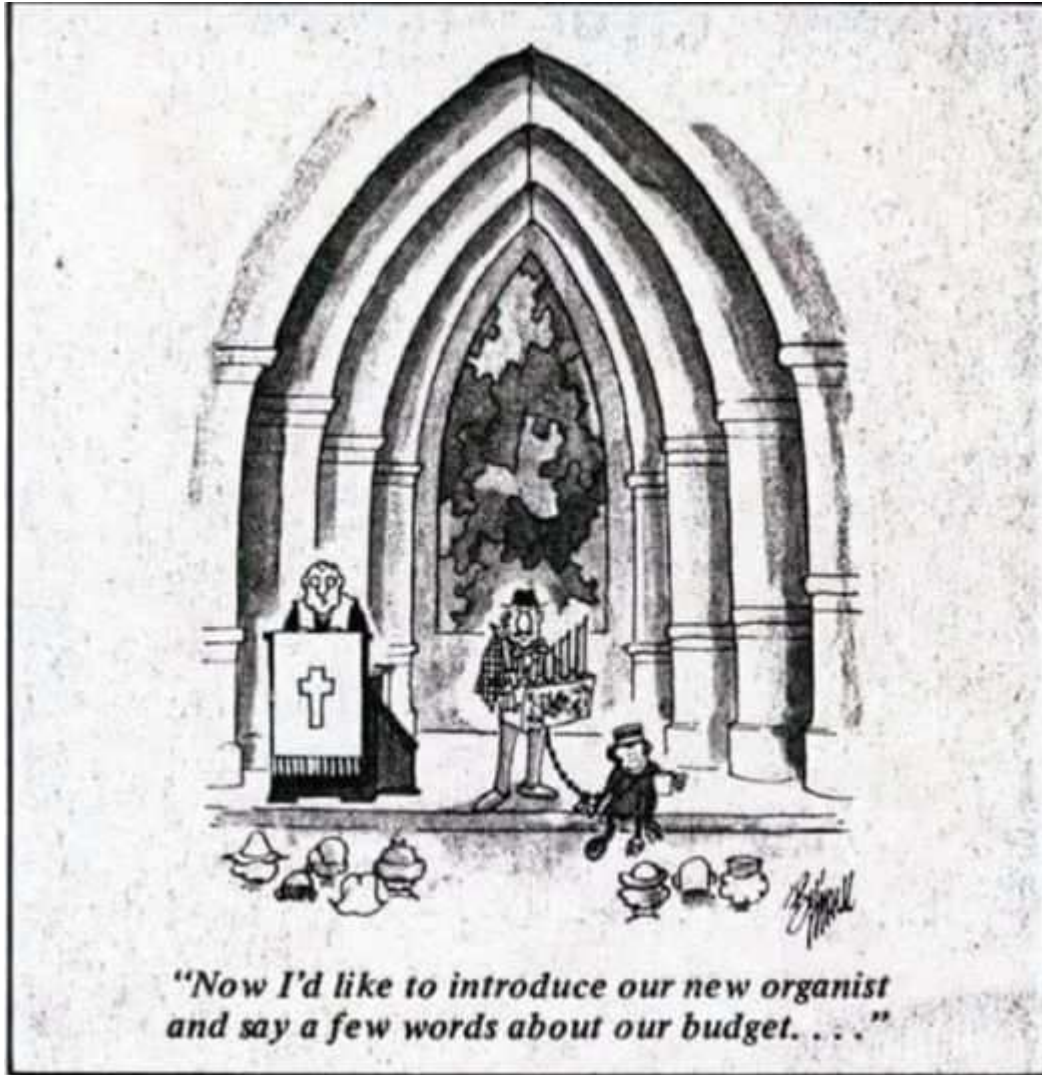


THE BROOKLYN BOMBARDE

The Newsletter of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
 August 2020



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Dean's Letter

Dear Brooklyn AGO chapter members,

Greetings! In this, my first Dean's Letter, I write to welcome you all to the 2020-21 program year, as we attempt to move ahead with our lives, careers, and vocations in a year of tremendous upheaval. I hope you have all been able to have at least some semblance of a pleasant and meaningful summer, even amid the chaos in the world, and continue to make music with fire and passion. Although much remains to be finalized at the time of this writing, the calendar committee has worked to put together a slate of events for the upcoming season, and regardless of what is happening around us, we as an AGO chapter will continue to do what we can to advance the cause of great organ music, artistry, and education. While there will be no Bach to Brooklyn bus tour this fall, there are still many fine instruments in the borough to be played and heard; while there may be no choirs meeting at the moment, there remain many human voices capable of soulful and heartfelt singing; and while schools may not be operating normally or under optimal circumstances, there remain many students in need of quality education, including quality instruction in the arts. We must and will continue to organize and promote programs to further these causes, and while it may sometimes be tempting to give up amid the challenges with which we have been faced in recent months, we must not succumb to that temptation, but continue to make our best music and fight for the furtherance of our art form and its positive impact on humanity.

Even as we move forward in whatever ways we can, our continued thoughts and prayers are with those affected by illness and death from COVID-19, those who have lost jobs and livelihood amid the economic fallout, and those whose mental health and personal lives have been compromised from all aspects of the pandemic. Whether playing a glorious organ in a large church filled with people or recording music alone in our living rooms, whether teaching a large school choir or teaching private lessons over Zoom, and whether taking a bus tour of half-a-dozen organs or just browsing stoplists and YouTube organ videos, music is one of our creator's gifts that give meaning to life, and just as it has always been necessary, it will be necessary as we get through the present crisis.

