

# Mixtures

The Organ of the Binghamton Chapter, AGO



MARCH 2011

## DEAN'S MESSAGE

On January 28 some 20 people gathered to learn about the restoration of the world's largest pipe organ in the Atlantic City Convention Hall (now called the Boardwalk Hall). This 7-manual behemoth is pictured in the February TAO, p. 44. More information is available online at [Acchos.org](http://Acchos.org). If you were not able to attend January's chapter event and wish to borrow the DVD, call Polly at 754-0378. In a trivia game following the DVD, we learned that the second largest pipe organ in the world is at Macy's (formerly Wanamaker's) in Philadelphia. If you count ranks instead of pipes, however, Macy's organ is the largest and has been completely restored. Third and fourth place are occupied by the organs at West Point Chapel and the First Congregational Church in LA.

Many of you attended Jonathan's outstanding concert on the Helmuth Wolff organ at B.U. on Feb. 18. It was an exciting performance which the audience thoroughly enjoyed. I looked forward to seeing many of you again on Feb. 25 at Hilltop, but Mother Nature had other plans. Thanks to Joan Kellam, Laura Kennedy, Jean Henssler, Leigh Harding, Lee Roseboom and Faith Brown, who put together a fine program and were all "ready to go." The program has been put on hold for a future time.

I now anticipate seeing many of you at the Cider Mill Playhouse on Saturday, March 26 and then again at Andrew Kotylo's concert on Sunday, March 27. Tickets for *Bach at Leipzig* are at the group rate of \$15, and reservations can be made online ([binghamtonago.org](http://binghamtonago.org)) or by calling Polly (754-0378) by March 10. Be sure to check **The Calendar** for other happenings you will not want to miss.

Polly Wendling, Co-dean

**Help Us Publicize** Andrew Kotylo's concert on March 27 at the Main St. Baptist Church. Simply print out the attached flier and post on your church's bulletin board or reproduce to distribute to people you think may be interested in attending. Thank you.

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### CO-DEANS

Lee Roseboom 797-7947  
Polly Wendling 754-0378

### NEWSLETTER

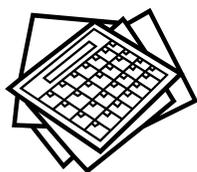
Polly Wendling,  
pro tem 754-0378

### PLACEMENT

Jean Henssler  
748-7285

### WEBSITE

Richard Hedgebeth  
[www.binghamtonago.org](http://www.binghamtonago.org)



## THE CALENDAR

Sunday, **March 20** – 4 pm *Choral Journeys* sung by the Madrigal Choir of Binghamton under the direction of Bruce Borton, a candidate for Artistic Director. First Presbyterian Church, 42 Chenango Street, Binghamton

Sunday, **March 20** – 3 pm Benefit Organ Recital by members of the Oneonta AGO Chapter at First Presbyterian Church, Main St., Oneonta (across the street from St. James Episcopal Church) to benefit the music program of First Baptist Church, Walton, NY. The church and its parsonage were burned to the ground shortly after Christmas. Music Director, Karen Ball, is doing her best to keep her choir motivated in the school where they worship, but they have absolutely NO MUSIC LEFT.

Saturday, **Mar. 26** – 4 pm Cider Mill Playhouse performance of *Bach at Leipzig*. Discussion and dinner afterwards at Orlando's, W. Main St. (En-Joie Golf Course). Tickets @ \$15 group rate; reservations to Polly (754-0378) or online ([binghamtonago.org](http://binghamtonago.org)) by March 10.

Sunday, **March 27** – 5 pm Dedicatory recital by Andrew Kotylo at Main Street Baptist Church, Main & Chestnut Sts., Binghamton, on the new Stephen Russell organ.

Saturday, **April 2** – 3 pm Junior Recital by Mark Rossnagel, a talented student of Jonathan Biggers, at First Presbyterian Church, Binghamton. Admission free. The program includes: Mendelssohn - Sonata III, Sweelinck - *Mein Junges Leben* variations, Bach - Dorian Toccata and Fugue, Durufle - Variations on *Veni Creator*.

