

THE BROOKLYN BOMBARDE

The Newsletter of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

August 2019



Sing to the Lord of the Harvest!

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Dean's Letter

Dear Brooklyn AGO Members,

Greetings! I hope everyone has had a relaxing and refreshing Summer, with just the right balance between the business up front and the party in the back. I hope that as the Summer winds down, you'll remember: don't think of this year as the hottest of the past 125 years--think of it as the coldest of the next 125! With this mentality, you'll find yourself positively clamoring to turn down the AC, and your pianos and organs may show their appreciation by staying slightly more in tune.

We had a wonderful send-off to our 2018-2019 program year, enjoying our June Potluck in the lovely gardens of St. John's Episcopal Church, installing our new Board members, and awarding our Person of the Year Award to the obviously deserving John Klauer. Since then, our friends on the Executive Board have had a busy few months of planning and organizing our next batch of exciting events for the 2019-2020 program year. Although we're not ready at the time of this writing to announce the full calendar, you can rest assured that all of our staple events--the Member's Recital, the Scholarship Competition, the January Banquet, etc.--will be on the docket, and we'll have some totally new

novelties to offer as well. As always, the best value for your AGO membership can be had by joining us in person at our many annual gatherings!

To kick things off, we're offering two events in September: "Bach to Brooklyn" and a workshop focusing on the AGO certification exams. Bach by popular demand, this year's "Bach to Brooklyn" organ tour will visit notable churches spread across Park Slope, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Greenpoint, and we'll have the pleasure of hearing some of the borough's finest organs, both old and new. Thanks to the fascinating commentary from our tour guide, Columbia University professor and architectural historian Andrew Dolkart, "Bach to Brooklyn" is worthwhile for all lovers of New York City history. I heartily encourage you to invite all your most well-behaved friends and neighbors! "Bach to Brooklyn" is on Saturday, September 7th, and full information and the reservation form are included in this issue of the Bombarde.

A new event we're offering this year will be our certification workshop, entitled "Almost Everything You've Wanted to Know About AGO Certification Exams But Were Afraid to Ask." If like me you find the idea of AGO certification appealing but find the process opaque, this may be your best opportunity to demystify things. Our workshop leader, Eric Birk, has attained the title "Fellow of the American Guild of Organists," meaning that he has mastered the most rigorous tests the Guild has to offer, and he'll be generously sharing the best strategies for success with all comers. This FREE workshop will take place on the evening of Monday, September 16th at St. Philip's Episcopal Church, and the flyer is also included in this issue.

Thank you so much for your ongoing participation in our Chapter. Without your involvement and attendance, we simply couldn't bring any of our enriching events to the Brooklyn community. Please feel free to write me at dean@brooklynago.org if you have any questions or concerns, and I hope to see you in person soon!

Very truly yours,
Dr. John A. Wolfe
Dean, American Guild of Organists Brooklyn Chapter

Brooklyn POE 2015 Participants - Where are they now?

If you have seen your September Issue of TAO (THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine) and have read the features on young organists, you may have noticed photos of two participants from the Brooklyn 2015 POE: **Samantha Scheff** and **Samuel Kuffuor-Afriyie**. On page 55 of that issue we learn that Samantha is a member of the newly formed National Board of AGO Young Organists (AGOYO). She is a Rutgers University master's degree student of Renée Louprette. (Ms. Louprette taught at our Brooklyn POE.) On page 52, Samuel is pictured as one of the performers in a master class given by Cherry Rhodes during the Syracuse Legacies Organ Conference in March of this year. He has just returned from a workshop he organized for church musicians in Ghana in Western Africa, which the Brooklyn Chapter Executive Committee voted to support with a modest donation.

Emily Amos graduated from the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan this past May and will be entering as a freshman this fall at The Curtis Institute of Music. **Jeremiah Mead** is in his third year of the Bachelor of Music program at the Juilliard School, studying with Paul Jacobs. About two years ago, I answered a telephone call to AGO National Headquarters from the mother of **Jonathan Kober**. She reported that he was hired by IBM in Dallas, Texas shortly after graduating from college! Congratulations to these young people in all of their successes. *Eric Birk*

There's Gold in Them Thar Hymns!

In a pinch we've all used a beloved hymn as our Sunday morning choir anthem. If we dig into the often beautiful poetry of these hymns we can our congregations something truly special.

