

The Brooklyn Bombardie

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

February 2019



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Dean's Letter

Dear Brooklyn AGO Members,

Greetings! I am pleased to report that our Chapter has enjoyed a busy and productive 2019 so far, with lots more to come as we enter the “home stretch” of our 2018-2019 program year. The year kicked off with our January Banquet at Enoteca on Court, where we traded stories “from the trenches” and enjoyed the finest Old World cuisine. We proceeded from there to “Pedals, Pipes and Pizza,” where eight young people joined us for an afternoon of fun and exploration. For the first time, this year’s event notably featured the “OrgelKids” do-it-yourself organ construction kit, thanks to Jared Lamenzo, Lana Krakovskiy and our friends at Friends of the Erben Organ. One young person was overhead to remark, “I want to be an organist when I grow up!” An educational event for adults was our very first Cooperative Choral Reading Workshop, conceived and led by Nick Martellacci and featuring several generous volunteers from the adult choir at St. Finbar’s Roman Catholic Church. Here we shared lesser-known gems from our choral music libraries in a relaxed setting, to great success--stay tuned for more workshops like this one in the future! And lastly, we counterprogrammed the most boring Super Bowl in living memory with our “Not-the-SuperBowl” concert, and I understand downtown Brooklyn is still recovering in the aftermath of our victory parade.

Coming up around the corner is our fourth annual George R. Mathison Memorial Scholarship Competition, where we’ll bestow a total of \$2,000 on some combination of four applicants, hailing from four schools spanning the high school to graduate school levels. I’d like to take a moment here to thank our esteemed judges, Frank Crosio, Gregory D’Agostino and Kalle Toivio, who will be freely donating their expertise to the chapter for this event. Later in the Spring we’ll sample the brand new Glück pipe organ at the San Damiano Mission in Greenpoint in our 2019 Members’ Recital, and we’ll close out the program year with our June Potluck. Some Spring events are still having their details finalized, so please occasionally check our website, www.brooklynago.org.

Finally, please review the slate of Executive Board nominees put forward in this Bombarde by our Nominating Committee, which this year consists of Nick Martellacci, Paul Olson and Raymond Trapp. Although that committee typically nominates only one name per office per year, chapter members may submit additional nominations for thirty days from the publication date of the slate. I for one would be thrilled to have chapter elections that were truly competitive, so we’d find out who could tack furthest to the left without making themselves unpalatable to the general electorate. Additionally, we have one open seat on the Executive Board available to any chapter member who wishes to serve in this capacity, and who would be available to attend our regularly scheduled monthly board meetings. Please consult the calendar page of this Bombarde for a list of board meeting times. Thank you very much for staying engaged with this election process and with the general life of the Chapter, and please don’t hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns. Best wishes in all your work, especially preparations for Lent, Holy Week and Easter!

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

Election Announcement

Dear Brooklyn AGO Members

The 2019-20 Election of Officers and Board Members is upon us. The Brooklyn AGO Executive Board selected a Nominating Committee of Nick Martellacci, Paul Richard Olson, and Raymond Trapp, who submitted a slate of Officers and Board Members to stand as candidates for election.

Slate for 2019 Election of Officers for 2019-20:

Officers:

Dean: John Wolfe

Sub-Dean: Thomas Hobson Williams

Secretary: Maria Rayzvasser

Treasurer: Eric Birk

Registrar: Gary Di Franco

Class of 2022:

Lana Krakovskiy

Alex Violette

(open seat)

This slate of Officers and Board Members, having been approved unanimously by the current Board, is hereby announced to the membership. If you'd like to place your name in nomination for the open seat or one of the officer positions, please notify me by March 31, 2019.

On or about April 10, 2019, you will receive an official ballot in the US Mail along with a stamped envelope addressed to Chapter Registrar Gary Di Franco. You may either mail the ballot to Gary's address in time for him to receive it by May 10th, 2019, or you may bring it in person to the Members' Recital at 5:00 on May 5, 2019, at the San Damiano Mission, 15 Nassau Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11222.

