March is invariably the time when we fastidiously prepare for and execute Passover, Holy Week, and Easter services. Organs that have lain silent or taken a more discrete role during Lent are reinvigorated in full force on Easter Day to rapturous applause, voiced or unvoiced. Organists, singers, and choir directors are reminded once again how significant an impact their music and work has on their congregations and concert audiences alike.

Not so this year, I expect. This month marks the first anniversary of the nation’s shutdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, together with the tragic loss of life, and also the innumerable loss of life experiences. It is time that we will never get back. Even though the news on large-scale vaccination is generally optimistic, the post-pandemic world is likely to be quite different from anything we have hitherto experienced. Nevertheless,
things will get better, and we can all enjoy a sense of hope and comfort from the fact that we will be able to gather in person again in the not so distant future.

For those of you struggling with the financial implications of the lockdown, please do remember that the Chapter is still providing 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 be handled as discretely as possible. Please email Claudia Dumschat with your request.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2021 Presidents’ Day Conference, which was a particular success. The online format allowed for attendees from all over the country (including one of our most illustrious colleagues, Fred Swann, who joined us from the West Coast!). Eternal thanks and bravi tutti to James Wetzel, the program committee, Sam Bartlett, and our participants, Didier Grassin, Rachel Laurin, Stephen Tharp, Andrew Henderson, and Christopher Houlihan, as well as Paolo Bordignon, our host at Saint Bartholomew’s.

The program year continues with our regular schedule of Monday broadcasts exploring the organs and buildings of this fair city. If you missed any of them, or any part of the Presidents’ Day Conference, you can watch them at your leisure here.

What will the new normal look like? Will choirs, congregations, and audiences flock back to their stalls, pews, and seats as soon as herd immunity has been pronounced? Will Zoom meetings become relegated to the past along with dodgy internet connections, inadvertent pushing of the mute button, and the ubiquitous cat filter? How about the many professional musicians who fled the City once work dried up in 2020? I expect that the transition will be a more nuanced affair, and that the road to a full recovery will be a complex and challenging one. Until then, we will continue to provide inspiring programs, educational activities, and resources for our members.

With my best wishes,

James Kennerley, Dean

Program News
March Chapter Event

Pipe Organs of NYC
(Virtual Only)

Monday, March 8th at 7 PM – Episode 8

Church of Saint Ignatius Loyola
K. Scott Warren, Director of Music Ministries
Daniel Beckwith, Principal Organist

and

Church of Saint Vincent Ferrer
James D. Wetzel, Director of Music and Organist

Episode 8 will feature music from the Jesuit and Dominican Churches of the Upper East Side. This video 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, 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.

Lenten Recital Series at Saint Vincent Ferrer
(In Person and Virtual)

Sundays of Lent at 4:15 PM
March 7th: Music of Herbert Howells
March 14th: Music of César Franck
March 21st: Music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
March 28th: Music of Jean Langlais

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.

Please email suggestions and comments for the Program Committee here.

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**Bulletin Board**

*In memoriam: Richard Shephard*

Composer Richard Shephard MBE (1949-2021) died on February 20th after a long illness.

Dr. Shephard grew up as a chorister of Gloucester Cathedral during Herbert Sumson’s tenure and then studied under Sir David Willcocks, Hugh Macdonald, and Alan Ridout while a student at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Shephard sang as a lay vicar of Salisbury Cathedral and York Minster. For twenty years, he served as headmaster of the York Minster School and subsequently as Chamberlain and Director of Development of York Minster. He was a member of the Archbishops’ Commission on Cathedrals and on the Church Music Commission.

Richard Shepard was a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music, was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2012 Birthday Honours for his services to music and education, and was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of North Yorkshire. He received honorary doctorates from York University and the University of the South (Sewanee) as well as a Lambeth Doctorate of Music.

**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.

**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.*

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**Member News**

**Appointment**

**Jeremy Paul Jelinek**
was recently appointed Interim Choirmaster and Organist at the Church of the Epiphany (Episcopal) on the Upper East Side, where he has assisted since October 2020. Even amidst COVID, Jeremy oversees a robust choral program. He will guide the plans surrounding the return to in-person liturgy and those relevant to the church’s imminent physical move to 351 East 74th Street. Last summer, Jeremy moved to New York City from Washington, D.C., where he was Principal Organist at Saint Dominic Church and Assisting Organist at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Jeremy is currently an M.M. candidate in Organ Performance at the Juilliard School, studying with Paul Jacobs.

