

# THE BROOKLYN BOMBARDE

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

May 2020



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## ***Dean's Letter***

Dear Brooklyn AGO Members,

Greetings! At the time of this writing, I'm back in my apartment in New York, after seven weeks spent hiding out from COVID-19 with my family in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The pandemic isn't leaving anyone unscathed--for some it means boredom and loneliness, for others lost earnings and economic hardship, and for others illness and death. We at the Brooklyn AGO send our deepest sympathies to everyone affected by this crisis in ways large and small, and we sincerely hope we can use our organization to make some positive impact in this terrible situation.

At this time, all the events we were planning to conclude the present program year are postponed indefinitely. These events are specifically the Members' Recital and the June Banquet; we also did not hold the Scholarship Competition that was scheduled for March. We hope to reschedule these events for late Summer or Fall of this year, but we aren't prepared presently to announce any specific plans.

Our Executive Board held its normally scheduled April and May meetings via videoconference, and we discussed ways we might address our current reality. We established that although we are a certified nonprofit organization, we aren't a charity in the strict sense, so we're not set up to make individual charitable gifts to members who may be in need. However, the Guild's National Headquarters is maintaining a detailed, regularly-updated list of resources for musicians impacted by the pandemic, which you can find at <https://www.agohq.org/responding-to-covid-19>. I highly recommend you peruse this list to identify any programs that may be able to assist you.

One area in which we hope we can help our members and fellow musicians is via online publicity, since the internet is currently the only public forum available to musicians. If you have a personal fundraiser such as a GoFundMe, Kickstarter or Patreon, or if you have any online content whatsoever you wish to distribute more widely, we're absolutely willing to share that info through our email list, website and Facebook page. We're also hoping to produce a virtual concert featuring filmed musical performances by our members. If you'd like to participate in this project, please reach out to me or Bombarde editor Nick Martellacci.

Finally, I want to take a moment to mourn the recent passing of organist and choirmaster Carlos Prescod. Along with his brother Roy, who predeceased him, Carlos was a pillar of Brooklyn's sacred music community for decades, and was closely associated with St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Crown Heights. Our musical world will be poorer without his gifts. May he rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon him.

Very truly yours,

Dr. John A. Wolfe

Dean, American Guild of Organists Brooklyn Chapter

## ***Tips from Our Members***

I hope everyone is doing well. We should all be in touch to help in any way if members become sick and/or are in isolation.

As for helpful practice techniques, I used a slightly different method to learn the difficult Bach *Fantasia in C Minor*, BWV 906, which I had to play on the harpsichord for one of our scholarship benefits. I practiced phrases one at a time until I knew each one well. Memorizing for me is easy and this helped. I then proceeded in this manner for the rest of the piece. Playing the harpsichord again after many years away from it caused

me some anxiety, but I was determined to play this for the benefit and I practiced it on the piano at home and on the harpsichord at St. Paul's. I was anxious, but less so since I had tested myself by playing phrases at random throughout the piece and picking up from there.

I know that others learn this way, and it depends on the individual to determine if this is a good way to proceed. What it allows one to do is to easily pick up the flow if there is any interruption when playing, and removes fear of getting lost when performing.

What other successful practice techniques can members share with us?

I hope all are well and stay so with physical distancing and masks, but it is even better to just stay home. We have many older members with comorbidities that make them especially vulnerable.

If you are staying home, have you found any good grocery delivery services? Most are so busy they cannot fulfill orders for 2 weeks or more.

Regards, and stay well,  
Steve Danziger

*If you have any tips or techniques to share please forward them to the Bombarde editor!*

## ***Lutherans Go Online!***

Like many of you, the last live service I played was back on Sunday, March 8. The next two Sundays I sat home I feeling like a nun at a nudist camp - not knowing what to do with my hands and knowing deep down I shouldn't be here. I did, however, keep up my weekly phone calls with Pastor Jeanne Warfield. The main topic of discussion was how to make online worship a reality ASAP. My homework included attending online seminars on licensing, planning an online service, and microphone sanitation.

As the big day approached, Pastor Jeanne and I along with our parish's in-house tech expert (Pastor's husband, Sheldon) scheduled a mid-week run through to work out any bugs. And there were bugs aplenty! When we finally connected my laptop to the Zoom meeting room with both audio and video, we decided that my electronic piano produced a more stable sound through the laptop microphone than the speakers on my Allen Quantum. The hour we worked was time well-spent.

On Sunday, Pastor Jeanne opened the meeting room one-half hour before the scheduled start of the service so that people had time to reconnect before the call to prayer. During the first two Zoom services Pastor made time for everyone participating to talk about how they and their families were dealing with the virus and life under quarantine. By the time Holy Week arrived everyone was comfortable with the new worship format. The graphics improved and Pastor had more time for preaching the Word.

The final innovation we made after Easter: Pastor sends me a list of hymns. I record them on both organ and piano. Sheldon then decides which format sounds best for each hymn, and records a group of local voices who sing along to my playing. The combined tracks are played during worship, the lyrics appear on the screen, and the congregation is invited to sing along at home with their devices on mute. (Singing along while un-muted would make the recorded music disappear as Zoom kept quickly switching to the most recently activated participant microphone. Not pretty!)