One of my favorite "anthem hymns" is #192 in the 1982 Episcopal Hymnal: This Joyful Eastertide. The text offers many opportunities to play with attack, volume and tempo. Here's how I use the text to interpret the music:

This Joyful Eastertide



1 This joy - ful Eas - ter - tide, a - way with sin and
 2 My flesh in hope shall rest and for a sea - son
 3 Death's flood has lost its chill since Je - sus crossed the



sor - - row! My love, the Cru - ci - fied, has
 slum - - ber till trump from east to west shall
 riv - - er. Lov - er of souls, from ill my



sprung to life this mor - - row.
 wake the dead in num - - ber.
 pass - ing soul de - liv - - er.

Refrain



Had Christ, who once was slain, not burst his three-day pris - on, our



faith had been in vain. But now has Christ a - ris - en, a -



ris - en, a - ris - en, a - ris - en.

Text: George R. Woodward, 1848–1934
 Music: VRUECHTEN, Dutch folk tune, 17th cent.

Verse 1: This joyful Eastertide, away with sin and sorrow - I have the choir really punch the second syllable of aWAY!

Verse 1: hath sprung to life this morrow... I have all 4 parts sing staccato through this phrase.

Verse 2: My flesh in hope shall rest, and for a season slumber - Start out normal tempo and mezzo forte; on the word “rest” begin a gradual ritardando and decrescendo thru “slumber” at which point the choir comes to a dead stop. Hold the last syllable. Complete break before continuing.

Verse 2: Till trump from east to west shall wake the dead - Lights, camera, action! Attack with full voice (well, as full as sopranos can get on a low Bb – maybe have them sing the first note an octave higher) and at normal tempo.

Verse 3: Death's flood has lost it's chill - “chill” is held for 3 beats; subito piano at the beginning of the word and rapid crescendo.

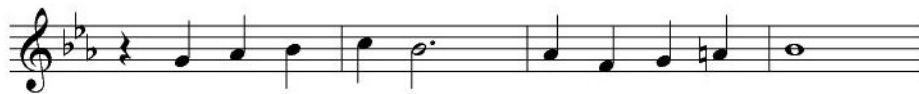
The copy of the hymn printed on this page (compliments of Grace Lutheran Church's One License Account A-722056) came from the Lutheran Hymnal. The 1982 Episcopal Hymnal flips verses 2 and 3.

Another option is to rework the rhythm of a

hymn. If you're like me, you find singing lyrics with the accent on the wrong syl-LAB-le to be maddening! The poetry gets lost in the ham-fisted forcing of round text into square melody. Here's the first verse of an *a capella* arrangement of “Abide with Me” I created for an evensong service a few years back. I freed the melody from the traditional rhythm so that the words shine through.



A - bide with me fast falls the ev - en - tide



the dark - ness deep - ens Lord, with me a - bide.



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,



Help of the Help - less, O a - bide with me.

Do you have a favorite hymn you like dressing up in anthem clothing? Pass it along and we'll showcase it in a future issue!

Nick Martellacci

Certification Exam Skills Workshop: Why You Should Attend (Certified or Not!)

"Almost Everything You've Wanted to Know About AGO Certification Exams, But Were Afraid to Ask" is the title of our next educational event. I chose this title because most people have questions about AGO exams that they are not quite sure how to ask them, or of whom to ask them. One of those is "Why should I consider certification?" Another is "Why is the material on AGO Certification Exams worth my attention?" The approach we'll take at this workshop is on the skills tested, not just the tests themselves. In this brief descriptive article, I hope to convince you to come whether you want to become certified or not, or whether you have some level of certification or not.

Let's start with the second question first: why the exam skills demand our attention. Many people believe that because many of the skills demanded of organists to pass the exams are not part of current degree program requirements in college degree programs that this means they are unnecessary in today's situations organists find themselves in. I was able to obtain two music degrees, one of them *magna cum laude*, thank you very much, and the other at one of our country's largest conservatories and for them I never had to read in C-clefs, adapt an accompaniment for the organ, improvise on a given motif, sight-read a figured bass line, or pass a fully chromatic dictation test in melodic, two part, and four-part presentations. You may not think of these as necessary skills on their own, but situations come up for us all the time that having these skills makes solutions so much easier in the work of an organist, a choir director, or anyone leading music in any way in a church music setting. The skills we'll look at primarily are: Registration, Harmonization (at sight), Sight-Reading, Transposition, Ear Training, Figured Bass, Accompaniments, Improvisation, Hymn-Playing, and Preparation Strategies. I'll be presenting these, and a few others, as skills that we all need to keep getting better at, even after obtaining certification.

