

May
2024

Mixtures



Binghamton Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

DEAN'S MESSAGE...

Many of you reading this heard Randy Steere's concert a couple of weeks ago. If you weren't able to be there, or able to attend his presentation the following morning, let me summarize a bit. His program focused on what could be called "accessible" music, pieces with obvious or well-known melodies and relatively little dissonance. Randy introduced each piece to help the audience appreciate the music and what he felt was significant or engaging about them.

During the Saturday workshop, Randy's main point was that organists have become "insular" and too intellectual in our programming. Organ concerts are too often designed to appeal to other organists, or dedicated church-goers (both of which are rather narrow audiences, and mostly shrinking). Or perhaps people who majored in music in college, rather than the broader population.

He showed an ad for an event at the Bedford Whaling Museum, a Moby Dick Marathon, and asked which of these aspects of the program would appeal to us: 25 hour live reading of Melville's book ... a live enactment of Chapter 40 (which was scheduled for midnight) ... discussions with experts, etc.

We felt it didn't have a "hook" for a general audience., too focused on specialists or people who already are deep into the book or whaling history. It didn't seem like it would be interactive enough. He feels the same is true for most organ concerts, and a lot of the music many organists play - too intellectual, no familiar melodies, and few rhythm patterns that ordinary people can recognize. - not interactive, just auditory (barely engages visual if the console is even visible).

The big challenge is to get people to come to a concert in the first place. And then it has to reach them where they are. His suggestions: short selections (4-5 minutes max) ... broad mix of styles and genres (he highlighted Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops as an example that gets people "in the door") ... pieces should appeal without having to be analyzed or studied (but brief explanation before playing can make them accessible) ... collaborate with other musicians, dancers, film, etc. (I remember an organ concert with light show in the 1970's, huge audience) ... develop a theme which has a "hook" to get people's attention ... don't assume audience is religious, but "spiritual" and mutual caring is good ... find ways for audience to participate (hands on, maybe let people try playing the organ afterwards).

(Continued on page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS...

- ♦ **Saturday, May 4 - 7:30 pm** - Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra presents "Other Worlds: Superheroes, Fantasy, and Sci-Fi" at the Forum Theatre, 236 Washington Street, Binghamton. The Philharmonic will be highlighting first responder. Tickets - \$25 - \$65/Ages 17 and under are free.
www.binghamtonphilharmonic.org
- ♦ **Sunday, May 5 - 4:00 pm** - *Music for a Sunday Afternoon* concert at Christ the King Fellowship Presbyterian Church, 75 North Main Street, Spencer, NY. David Jackson, director and organist. Performers also include: Jewel Griffith, Brenda Yeier and Linden Foster. The program includes solo works and congregational hymns.
- ♦ **Sunday, May 5 - 4:00 pm** - Main Street Baptist Church, 117 Main Street, Binghamton. William Lawson will be giving the second of his two 50th anniversary programs called "The Danish Organ." It will be a survey of Danish Sacred Music from about 1800 to the present with the participation of flute, organ, solo voice, trumpet, and trombone provided by musicians from BU.
- ♦ **Friday, May 17 - 7:00 pm** - Organ recital by Philadelphia-based organist Max Esmus, AAGO. First Presbyterian Church, 1060 W Main Street, Troy, PA, featuring the works of Guilman. See page 62 of the April issue of the TAO.
- ♦ **Saturday, May 18 - 7:00 pm** - Binghamton Theater Organ Society concert, Nancy Wildoner presents *Pop Pipes: Favorites* at the Forum Theater, 236 Washington Street, Binghamton. www.BinghamtonTOS.org (See ad on page 6).
- ♦ **Sunday, June 2 - 4:00 pm** - Members' Recital, United Presbyterian Church, 42 Chenango Street, Binghamton.
- ♦ **Saturday, June 15 - 4:00 pm** - Organ recital, Jean Henssler, First Presbyterian Church, 1060 W Main Street, Troy, PA.
- ♦ **Sunday, June 23 - 7:30 pm** - Former Ithacan, John Riss will give a recital at First Presbyterian Church, Ithaca in memory of their AGO founding member Jean Radice

COME & PLAY @ THE MEMBERS' RECITAL...

WHAT - Annual Chapter Members' Recital

WHEN - Sunday, June 2 at 4:00 pm

WHERE - United Presbyterian Church, 42 Chenango St., Binghamton

WHAT TO PLAY - Consider a variety of music genres,
Inclusive of voice and instrumental music, if desired.
Shorter Pieces rather than major works will allow for more participation



CONTACT

Rebecca Mebert (607) 343-7392 or Andy Chadwick (607) 972-8117

To provide the name/composer of your recital piece
& arrange a practice time at the church/they will meet you there!

DEAN'S MESSAGE CONTINUED...

He highlighted a few organists who are doing things we should consider emulating (or expanding upon): ...one uses pre-programed digital percussion in his concerts....Paul Fey posts short videos on YouTube with attention-grabbing descriptions (also Anna Lapwood, Richard McVeigh, others)...an organist who challenges kids to create videos for a short organ piece he has recorded for them, then plays the piece to the films that are submitted.