Sunday, **April 3** – 4 pm Jonathan Biggers will be presenting the 7th concert in the COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH series. At First Presbyterian Church, Binghamton. He plans on performing 1/2 of the *Clavierübung III*, framed by the Prelude and Fugue in E-flat ("St. Anne"). Admission is half-price for all AGO members. Jonathan writes that this is "a BIG program, well-suited to the First Pres organ. . . Please come and be sure to bring a friend."

Saturday, **April 9** – 9:30 am Board Meeting at Dunkin' Donuts

Sunday, **April 10** – 4 pm Organist David Yearsley at Grace Episcopal, Elmira

Friday, **May 6** – 7 pm Open House at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Binghamton, to see and hear the James Louder tracker organ built in 2004.

Sunday, **June 12** – 4 pm Members Recital at First Congregational in Greene, NY  
" " 6 pm Annual dinner & meeting at the 1810 Juliand House

July 3-6 - Region I and II AGO Convention in Morristown, NJ . Read all about it online at [www.AGO2011NJ.com](http://www.AGO2011NJ.com). Jean Henssler is looking for a roommate; call (607) 748-7285 or email "jhhmusik\*@\*aol.com"

## Have You Begun Yet?!

-to practice a special piece you plan to play in the Member's Recital on June 12<sup>th</sup>?

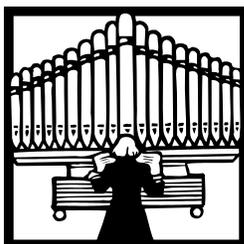
The organ we will be using is a Wick's Classic two manual pipe organ designed for the First Congregational Church in Greene, NY after the church burned in 1985. If you have already signed up to play or plan to, Ellie Rugg will e-mail the specifications for the organ to you.

**IMPORTANT:** Please contact Ellie Rugg with information about the piece you will be playing—(we have set a limit of 3-7 minutes) at 607-692-3204 or "Jrugg001\*at\*stny.rr.com" ASAP! We would like to have a completed roster by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

To arrange practice time at the organ, please contact Claudia Kachmarik, host organist, at 607-242-1338 or "ckach14\*at\*stny.rr.com".

It has been decided to dedicate the recital to Armand Harding and Caroline Stone and to invite their spouses to attend. This will be an added remembrance and celebration of the ongoing observance of the 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the First Congregational Church of Greene. Our Recital has been designated a part of this observance.

Claudia and Steve Kachmarik will host our annual dinner/meeting at the 1810 Juliand House just a few minutes from the church. They have offered to provide a dinner at a reasonable cost TBA. More details coming!



## Introducing Our Chaplain



A written bio is an inadequate substitute for meeting **Joanne Lanfear** in person. She is a delightful person and has offered to help our chapter in any way she can. Joanne first met some of us a year ago at the clergy/organist dinner in Owego. Subsequently she was present at the September kickoff and the post-holiday dinner.

Joanne grew up in Oxford, NY, majored in religion and philosophy at Marietta College, Ohio, raised 4 sons, and returned to school for a Master's Degree in school counseling and for certified advanced study in marriage and family counseling.

Our chaplain has worked for 20 years as a school psychologist and for the past 18 years has served in the marriage-and-family counseling ministry for the United Church of Christ. In addition to her counseling ministry, she is Interim Pastor at East Side Congregational, UCC.

Perhaps some day we can persuade Joanne to play one of her 2 accordions for us! She loves classical music and church hymns, and like many of us, she wonders in what direction church music is headed.



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*The following article appeared in the Owego Pennysaver 1/30/11. Reprinted with permission of the writer, Wendy Post.*

## **Where music and faith converge**



Gathering in an early 1800's church that rests on the corner in downtown Owego, N.Y., congregants are welcomed each week for worship and music that is performed on a late 1800's organ by Ithaca College Professor Leon W. Couch III.

Sitting intently in front of the organ's keyboard and pedals, and beneath the facade that consists of pipes with scrolling and gilding, Couch performs, each week, music that is built off of the sermon.

According to Couch, he spends time with the pastor, Parish Bridges, to learn about the scripture and the sermon topics, and then takes the time to select a passage and build the hymns off of it.