**Retirement**

**Mollie Nichols**
will retire this year after 32 years serving as Director of Music and Organist at the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest (Fifth Avenue at 90th Street) and will be relocating to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Mollie’s other posts include Music Department Head, Nightingale Bamford School, NYC; Adjunct Professor, Fordham University’s Westchester Campus; Organist, Westchester Reform Temple, and Riverdale Temple. Former
church positions include Saint James’s Church with Alec Wyton, and Saint Matthew’s Church, Wilton, Connecticut.

She received two degrees in Organ Performance and the Performer’s Certificate for Performing Excellence as a student of Russell Saunders at the Eastman School of Music. Her ministry at Heavenly Rest included developing a choristers program (age three through high school) which included pilgrimages to England and performances at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as creating youth musicals and social events; developing an arts and music program for young children; directing the Annual Christmas Pageant involving more than 100 youth from the Church and community; and developing Evensong, Jazz Vespers, and Night Prayer services. She led a parish choir community of professional and volunteer musicians and a seasonal handbell choir.

*Photo credit: Robert M. Presutti.*

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

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**From the Editor**

**Living with Less**

**If Less Is More...**

One of my favorite television shows of all time, *Frasier*, is apparently getting a reboot. A quote from the lovably pompous protagonist—which could almost be his credo—reveals why he so often ends up looking foolish: “If less is more, just think how much more ‘more’ will be.” In its context (Season 7, Episode 13: “They’re Playing Our Song”), Frasier set about composing and recording an ostentatious, impossibly long, fully orchestrated, and exceedingly expensive theme song for his radio show. Or as Dr. Crane would have it, “Oh, it’s not a time for stinting. I’ve got everything from the African rain stick to the Javanese...”
The Size of His Opus

Frasier’s Freudian operetta was farcically bad not because it was poorly composed, but because it was poorly conceived. As a vanity project it failed to cohere to the parameters of the genre, time allotment, and budget. As Frasier’s father Martin remonstrated, “I tried whistling that thing you wrote today, and I got lightheaded.” Ultimately Frasier learned his lesson, went back to the keyboard, and did indeed produce a catchy, tuneful 20-second jingle that more appropriately and artistically fit the literal and figurative bill. (For a laugh, compare his first and second attempts.)

Striving to better, oft we mar what’s well

Especially in these times, learning to live with less must be the order of the day. And not just to live with less, but even to thrive with less. In a world obsessed with the acquisition of rights and freedoms, we often fail to appreciate or even acknowledge the counterpoising limitations of responsibility. For it is often not in spite of, but because of such limitations imposed on us that we flourish as players and as people.

We All Know Someone

Let us consider the 200-seat church wherein Napoleon Bonaparte, A.A.G.O. insisted that his 2-manual, 20-rank organ include an en chamade reed. (You know, the kind where a tall man can just about touch the resonators when walking down the main aisle.) Is that judicious?

Or what about the church down the block where there is only room in the chamber for a 16-foot bourdon and cromorne, but life will simply not be worth living without five 32-foots and a clarinet, basset horn, English horn, and bassoon. And so the appropriately sized pipe organ now has 30 digital supplements and a console the size of a Manhattan studio. Is that tasteful?

Or what about the church around the corner whose director is bound and determined that the choir is going learn Mozart’s Requiem when they can barely muster the Ave verum corpus. Is that practical?

Would not the money for the first church’s party horn have been better placed in a fund to ensure that the rest of the organ can be maintained in ten years when the general coffers are light? Would not the second church’s organist be a better artist by choosing repertoire appropriate to his instrument instead of the other way around? Would not the third church’s volunteer singer and her listeners, and even the director, be better formed by ten short anthems sung well instead of a masterwork without the mastery?

Give Up for Lent
So the challenge ahead is: how we can better serve our audience, our congregation, our singers, and ourselves by being better stewards of that which has been entrusted to us? Instead of indulging in self aggrandizement, or soap-boxing, or oneupmanship either with the music we choose or the organs we commission, may we use these narrow times to be truly forged in a crucible of moderation.