Now to the first question: why you work toward AGO Certification. No one can you can decide that this is something you should do, but if you are working at getting better at the skills tested and are using them in your work, why not let the whole world (especially colleagues and future employers, who can sometimes be the same person!) know about it with those exam letters after your name on business cards, CV documents, and your email signature? In all professions, certification achievement shows that someone objectively graded your abilities in the areas covered during the process (which in the AGO happens in a totally blind procedure which only you can corrupt by telling too many people you are taking the exams!). If you are beyond the point that you would consider another academic degree, which likely won't require the supposedly "antiquated" skills that I listed some of earlier, then certification is doable, affordable, and a worthy goal that can add a quantifiable level of respect to your reputation as an organist. There are some church people in this city who recognize and are impressed with AGO Certification. They serve on musician search committees, denominational boards, parish vestries, and even in pulpits as pastors. You'll definitely make a positive impression with AGO Certification, as long as you can demonstrate those skills achieved in your work, of course.

To prove both points, let's examine a frequent situation in which all of these skills can be a great help: that moment or those moments when you could have/should have/needed to but didn't IMPROVISE! 🤯 The choir procession took longer than the hymn allowed, the priest didn't finish preparations at the communion table during the entire duration of both an offertory selection and the hymn after, or a postlude follows the last hymn which are both in entirely unrelated keys that beg for an interlude, and you didn't have anything worked out. You can use all of the skills we will cover at this upcoming workshop to sound as smooth as silk without having made any written preparation at all when such things come up without notice.

On Sept. 16, at 7:00 p.m. we'll be at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant where our Dean John Wolfe is organist and choirmaster. The excellent Guibault-Thérien instrument there is ideal for our purposes and there is ample room for everyone to see, hear, and participate in demonstration, so bring your shoes!

Eric Birk, MM, [SPC, CAGO, AAGO, &!] FAGO

Member News

Brooklyn member Adriano Spampanato has advanced to the semi-final round of the Tariverdiev Organ competition. According to the official website: "The Mikael Tariverdiev Organ Competition is the first and the only international organ competition held in Russia. From 1999 onwards this international event is held in Kaliningrad once every two years." Spampanato participated in the first round in Lawrence, KS.

Calendar

09/03/19 - 7:30 PM

Board Meeting

Baptist Temple

09/07/19 - 9:00 AM

Bach to Brooklyn

09/16/19 - 7:00 PM

Certification Workshop

St Philip's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

09/20/19 - 7:00 PM

Organ Recital - Renée Anne Louprette

Old St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC

09/29/19 - 3:00 PM

Clayton G. Williams, Baritone

St. Philip's Episcopal Church

10/08/19 - 7:30 PM

Board Meeting

Baptist Temple

11/12/19 - 7:30 PM

Board Meeting

Baptist Temple

11/17/19 - 5:00 PM

Organ Recital - Paul Richard Olson

Grace Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

11/28/19

Thanksgiving

12/03/19 - 12:30 PM

Organ Recital - Craig Whitney

Grace Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

12/08/19 - 11:00 AM

Advent Lessons and Carols

Grace Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

12/08/19 - 4:00 PM

Community Carol Sing

Grace Lutheran Church, Forest Hills

12/10/19 - 12:30 PM

Organ Recital - Dr. Gregory D'Agostino

Grace Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

12/17/19 - 12:30 PM

Organ Recital - Paul Richard Olson

Grace Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

12/22/19 - 5:00 PM

Christmas Lessons and Carols

Grace Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

12/25/19

Christmas

Board and Officers

Dean Dr. John A. Wolfe
Sub-Dean Thomas Hobson Williams
Treasurer Eric Birk, FAGO
Secretary Maria Rayzwasser
Registrar Gary Di Franco

Executive Board

Class of 2020:
 Anthony Labella
 Kurleigh Lowe, CAGO
 Rasaan Bourke

Class of 2021
 Robert Frisby
 Samuel Kuffuor
 Phillip Lamb

Class of 2022
 Lana Krakovskiy
 Nick Martellacci
 Alex Violette

Substitute List

Don Barnum - (917) 689-2953
 Samantha Bassler - (570) 594-1066
 John Collis (no Sunday AM) - (718) 797-5473
 John Conner - (201) 945-8579
 Gary Di Franco - (917) 626-7760
 Nick Martellacci (no Sunday AM) - (718) 624-5665
 Maria Rayzwasser (no Sunday AM) - (347) 598-4571
 Alex Violette - (718) 873-5912
 Robert Vogel - (917) 242-6745
 Thomas Hobson Williams (no Sunday AM) - (404) 403-7492
 John A. Wolfe (no Sunday AM) - (717) 253-2886
 Ellen Wright - (917) 693-7158