Many thanks to the Nominating Committee and to the members who have agreed to stand for (re)election this term.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. John A. Wolfe

Dean, American Build of Organists Brooklyn Chapter

Pedals Pipes & Pizza 2019



On Saturday, January 26th, the Brooklyn AGO held a "Pedals, Pipes and Pizza" event for young people at All Saints Episcopal Church. Eight youngsters and their parents were present for a day of education on the pipe organ and its music, topped off by a free pizza lunch! The event began with John Wolfe's performance of *A Young Person's Guide to the Organ*, by Randolph Currie and featuring narration by Ellen Wright. The piece is divided into sections that each draw attention to a particular set of organ

pipes or an important aspect of the organ, each based on the theme of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Following the performance, Ellen oversaw a portion of the program where kids could try playing the organ themselves, or could push and pull stops while she played. Next, Lana Krakovskiy led the kids in an exploration of "OrgelKids," a do-it-yourself organ building kit that allowed the children to gain a deep understanding of the instrument from the inside out. While we enjoyed our pizza lunch, we heard the kids saying things like, "I want to be an organist when I grow up!" The Brooklyn AGO extends its sincere gratitude to All Saints Episcopal Church for



hosting the event, to Jared Lamenzo and the Friends of the Erben Organ for granting us access to the "OrgelKids" kit, and to all those chapter members who helped make this event a success.

Dr. John A. Wolfe, Dean

OrgelKids Before...

Cooperative Choral Reading Workshop

On Tuesday evening, January 22 Brooklyn chapter members with assistance from several members of the parish choir met at St. Finbar's Church in Brooklyn.

Six members – John Wolfe, Ellen Wright, Kurleigh, Lowe, Thomas Hobson Williams, Gary Di Franco, and myself led the assembled singers through previously unknown choral gems.



After the singing, we retired to the rectory basement for refreshments and fellowship. The feedback was positive and more than one person has requested that this event be repeated in the future.

Nick Martellacci

Melody Weaving

A Useful Technique When Arranging for a Small Group

by Nick Martellacci

In 2009 I became Organist and Music Director at St Stephen's Lutheran Church in Brooklyn. The choir consisted of a dozen women past their vocal prime, but able to sing on pitch, blend, and create a beautiful sound. These were hard working ladies dedicated to maintaining their presence in the weekly parish worship. The music library consisted mainly of Xerox copies of SATB anthems. Sopranos and altos singing SATB arrangements left glaring gaps in the harmony. Then there's the pesky fact that using copied music is illegal. But the church's budget did not contain funds for me to overhaul the choral library. What to do in this situation that is familiar to so many of us?

For the first few months I struggled along using whatever legal music I could find. The musical results were less than spectacular – I still cringe when I think of the soprano high F's in Gounod's *Praise Ye the Father*. Then one Sunday the choir sang a simple two-part arrangement of *Fairest Lord Jesus* I'd written for them. The scales fell from my eyes – I was no longer bound by the limited library. Better yet I could write music that highlighted my choir's vocal strengths while avoiding their weaknesses. Over my remaining time at SSLC, I rebuilt the choir library from the ground up with hymn arrangements, original compositions, and some judiciously purchased "real" anthems.

In this article I want to share with you the technique I used for hymn arrangements. I call it Melody Weaving. Simply put:

- Sopranos sing melody notes that are too high for the altos
- Altos sing melody notes too low for the sopranos.
- The melody is always present.
- The voices not singing melody provide harmony.
- Improvise or write out a simple introduction and interlude and you've got yourself an anthem.

Let me walk you through the process I used for my arrangement of *Just As I Am*.

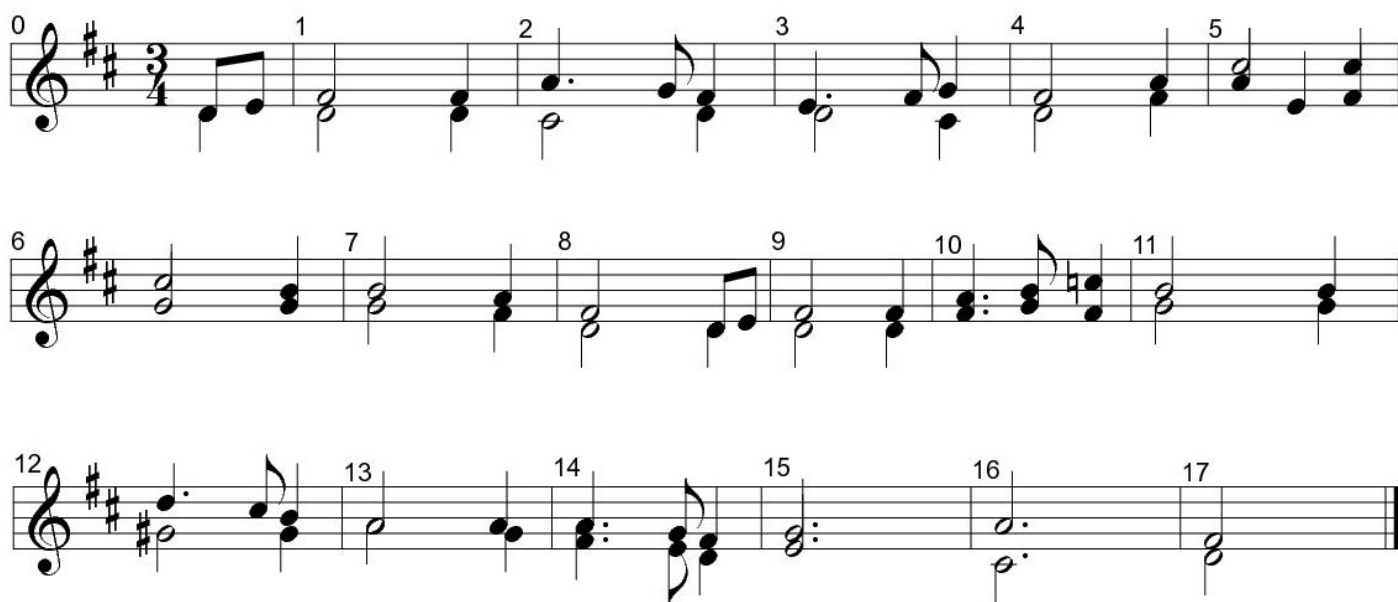
I decided to add a few non-standard harmonies to this hymn. So let's start with the accompaniment:

