGO Chapter's George Mathison Memorial Scholarship Competition will take place on Saturday, March 13th at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn Heights. The competition is open to anyone currently enrolled in organ study for credit at an academic institution, and to high school age students taking private lessons. Applications are due on or before February 13th, and judges will be announced after that date. Further information can be found [here](#). Anyone with questions may email Thomas Hobson Williams, Dean
of the Brooklyn AGO Chapter.

**Masterwork Music and Art Foundation Organist Competition**

The Foundation is accepting applications through March 15th for a $10,000 prize that will be awarded to an emerging artist under the age of forty who is pursuing artistic development. Visit [masterworkarts.org](http://masterworkarts.org) for more details and to apply.

Send Bulletin Board submissions to the editor for publication.

Submit news items (professional appointments, retirements, marriages, births, obituaries, etc.) to the editor for publication.

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**From the Editor**

**Staying Small**

**A Personage of Noble Rank and Title**

When I am frustrated (that is, almost always) with the actions or elocution of a leader, ecclesiastical or civil, local or global, I often think, “If only I were Lord High Executioner of Titipu, things would be better.” If I were in charge, people would know when to use “were” or “was.” The liturgy would look like this. The faithful would be inspired to behave like that. The citizenry would ascent to policies such as these. The trains would run on time (to borrow someone else’s platform). And so forth. A dangerous path that has not been paved by the best role models to say the least.

Beyond the alarming bent towards megalomania that such fantasies may inspire, I am always (gratefully) humbled by the reminder that there is still much about my own relatively simple existence that I would like to and fully have the power to change but have not. I return to the advice that one should not rail against the corruptions of the world if your bed is not made. (I always make my bed.) But the point is, if I cannot get my own inbox cleared or this editorial done before the eleventh hour, it is nothing but arrogance (well, maybe...
with a soupçon of laziness) to think that my worldwide plan has any more efficacious merit. This double edged sword keeps me motivated toward self improvement and reconciles me to the general state of things as being not so bad and certainly no worse than in times past. And as Igor reminds us, it could also be raining.

**Oversized Gesture or Practical Step**

I would suggest that instead of grand, sweeping narratives of global change, particularly in Cvidial times, we need small, practical, achievable personal goals to keep our spirits up and our society intact. To that end, I have found projects to be my saving grace during quarantine. Repertoire that I had resigned myself to never learning is now under my fingertips. Juvenile editions of polyphony that I never thought would get revised now have a uniform appearance. (I have taken enough from C.P.D.L. over the years—about time to contribute to it.) In the summer, I even walked across the street to sit on a bench in Riverside Park. Not to read, not to stare at my phone; just to sit there and watch the world go by—something in fifteen years of New York freneticism I had never done.

We hear much talk about what some politician or pope or pop-star has done or should do, and then what the pundit would do instead. (I am essentially off social media these days, so if utopia does indeed arrive, please be sure to let me know.) But before we set out to solve the perduring problems of the world via stinging exegesis on Facebook, or even through that redressive election that is elusively always one more cycle away, maybe we should check to see if our professional website is up to date. Maybe we should consider how many notes we split in last Sunday’s postlude. Maybe we should see what we can do as musicians through music qua music to make this world a better place. In other words, if we do not think music is powerful enough to improve our lot in life and that of our neighbor, maybe that outlook is indeed the thing that needs changing, because music certainly is.

Upon ultimate reflection, I am certain that while the world would indeed be different were I in charge, it would not actually be better. So instead of trying to change the world, I am trying, and failing, and trying again, just to fashion myself in a better likeness, one note and one day at a time.

Submitted for your consideration,

Sincerely,

James D. Wetzel, Sub Dean
P.S. The title of this article equally could have been applied to that tired old New Year's Resolution, which reminds me of the silly joke, “Last year, I promised myself I would lose ten pounds. Only twenty more to go.”

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Getting to Know You

**Lincoln Center, Part 2**

For Lincoln Center, Part 1, which included the organs of David Geffen Hall and the Metropolitan Opera House, see last October’s Newsletter [here](#).

**Alice Tully Hall**

The ground-breaking ceremony of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts took place on May 14, 1959, with President Dwight D. Eisenhower in attendance. Just three years later, Philharmonic Hall, now David Geffen Hall, opened in September, 1962 as the first major performance venue of the project. The New York State Theater followed in 1964, soon joined by the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the New York...
Public Library of the Performing Arts in the Fall of 1965. The new Metropolitan Opera House’s opening night was on September 16, 1966. Lastly, Damrosch Park and the Guggenheim Band Shell were completed in May, 1969. All of these initial elements occupy the “superblock” west of Broadway between 62nd and 65th Streets, with the Revson Fountain as its centerpiece.