Submitted for your consideration,

Sincerely,

James D. Wetzel, Sub Dean

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**Getting to Know You**

**Central Presbyterian Church**

**Introduction**

In a City with so many churches, surprisingly few have any bells. Even fewer churches have enough to constitute a ring, chime, or carillon. It is, then, a newsworthy event indeed when a Manhattan church purchases a new set of bells.

The last known major installation of bells in Manhattan was in 2006 when Trinity Church dedicated 12 new bells in their tower at the head of Wall Street. Cast by the Taylor Foundry in England, it is the only 12-bell change-ringing installation in the United States, and is one of only two 12-bell change-ringing towers in North America, the other being at Saint James’s Cathedral in Toronto. More information about Trinity’s bells is available [here](#).

A “carillon” is a musical instruments made of at least 23 conventional tower bells which have been tuned so that they can be played together in harmony. The bells are hung fixed, or “dead,” in a frame, and are played by a mechanism which operates internal clappers and/or external hammers. [Towerbells.org](#) is a useful resource for the delineation of the bell ringing terminology.
The term for the study of bells itself is campanology.

According to the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America, there are only three carillons in New York City: Riverside Church’s Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon (74 bells); Saint Martin’s Episcopal Church in Harlem (42 bells); and Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue (26 bells). At least that was so until last October.

**Old Carillon**

The Gothic sanctuary now occupied by Central Presbyterian Church was built in the early 1920s for the Park Avenue Baptist Church by the architectural firm of Allen and Collens, working with Hency C. Pelton. This was done through the financial benefaction of member John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The Gillett and Johnston Foundry of Croydon, England cast a 53-bell carillon in 1925. When four years later Park Avenue Baptist’s preacher, the Reverend Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Mr. Rockefeller, and the rest of the congregation moved uptown to the Riverside Church in Morningside Heights, their carillon—which had been given by Mr. Rockefeller in memory of his mother—came with them.

**New Carillon**

Central Presbyterian Church was originally founded in 1821. When the congregation purchased the Park Avenue building in 1929, the bell tower was empty, and it would remain so for the next ninety years. In October 2020, Central dedicated a new 50-bell carillon. This event marked an important milestone for the congregation which had initiated a complete restoration of its historic tower in 2017 through a significant gift from a generous donor.

This carillon was cast by the Paccard Foundry of Annecy, France which has been continuously operated since 1796 by seven generations of the founding family. The bells (E3, G3-G7) are sounded by electronically controlled strikers played from a keyboard/MIDI controller instead of from a traditional carillon console with trackers. (Anyone who has seen the relatively small size of the tower will readily comprehend why.)

Central’s Senior Pastor Jason Harris commented, “For nearly a century, the silence of the bell tower served as a poignant metaphor for Central’s decline, as the congregation dwindled in size and the building fell into disrepair. But in recent years, we have witnessed this old church burst back to new life. By God’s
grace, Central has become one of the most vibrant churches in the city, welcoming professionals, families, students, and artists from all different backgrounds into a united community of faith in Jesus. It is our earnest prayer that the return of the sound of bells will symbolize renewed life within our community and signal a note of hope in the city after such a long period of uncertainty and silence.”

Organ at Central

Central’s organ is M.P. Möller’s Opus 8000 of 1950, a 4-manual instrument of 79 ranks. It followed on the heels of Möller’s rebuild of the organ at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue (Opus 7900 in 1948), and its design was a collaboration between a young Ernest White and Hugh Giles, Central’s Director of Music and one of Tournemire’s last students.

The quality of the organ at Central was singled out in a letter from Henry Willis III to G. Donald Harrison after the former’s tour of the U.S. Jean Langlais’s American debut was made on the instrument which he described as “very poetic.”

All but a handful of ranks are original, and a campaign is underway to fund a full restoration of the instrument. Thereafter the carillon will also be playable from the organ console.

For more information:
Church Website
NYCAGO Organ Project

Thanks to the Reverend Jason Harris, Senior Pastor; Seth Ward, Worship Director; and Jason Nong.
Quote of the Month

Also from Season 7, Episode 13: “They’re Playing Our Song” of Frasier:

Frasier: Our show deals with the whole range of human emotion from euphoria to despair, and nothing says despair so quickly as the skirl of a bagpipe.
Roz: Nothing says “Turn off the radio” so quickly either.
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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Visit the NYCAGO Chapter website by clicking here.

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