The image displays a piano accompaniment for the hymn "Just As I Am". The score is written in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of four systems of two staves each. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, while the bass clef provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fourth system.

Once the desired harmonies were set, all I had to do was work out the voice parts. To begin, I wrote out the melody on a sheet of music paper.



Keeping one eye on the harmonies in the accompaniment, the next step is to sketch out the harmony:



Because I changed the harmony in measure two from the traditional D Major to the dominant A Major, I was unable to go with descending parallel thirds between melody and harmony. Next, in measures five through eight the melody flips back and forth between soprano and alto but is always there. The melody at this point doesn't let the sopranos shine. So I wrote them a harmony part above the alto melody line. The same thing happens in measures ten through twelve.

Once I was satisfied with the harmonies, I wrote out the parts on separate staves:

Just as I am with out one plea,

The first system of musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Just as I am with out one plea,"

but that Thy blood was shed for me,

The second system of musical notation continues the hymn. The lyrics are: "but that Thy blood was shed for me,"

and that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee

The third system of musical notation continues the hymn. The lyrics are: "and that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee"

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

The fourth system of musical notation concludes the hymn. The lyrics are: "O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

I hope this information proves useful! If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Calendar

3/2/19 - 1:00 PM

Scholarship Competition

Grace Church, Brooklyn

3/12/19 - 12:30 PM

Lenten Noontime Recital

Ellen Wright, Organist

Grace Church Brooklyn

3/12/19 - 7:30 PM

Board Meeting

Baptist Temple

3/19/19 - 12:30 PM

Lenten Noontime Recital

Michael V Kaminski, Organist

Grace Church, Brooklyn

3/26/19 - 12:30 PM

Lenten Noontime Recital

Nick Martellacci, Organist

Grace Church, Brooklyn

4/2/19 - 12:30 PM

Lenten Noontime Recital

Judith Hancock, Organist

Grace Church, Brooklyn

4/9/19 - 12:30:00 PM

Lenten Noontime Recital

Paul Richard Olson, Organist

Grace Church, Brooklyn

4/9/19 - 7:30 PM

Board Meeting

Baptist Temple

4/20/19 – 4:00 PM

Haydn's Seven Last Words of Christ

The New York Classical Quartet

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

5/5/19 - 5:00 PM

Members' Recital

San Damiano Mission

21 Nassau Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11222

5/7/19 - 7:30 PM

Board Meeting

Baptist Temple

6/2/19 - 4:00 PM

Jazz Vespers

Nick Martellacci, Piano & Organ

Grace Lutheran Church, Forest Hills, NY

From the Editor

Please feel free to send along any articles, advertisements, and calendar submissions to me at nm11201@aol.com. Word, PowerPoint, and JPG files work best.

Flyers

St. Philip's Episcopal/Anglican Church Presents:

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST

A Musical Work with Biblical Narration by Joseph Haydn



THE NEW YORK CLASSICAL QUARTET

Judson Griffin, violin
Kate Goddard, viola

Margaret Ziemnicka, violin
David Bakanjian, cello

SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH, 2019 AT 4:00PM

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

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A FREEWILL OFFERING WILL BENEFIT THE ARTISTS