The two addended tenants of Lincoln Center–The Juilliard School and Alice Tully Hall–share a building on the north side of 65th Street, west of Broadway, and originally communicated with their souther neighbors via a large plaza that bridged 65th Street. (This was removed during the 2006-2009 renovations.) Alice Tully Hall opened on September 11, 1969 and Juilliard on October 26 of the same year. The building, of Brutalist style, was designed by Pietro Belluschi.

Alice Tully, whose grandfather founded Corning Glass Works and from whom she inherited her fortune, was a modest singer who spent much of her life promoting and supporting the arts in New York. It was at the suggestion of her cousin, Arthur Amory Houghton, Jr., one of the founders of Lincoln Center, that she underwrote the entire amount for the theater that would soon bear her name. In addition to the financial beneficence, Miss Tully’s personal preferences were incorporated into the hall, down to the configuration of the seats (now at 1,086 in total) and the color of the carpet. (*At left: Juilliard Professor and renowned harpsichordist Albert Fuller’s* memoir of Miss Tully, a fantastic read.)

Miss Tully was integrally involved in the selection of the Swiss firm of Theodore Kuhn to build the hall’s organ, which was a personal gift in memory of her friend and singer Edward Graeffe. The four-manual mechanical key action instrument of was installed in 1974, situated at the back of the stage. It was designed by Friedrich Jako, director of Kuhn, with Lawrence Phelps as consultant and Jakob Schmidt as visual designer.

André Marchal, another friend of Miss Tully’s, dedicated the organ on April 9, 1975. That inaugural year included subsequent performances by students of Juilliard’s organ department, Karl Richter, E. Power Biggs, Catharine Crozier, Thomas Schippers, Leonard Raver, Anthony Newman, and Walter Hilse.

During the renovations of Alice Tully Hall that began in 2006 and were executed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro and FXFOWLE, the organ was placed in storage; it was reinstalled, with several small modifications, by Kuhn during the summer of 2010 to the great relief of many who feared it would know the same
fate as the Aeolian Skinner across the street. The organ was reinaugurated on November 16, 2010, with Paul Jacobs performing Bach’s *Clavier-Übung III*, assisted by the Clarion Choir, Steven Fox, conductor, who sang the chorales.

For more information:
NYCAGO Organ Project
History of Lincoln Center
Alice Tully Obituary

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**Great Music In a Great Space**

**Tuesdays at 6**
Every Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Raymond Nagem, organ
David Briggs, organ

*Tuesdays at 6* is a weekly organ recital series presented by the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. It began as an early response to the coronavirus pandemic and has blossomed into an already beloved Cathedral tradition. Concerts, which run about 45 minutes, are presented at 6 p.m. each Tuesday and are free to the public. They can be accessed on the Cathedral’s YouTube and Facebook pages. The series features Raymond Nagem, Associate Director of Music and Organist, and David Briggs, Artist in Residence.
Quote of the Month

*Freedom has cost too much blood and agony to be relinquished at the cheap price of rhetoric.*

*There are only two ways of telling the complete truth—anonymously and posthumously.*

~Thomas Sowell (b. 1930)

NYCAGO Chapter Information

General Inquiries

[Chapter Contacts Page]
[Chapter Committees and Appointments]

Newsletter

James D. Wetzel, *editor*

The newsletter is published on the first of every month. Please submit all material (advertising, announcements, classifieds, etc.) to [the editor] by the 24th of the preceding month.

Executive Board

**Dean:** James Kennerley  
**Sub Dean:** James D. Wetzel  
**Secretary:** Raymond Nagem  
**Treasurer:** Patrick Kreeger  
**Registrar:** Larry Long  
**Auditors:** Paolo Bordignon and Andrew Henderson

**At-large (Class of 2024):** Loraine Enlow, Nathaniel Gumbs, Bernadette Hoke, Colin MacKnight, Jared Lamenzo, and Lena Tharp

**At-large (Class of 2022):** Sam Bartlett, Gregory D'Agostino, Donald Meineke, William Randolph, Jason Roberts, J. David Williams, and Janet Yieh

The biographies of the board members are provided [here].
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