So, until we're allowed to open our doors, we're able to reach out to our parishioners and offer them communal worship. The parish is even offering weekly online Bible study.

Two points: Bishop Paul Egensteiner, who was consecrated as head of the Metropolitan New York Synod - ELCA in November 2019, authorized the Synod's picking up the tab for the Zoom license fees for parishes who decided to offer online worship. Requiring a password to enter the meeting has prevented interruptions from Zoombombing!

**Licensing Issues:** If your church is offering online worship you must purchase a separate podcast license on top of the print license you already own in order to print your weekly bulletins. An added benefit of this podcast license is that you can record your services and share it on your web site while the license is in effect. All copyright information for hymns used must appear somewhere on the screen. If you perform any music not in the public domain, you need to display title, composer, copyright information, publisher, and date of publication. Performers of any recorded music (instrumental or choral) must include artist and label information.

Nick Martellacci

*If you have any stories or technical expertise to share about your church's venture into online worship, please send them along!*

## ***Election Results***

I'm pleased to announce the successful conclusion of our 2020 chapter election, along with the new officers and Executive Board members our chapter has elected. The winners are as follows:

**Dean:** Thomas Hobson Williams

**Sub Dean:** Gary Di Franco

**Treasurer:** Eric Birk

**Secretary:** Ellen Wright

**Registrar:** Nick Martellacci

**Class of 2021:**

Kurleigh Lowe

Angelina Ngo

**Class of 2022:**

Henry Brooks

Alan Stenzler

**Class of 2023:**

Davian Alleyne

Kell Julliard

Doris Schultz

Congratulations to all, and thank you very much to the many of you who voted in this year's election. Thanks as well to this year's Nominating Committee: John Klauder, Tom Sarff, and yours truly.

Under normal circumstances, our chapter holds its installation ceremony for new officers at our annual June Banquet. However, in the name of social distancing we're postponing this year's banquet--we hope to hold it in the late Summer or early Fall, depending on the COVID-19 situation. With this being the case, we'd like to invite you to a **virtual officers installation ceremony, which will take place on Tuesday, June 16th at 7:30PM via Google Hangouts**. You should have already received an email from me containing a link to join the online meeting. If you haven't, or if you have any questions on how to use this link, please reach out to me.

Dr. John A. Wolfe

## ***Gentlemen (and Gentlewomen), Start Your Camcorders***

As mentioned in the Dean's letter, we're planning to offer an online Members' Recital. This project will serve as the kick-off for the start of our very own YouTube channel! We're asking members to submit videos of their performance for inclusion in the online recital video. We'll air the videos publicly but we won't seek to profit from them in any way, and we'll be sure to give full credit to the musicians. We hope this will be a fun way for

our members to exercise their creativity in the current circumstances, and will offer an edifying musical experience to viewers.

If you've already uploaded your videos, all we'll need is the link. If you only have audio recordings of your playing you can turn them into videos with the use of free software like VSDC Video Editor. Simply import the audio files with a few photographs and PRESTO! you've got a video. We're happy to help with any questions you may have about creating or editing digital video.

For this first go-round please keep performances at or under ten minutes.

Dr. John A. Wolfe/Nick Martellacci

## ***From the National Guild***

Take advantage of the iRCO hosted by the Royal College of Organists in the U.K. (free until June 30 and special reduced rate for AGO members thereafter). You can sign up at <https://i.rco.org.uk/>.

Eric Birk, FAGO

*I've already logged in and enjoyed excellent videos on pedal technique and improvisation.*

NM

## ***Seeking a New Editor for the Bombarde***

In June I'll be assuming the duties of the Registrar. In order to free up time for this new responsibility I'm looking to offload my job as Bombarde editor. We currently go to press four times a year: February, May, August, and November. These months were chosen to avoid the time pressure - for both contributors and readers - that occurs at holiday and vacation time. If you're interested please contact me via email: [nm11201@aol.com](mailto:nm11201@aol.com).

Nick Martellacci

### **Board and Officers (thru 5/31/20)**

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

### **Executive Board**

#### **Class of 2020:**

Anthony Labella  
Kurleigh Lowe, CAGO

#### **Class of 2021**

Robert Frisby  
Samuel Kuffuor  
Phillip Lamb

#### **Class of 2022**

Lana Krakovski  
Alex Violette  
Nick Martellacci

### **Substitute List**

Robert Agis | (347) 429-0088  
Don Barnum (summer Sunday AM only) | (917) 689-2953  
Samantha Bassler | (570) 594-1066  
Rasaan Bourke | (646) 318-6714  
John Collis (no Sunday AM) | (718) 797-5473  
Gary Di Franco | (917) 626-7760  
Nicholas 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 | (404) 403-7492  
John A. Wolfe (no Sunday AM) | (717) 253-2886  
Ellen Wright | (917) 693-7158