Myself, I'd say that certain pieces by Widor, Vierne and Dupré would fit the model he proposes, even Mendelssohn, and yes, certain pieces by JS Bach. Overall, it was a very thought-provoking concert and workshop, which I hope will influence our chapter programming going forward. Speaking of which, please sign up to play in our Members' Recital which is on June 2 (a week earlier than originally planned). See page 2 for further information. Dinner at Little Venice will follow for members and guests.

Hilton

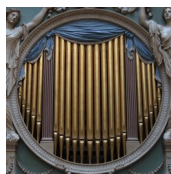
FROM THE REGISTRAR...

Our chapter has about 34 members who are listed for membership renewal before July 1st. The national database, ONCARD, already has them listed as "invoiced not paid". It is anticipated that those invoices will be emailed about May 1st. As in previous years, I encourage those members to renew online using a credit card and to consider doing it quickly. That's the most secure way! A check mailed to AGO Headquarters is not as secure. Also as before, for members that do not renew online (and I know the website renewal is outdated and, for using only once a year - puzzling), the chapter's traditional form will be mailed June 1st to accept checks.

Richard

CONGRATULATIONS TO PAULETTE FRY!...

Yet another published composer among us! Congratulations to Binghamton Chapter member Paulette Fry on the recent publication of her ***Boundless Mercy: Hymn Settings for Organ***. Lorenz ISBN: 978-0-7877-8949-7



ESTHER WILCOX: 11/12/33 - 4/22/24



Chapter member, Esther Wilcox, was laid to rest this past Monday, April 29 from the Hopley & Eschbach Funeral Home, Binghamton. She was remembered fondly at the funeral service by 27 family members, nurse colleagues, AGO members and friends. Esther had quite an amazing life!

Our chapter was well represented by eight members in attendance. The music during the visitation and service was voluntarily provided by AGO members, Carol Bartlett and Claudia Kachmarik. Also, the keyboard used was supplied by Claudia.



Esther had been a resident at Elizabeth Church Nursing Home for the past five years. She was very appreciative of the cards and letters chapter members sent over the years. And, deep gratitude is extended to AGO members, Richard Sheasley, Lee Roseboom, and Carol Bartlett, who not only faithfully visited her on a regular basis, but also kept her informed of all the latest chapter news.

We are thankful for Esther and her life of service through nursing and music.
May she have eternal rest in the heavenly kingdom.

JOSEPH MAXWELL OSSEI-LITTLE...

As you all know, Joseph was the performer for our Young Artist Series Recital last November. And on Saturday, April 13, he gave his Master's Recital at Syracuse University. Five of our chapter members attended his recital and got a chance to speak with him afterwards, while posing for photos!

Last week, our chapter sent Joseph a \$500 check to assist with his travel back to Ghana (his home) this summer. He will get to see his wife and baby son - the first time he will see his baby in person! Upon returning to the States, he will be pursuing a DMA at the University of Houston.

Joseph was thrilled to see our chapter members at his recital. And he was deeply moved and grateful to receive the check.

We wish Joseph well in his travel and in his continuing musical education!



POSITION FOR CHURCH ORGANIST...

Looking for: organist or pianist to play weekly at the Sunday service for the Emory UMC in Hancock, NY (40 minutes south of Binghamton; 1 hour north of Scranton). The standard playlist is prelude, 3 hymns, and a postlude. Organ is a newly restored 1926 Estey, 9 rank, 2 manual with both the swell and the great chests redone by the Chase Organ Co. This position offered is only to provide music and accompaniment - no choral directing, rehearsals, etc.

\$125.00 per service. Applicants may contact Michael Fotta via email, text, or phone: mfotta@susumc.org (570) 575-3318

PART-TIME ORGANIST POSITION...

Looking for a part time organist for a church in Liberty, Sullivan County, NY. Please contact for further information:

Karen Faraci, Ruling Elder kfaraci74@yahoo.com (845) 80407714

WITH HEARTFELT THANKS...

On behalf of our Binghamton AGO Chapter, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to member, Jean Henssler for the wonderful work she did in helping make Randy Steere's Concert (April 19) and Open Discussion (April 20) at Trinity Episcopal Church a success! Indeed, much "behind the scenes" work begins months before an event happens. And Jean, since bringing the idea of Randy's concert and presentation to the executive board last summer, took care of all the details (there were many) and was involved in continuous communication with Randy in Massachusetts, to bring the event to reality. We thank you, Jean, not only for your passion for the organ and its music, but also for the work you do in making us a better AGO chapter!

Nancy McNamara





The Binghamton Theater Organ Society presents:

Nancy Wildoner in Concert

POP PIPES: Favorites



Songs you grew up with– 1950's to now. Favorite arrangements from Nancy's previous concerts, including "Broadway A to Z" with Judy Giblin and Randy Messing. You'll want to sing along, fun guaranteed!

Sat. May 18, 2024 at 7 pm

At the Forum Theater. www.BinghamtonTOS.org

Tickets at door- \$20 Adult, \$15 BTOS Members and Vets.

Students are free courtesy of Early Owego Antique Center.



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