Couch added that in order to bring the music and worship together, you have to know the bible very well, and you have to know the church year. The choir at the church must also follow the same direction regarding hymns, and Couch has formed a committee that prepares the choir songs based on the same selections for the organ.

But for the 40-year old music theory professor at Ithaca College, the opportunity to serve as an organist for the church helps him to continue learning. "I like to help people worship," said Couch, "and I gain a lot of satisfaction from it."

He added, "Plus I get to perform every week, and it forces me to keep learning music."

Relocating to Ithaca in the summer of 2010, Couch stated that he has traveled around a lot while fulfilling the acquisition of two Master's degrees and two Doctorates – one in music theory and an undergraduate in physics. Couch also has a Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) degree in organ.

This D.M.A. in organ made Couch highly desirable amongst churches in the area upon his arrival, and he noted that he received four offers to perform as a church organist – one in Corning, one in Elmira, one in Syracuse and one in Owego.

Couch also noted that he was impressed with the choir at the Owego church, and that is why he chose that location.

As a professor at Ithaca College, Couch teaches students how to construct pieces and integrate them with emotion. The church in Owego contained the right elements of challenge and continual learning, thus influencing Couch to accept the proposition.

"Composers work really hard to put things together," said Couch of his work. And at the church, he explained, he is able to perform each Sunday, work ahead of time to select the hymns, and work with the choir during their Thursday evening rehearsals.

And residing in Brooktondale and keeping busy with his teaching and his music performances, Couch's daughter Elizabeth, at the age nine, is already playing the cello. "I'm looking forward to playing chamber music with her," added Couch of his daughter's inherited talents.

But if this schedule didn't already keep him busy, Couch also talked of the solo performances he delivers throughout the country that are arranged by an agency out of California. Although he mostly plays the organ at these performances, he has also performed on piano, harpsichord, and a carillon – a musical instrument that is usually housed in a free-standing bell tower.

But on Sundays, when the sermon, organ and choir all come together, it is a place where music and faith converge.

Sitting amongst the congregation, and observing the organist, one must also wonder about the organ's construction. With towering pipes that serve as a facade over the inner workings, Couch explained how the two to three thousand pipes that are encased in wood dictate the chords and keys played to transform into sound.

Carefully, and without touching the wood that surrounded each pipe, Couch gave a brief tour of the inner workings of the 1889 Hutchings tracker organ. The organ, according to the church, is on the national historic registry and was purchased from a Congregational church in Oswego that was uniting with the First Presbyterian Church. It was installed in the sanctuary in 1988.



### **Broome County Arts Council Newsletter**

It is very easy to get the BCAC Weekly Newsletter, which is literally packed with all that is happening in the local and area arts world. Individual members of Binghamton AGO Chapter can sign up to receive the newsletter of the BCAC by going to the Web Site [www.bcartsCouncil.com](http://www.bcartsCouncil.com), clicking on Get Our Newsletter, and entering one's email address.

Once Couch creates his hymns through working with the pastor on the upcoming sermons, the conversion comes together in its entirety for a Sunday morning worship.

“People can tell what they're singing – they have that intuition,” said Couch of the importance of selecting hymns that are melded into the sermon, and the time of the year.

Along with the organ music, the 25-member choir will perform one or two anthems per week. According to Couch, the choir is four part – with a soprano, alto, tenor and bass section. “This is another reason why I selected this church.”

And although Couch is only expected to be in the area for a one year duration, for now, his music will carry on through others. Couch has constructed a 3-set CD which offers instruction for professional organ players.

Couch also spends 50 to 60 hours per week teaching students who, according to Couch, will become professionals. “I love training them and then seeing them grow,” Couch added.

More information about Professor Leon W. Couch III, his performances and his CD's can be found by visiting [www.performance.profcouch.us](http://www.performance.profcouch.us).

### **Electronic Mailing of Newsletter**

E-mailed newsletters will be sent as a PDF attachment. You may let us know at any time if you wish to change your preferred method of receiving *Mixtures* (bwending\*at\*stny.rr.com). As long as we don't hear from you, you will continue to receive a hard copy in the mail.