The Brooklyn Chapter
The American Guild of Organists



Back To Brooklyn
Organ Tour
Saturday September 7, 2019
from 9am to 5pm

\$45 (Members)
\$55 (Non-Members)
Breakfast and Lunch Included

Starting and Ending at
All Saints Episcopal Church
286-88 Seventh Avenue (at Seventh Street),
Brooklyn NY, 11215
Email: dean@brooklynago.org for more info

The American Guild of Organists Brooklyn Chapter is pleased to present a Fall Bus Tour of distinguished organs in diverse houses of worship. Tour guide Andrew Dolkart, author of *Landmarks of New York City*, will speak about items of architectural and historical interest in the featured churches as well as in the neighborhoods surrounding them. A chapter organist or the resident organist will showcase the instrument at each location.

To reserve a seat on the bus, please complete the reservation form below and return with your payment no later than September 1st. Space is limited, and reservations will be honored on a first-come-first served basis.

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____ City, State: _____

PHONE: (____) - _____ EMAIL: _____

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: _____

ADA REQUIREMENTS: _____

Would you like to join our events mailing list? Yes No TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Please make check payable to "AGO Brooklyn Chapter"
Mail form and payment to John Wolfe, 476 W. 141st St., Apt. 71, New York, NY 10031

The American Guild of Organists Brooklyn Chapter Presents:

**ALMOST EVERYTHING YOU'VE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT
AGO CERTIFICATION EXAMS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK**

An Educational Workshop for Organists
Led by Eric Birk, FAGO

REGISTRATION

PREPARATION STRATEGIES

SIGHT READING

TRANSPOSITION

FIGURED BASS

HARMONIZATION

EAR TRAINING

IMPROVISATION

HYMN PLAYING

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Monday, September 16th, 2019 at 7:00PM

St. Philip's Episcopal Church

265 Decatur Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233

(A or C trains to Utica Avenue)

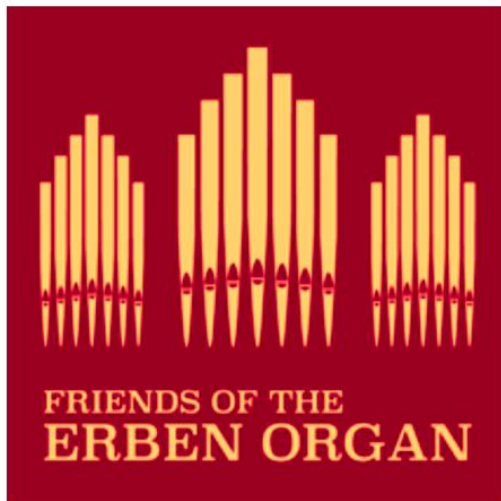
FREE! Email dean@brooklynago.org to RSVP

2019 ERBEN ORGAN DAYS

Renée Anne Louprette

San Gennaro Organ Recital

Friday, September 20, 7:00 PM



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BASILICA OF ST. PATRICK'S
OLD CATHEDRAL

MOTT AND PRINCE
STREETS

Friends of the Erben Organ presents Renée Anne Louprette, organist, in our annual recital for the Feast of San Gennaro.

The festive program features works of Italian composers played on our two magnificent 19th-century organs: the 1868 Erben organ and the 1859 Hall & Labagh chancel organ.

Celebrate the sounds that our forebears heard at the most important and sacred moments of their lives.

Suggested donation of \$15 to help preserve, restore, and present the glorious 151-year-old Erben pipe organ.

St. Philip's Episcopal/Anglican Church Presents:
CLAYTON G. WILLIAMS, BARITONE, IN CONCERT



*Art Songs, Gospel, Opera & Spirituals
Accompanied by Jason Thomas, piano*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 2019 AT 3:00PM

*St. Philip's Episcopal/Anglican Church
334 MacDonough Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233*

**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
A FREEWILL OFFERING WILL BENEFIT THE ARTIST**



Community Carol Sing

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2018 - 4:00 P.M.

Grace Lutheran Church

103-15 Union Turnpike
Forest Hills, NY 11375
718-268-6189

Reception to follow.

*Cash prize for the craziest
Christmas sweater!*