I look forward to serving the chapter in my term as Dean, even (or perhaps especially) with the weird start we're having this year. Chapter members, you are always welcome to reach out if I can be of assistance, or if you'd like to share ideas and brainstorm ways to be more effective as performing musicians, educators, and ministers of music.

Very Truly Yours,

Thomas Hobson Williams
Dean, Brooklyn Chapter - American Guild of Organists

COVID-19 Memorial

At their June meeting the Executive Board decided that in 2020, rather than honor a Person of the Year, we honor our colleagues who have fallen victim to the current pandemic.

James Merle Weaver - April 16, 2020

Edward Shay - April 21, 2020

David S. Boe - April 28, 2020

Charles Russell Krigbaum - April 30, 2020

Frances Maxine Pettit Harris - May 24, 2020

Remembering David Boe

I was very sorry to hear that we lost David on April 28. An Oberlin friend called to let me know. He was a fine musician, a fine teacher, and a fine man. We were indeed blessed to study with him. He and his lovely wife, Sigrid (whom he met while on a Fulbright in Germany), had the studio over for dinner a couple times.

He had studied with Poister at Syracuse and then with Walcha and Leonhardt in Germany. He was on the quiet and reserved side but you always knew there was a lot going on in his mind. And a very perceptive teacher - he always knew what needed to be said. He let me have it one time - commented that because I learned so fast I'd get the notes down and think I was done and that the students who had to work harder really knew the music by the time they could play it. He was spot on, and I took it to heart. And what a difference that has made in my playing.*

Two times he completely cracked me up. One was at the awards ceremony at the end of senior year. He was Dean at the time - he got up to present to so-and-so the whatever award in the amount of, pause of disbelief, \$299. Nobody got up to receive the award so he quipped "and if she doesn't come in this afternoon we're going to take off another dollar."

The other was at the organ department reception after the dedication of the Fisk in Finney Chapel (French Romantic Style - absolutely stunning instrument). This was long after I had graduated. The concert had been with the Oberlin Orchestra (they were fantastic - and it was only October!). David had played a commissioned work by an alumni composer and the Saint-Saens (after which Haskell Thompson played the Jongen). When I finally managed to get over to him he leaned over to me and quietly and dryly asked "did you like the organ?" This in a room full of organists most of whose feet had not yet touched the ground!

Jeffrey Lynn Walker

**Following David Boe's advice certainly paid off. In 1980 Jeff won the AGO's National Young Artist Competition in Organ Playing!*

Remembering Jane Parker Smith

I fell in love with Jane Parker Smith as a teenager after listening to her wonderful records. I bought her recording of the Widor 5th Symphony when I was 13 and her recording of the Liszt "Ad Nos" two years later. I was also listening to Richard Elsassner's classic recording of the Widor from the Hammond Castle Museum and I liked Jane's better - she played with much more stateliness and depth of feeling. After listening to these regularly for about 4 years I felt the need to get to know Jane personally. This was in 1981, before the internet, E - Mail or other modern communication devices so the only way to introduce myself was to call directly on the phone, which I brazenly did after doing a fair amount of detective work to find her phone number! I was very nervous as to how she would respond but I had a feeling she would be receptive because of the energy and liveliness of her playing. Luckily, I was right and she was very warm and friendly with that first call and all of our subsequent conversations. I loved talking with her and felt that I had found a true kindred spirit! This went on for about 8 years and in 1989 I planned a trip to England and one of the highlights was to finally meet Jane in person after going to a concert that she gave. She was very friendly and looked beautiful, with reddish dark hair, sensitive eyes and an elegant black outfit. We had a short but lovely conversation. I saw her in person two more times, when she performed in New York in 1996 and 2007.

Both times she was so nice and warm and it was great to see her and talk afterwards. I was hoping to be able to hook up with her again after the current health crisis and hopefully study with her or play in one of her masterclasses but she tragically passed away on June 24th. I will cherish these memories and I wish I could have gotten to know her better than I did. Her personality was directly reflected in her music - full of energy and excitement and always with depth of feeling and substance.

Rest In Peace, my beautiful soulmate, I will always be with you!

Love, Aaron (Comins)

Getting Published

Back in June I submitted two pieces for publication to SheetMusicPlus.com - a short piano improvisation on Down Ampney (Come down, O Love Divine) and an organ transcription of Percy Grainger's piano setting of Danny Boy. The pieces were accepted! If/when these pieces start to sell, I'll be earning a commission of 45%.

I'm currently working on a recording of my transcription of the Russian Dance from the Nutcracker. You see, when you submit a piece for publication, in addition to a PDF printer-ready copy of the music you must also supply a recording so that online purchasers can listen before buying. I'm hoping that this piece will be available before the end of September.

If you have original pieces or arrangements you'd like published - without the intercession and commissions of an agent - begin the process by going to www.sheetmusicplus.com/smppressinvite or emailing smppress@sheetmusicplus.com.

Nick Martellacci

Calendar

The Calendar Committee met during August. Even though events have been planned, the final details are not available at this time. When the calendar has been finalized, we'll send out a special mailing.

Board and Officers

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Dean | Thomas Hobson Williams |
| Sub-Dean | Gary Di Franco |
| Treasurer | Eric Birk, FAGO |
| Secretary | Ellen Wright |
| Registrar | Nick Martellacci |

Executive Board

Class of 2021

Robert Frisby
Kurleigh Lowe
Angelina Ngo

Class of 2022

Henry Brooks
Alan Stenzler
Alex Violette

Class of 2023

Davian Alleyne
Kell Julliard
Doris Schultz

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John Conner | (201) 945-8579
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