The New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

www.nycago.org

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Dean’s Message

Changing with the times

At our last meeting, the Executive Board of the chapter spent a good deal of time discussing the excellent slate of candidates put forward by the International Performer of the Year committee (Donald Meineke, chair). You will hear from the committee shortly, once the slate that was ratified by the board is prepared for sharing with the chapter, along with biographies and recorded performances given by the nominees. The award was first presented in 1978 to Robert Noehren, who played a recital at Alice Tully Hall.

The aim of the award is to recognize excellence in organ performance and to increase public awareness of the organ and its performers. Particular focus is given to performers who enjoy an international reputation and performing career, and nine of the 21 awardees are from abroad. Five awardees have been women. The IPYA Committee and the Board worked diligently to consider a broad range of nominees to more fully represent the organist field.
We will also, for the first time, implement the ranked-choice voting system. Previously, the winner was decided by a simple majority vote from the Chapter members. Though no voting system is perfect, ranked-choice voting, which was invented around 1870 and is used in numerous democracies around the world (and coming soon to NYC’s elections!) has the advantage of negating the effects of popularity and fame when voting for a candidate. The most common system, Instant-runoff voting, considers the first choice candidate winning 50% or more votes the outright winner. If not, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated, and the second-choice votes of voters who preferred the eliminated candidate are allocated to those who remain in the race. This process continues until one candidate has a majority. Survey Monkey, the online platform that we use, automatically calculates the winner, and makes the whole process very easy. We hope that this will encourage increased participation in the vote and greater ownership of the award and its winner.

In line with our commitment to diversity in all that we do, as well as our commitment to membership recruitment, growth, and retention, the National AGO recently announced the establishment of the “Year of the Young Organist,” July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022. During these twelve months, any individual under the age of 30 can become a new member or renew their membership for free. Those eligible can take advantage of this offer by following this link. The AGO offers a wealth of reasons to become part of the organ community. Please forward this message to anyone you think would enjoy the benefits of free membership.

With my very best wishes, as ever,

James Kennerley, Dean

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**Program News**

**Chapter Events**

**Pipe Organs of NYC (Virtual Only)**

Monday, May 10th at 7 PM – Episode 9

**Church of the Holy Apostles**

Dr. Tim Pyper, *Director of Music*

and

**Basilica of Saint Patrick’s Old Cathedral**
Jared Lamenzo, Organist and Director of Music

Monday, May 17th at 7 PM – Episode 10
First Presbyterian Church
Michael Shake, Director of Music
and
Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church
Dr. Andrew Henderson, Director of Music and Organist

This series of virtual programming 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.

NYCAGO Tribute to John Weaver (Virtual Only)

Monday, June 7th at 7 PM
with
Dr. Andrew Henderson
Director of Music and Organist,
Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

Alan Morrison
Chair in Organ Studies,
Curtis Institute of Music

Paul Jacobs
Chair of the Organ Department,
The Juilliard School

Dr. Weaver was Director of Music at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church from 1970 to 2005; 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. At all three of these institutions, he was immediately succeeded by one of his students. These three students, now in the full stride of their own careers, will offer a 45-minute discussion on the legacy left by Dr. Weaver.

This virtual event may be viewed via our NYCAGO Facebook Page or YouTube Channel.

Events around Town

Church of the Epiphany – Farewell Recital

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is planning to move from its present building at 1393 York Avenue at 74th Street to the former Jan Hus Presbyterian Church at 351 East 74th Street. As part of that relocation, the parish sold its Aeolian Skinner organ, Op. 1412 from 1962, to Saint Bernadette’s Roman
Catholic Church in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Epiphany hosted a farewell concert for the organ on Sunday, May 9th at 6:30 PM with music of Bach, Hurd, Mendelssohn, and Widor played by Stephen Rapp. View the recital here. The program is available here.

The Aeolian Skinner will be removed beginning May 12th. Epiphany has contracted M. L. Bigelow and Co. of American Fork, Utah to build an organ for their new sanctuary. More information is available here.

The Complete Organ Works of Dupré at Saint Thomas Church  
(In Person and Virtual)

Final Recital: 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 presented as part of the Concerts at Saint Thomas 2020-2021 season. They are live-streamed at the times above and will remain available on-demand for one month after the performance. For the remaining recitals in this series, a limited number of in-person tickets will also be available; for more information and to view, click here.

Please email suggestions and comments for the Program Committee here.

Bulletin Board

International Performer of the Year Award

Every two years the NYCAGO Chapter embarks on the process of identifying a slate of candidates, which are presented to the membership for a vote. The Chapter then bestows upon the winning candidate the International Performer of the Year Award. The Chapter by-laws state the award is “for an exemplary performer active internationally in the field of organ performance.”

The Board recently met and has approved a slate of candidates for consideration. We are currently in the process of gathering the candidate’s permission, artist biographies, and head shots to be included in the formal announcement. Beyond that information, we hope you might take some time to familiarize yourself with each of the candidate’s extensive careers and unique contributions to the art of organ performance.

For a brief history and full list of past recipients of the IPYA, click here.
We look forward to presenting the official slate for the 2021 International Performer of the Year Award to you very soon and await with great anticipation for the naming of this year’s recipient.

Submitted by Donald Meineke, Chair of the Awards Committee

**RCYO Competition**

On April 26th, the NYCAGO Chapter held a competition as part of the 2021 AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists. This year’s competition was pre-recorded and took place online. Our three judges listened to the recordings once through (as they would in a live competition) and then conferred over Zoom to determine first and second place. The judging process was entirely anonymous. This year, the NYCAGO Chapter competition had two participants: Cecily DeMarco and Anna Gugliotta. Both competitors were required to play a work by Bach, a work written after 1750, a hymn, and two movements of *Sonata in Sea: Cape Cod* by James Woodman.

Our judges awarded second place and its accompanying $300 prize to Anna Gugliotta. Cecily DeMarco won first place and a $600 prize. Additionally, Cecily will advance to the Northeast Regional Competition, which will be held virtually on May 8. The winner of the Regional Competition will be invited to perform a “Rising Star” recital at the 2022 AGO National Convention in Seattle. (There is no national competition after the regional level.) The Chapter is also looking forward to presenting Cecily in recital next season.

We are very grateful to our panel of esteemed judges: international concert organist Chelsea Chen; Dr. Paolo Bordignon, Director of Music at Saint Bartholomew’s Church; and Dr. Raymond Nagem, Associate Music Director at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and organ professor at Manhattan School of Music. Congratulations to Cecily and Anna!

Submitted by Dr. Colin MacKnight, Competition Coordinator

*Send Bulletin Board submissions to [the editor](mailto:theeditor) for publication.*
Getting to Know You

An Appeal

This column has been running since February, 2020 and has featured organs of churches, synagogues, and civic auditoriums across New York City. In that time period, elsewhere in these Newsletters, we have also reported the dismantling of three historic instruments within our Chapter’s precincts: those of All Saints Church in Harlem, the First Moravian Church in Kips Bay, and the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Lenox Hill (see above).

The task for the readership this month is: if you know of other churches that have closed, or ones that are planning to close or dismantle their instruments, whether through the ravages of Covid or otherwise, would you please let us know? We would like to feature them here before it is too late as well as accurately update the NYCAGO Organ Project.

Email us here with any pertinent information.
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

Since wedding season is approaching,

The ring was on her hand, the Bishop’s benediction had been given, the bridesmaids were a-poise to resume their place in the procession, and the organ was showing preliminary symptoms of breaking out into the Mendelssohn March, without which no newly-wedded couple had ever emerged upon New York.
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.

Visit the NYCAGO Chapter website by clicking here.

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