



# **The Brooklyn Bombarde**

**The Brooklyn Chapter of the  
American Guild of Organists  
October, 2004**

A word from the Dean:

Welcome, fellow organists and friends of the pipe organ, to our 2004-2005 season. For those who weren't at Coney Island and our picnic, please come this Sunday to our guild service, which is a joint venture with the American Institute of Organbuilders. It will be at St. Charles Borromeo, 21 Sidney Place, Brooklyn Heights, at 4 PM, with preludes and a demonstration of the organ by Jonathan Hall.

Some of our other members will be singing with members of the St. Charles, St. Teresa, Grace, and Plymouth choirs in works of Parry, Stanford, Howells and Dyson. Those who wish to sing should bring vestments, and arrive at 2 PM to sing pieces through, and arrange a seating arrangement.

The choir will be at the front, as last year, so it will take a little time to coordinate the organ and choir. Do stay afterwards to meet members of the AIO, as well as your fellow AGO members at a reception in the school hall that will introduce people from around the country to Brooklyn egg creams and Nathan hot dogs, as well as the usual wine and cheese.

Those who were at the Coney Island picnic and the Guild picnic at St. John's church in September all had a great time, and were part of one of the fastest growing chapters in the country. Take pride in what you all have done by looking at page 30 of the October issue of *The American Organist*.

We need those who have not renewed to please get a check in to our registrar as soon as possible, so you can continue to get your national magazine. I know we live in tough times financially, but please do the best you can, and, if there is a problem, please let us know.

Next Sunday, October 10, 6:00 PM, I call your attention to the Queen's chapter's concert at Queens college LeFrak Hall on their Bedient organ. This to benefit WNYE-FM, 91.5, carrier of PIPEDREAMS on Sunday evenings. Queens Dean, Vinny Alukonis needs people to help with this. Those who can, please call him at 516-488-5287. Remember, we have some wonderful members you should get to know. Come out to chapter events!

—Donald Barnum

*Dean, Brooklyn Chapter, American Guild of Organists*



## Officers, Board Members and Appointments, 2004-2005

**Dean:** Donald C. Barnum, Jr. 212-799-6944  
**Sub-Dean:** George B. Williams 718-230-9087  
**Secretary:** Hope Engelsen 718-836-1751  
**Registrar:** Jonathan Hall 917-596-4002  
**Treasurer:** Roland Blackburn 212-982-9287

Class of 2007: Mick Tucci, Sylvester Nichols,  
Jonathan Hall.

Class of 2006: John Cunniffe, Gregory Eaton,  
Joseph Extejt.

Class of 2005 : Stephen Danziger, MD,  
J. David Williams, Gregory Jack.

### Appointments

**Chaplain:** The Rev. Thaddeus Grzelak, St.  
Charles Borromeo Church.

**Archivist:** Keith Bigger 718-875-1858, x160

**Bombarde Editor and Webmaster:**  
Jonathan Hall

**Professional Concerns:** Gregory Eaton  
212-924-4963

## Pipedreams Benefit in Queens, October 10

It has come to our attention that the October 10  
Pipedreams benefit concert in Queens is still rather  
under-subscribed. We do endorse this as a chapter  
event, and recommend you contact Vincent  
Alukonis, the Dean of Queens, for information on  
securing a ticket.

**The Brooklyn Bombarde**  
Published from September to June,  
when possible  
Jonathan B. Hall, FAGO, Editor  
church: 212-737-2720 x24  
cell: 917-596-4002  
jonathan@jonathanbhall.com

## Some Upcoming Concerts and Chapter Programs

Every Wednesday, 1:10 PM. Free Recital at the  
Church of Saint Ann and the Holy Trinity, Montague  
and Clinton, the Heights.

Halloween, October 31, 4 PM. Recital by Julian  
Goodwin, past dean, at Good Shepherd Lutheran  
Church, 4th Ave (Bay Ridge Pkwy) and 75th St.  
Sugg. Contribution \$7. Buxtehude, Walcha,  
Inwood, Goodwin, Milhaud, others.

## New Members (since July)

Welcome to Tim Chun!

Please let the Editor know if your name was  
omitted! And please continue the work of outreach  
that has made us the fastest-growing chapter in the  
AGO!

## Halloween

The Organist's High Holy Day will occur on  
Sunday, October 31. Please feel free to come by the  
home of your Editor (see the address on the back  
page) anytime after 7, for some traditional silliness.  
Perhaps after Julian's recital!) Any and all offerings  
for the alcohol or food gods will be welcome but are  
not obligatory. Costumes are optional.

## Substitute List

Please direct all inquiries and corrections for  
this list to Julian Goodwin, Placement Officer. He  
can be reached at 718-875-3542. For permanent  
positions, see the National website, [www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org).  
Please let your Editor know about any misspelled  
names or inaccurate numbers!

Ellen Wright 718-625-3903  
Julian Goodwin 718-875-3542  
Roy Prescod (no Sundays) 718-253-8498  
Sylvester Nichols 718-493-0445  
Andrew Violette (no Sunday AM) 718-821-6055  
Mark Victor Smith (no Sundays) 718-728-7038

## **Authentic Brooklyn** **On Being an Organist at Halloween**

*Play Phantom of the Opera!*

That's what they all say, isn't it? Kids, I mean, and even their parents, as they come up to examine the mysterious and mighty pipe organ after Mass. *Play Phantom! Play Toccata! Play Bach!*

—However they say it, they all mean the same thing: the *Toccata in D Minor*, BWV whatever-it-is; you know what it is. The single most famous organ work ever written, even assuming it *was* written for organ. The most distinctive contribution our *demi-monde* has made to the world at large.

And we tend to squirm, don't we? We get embarrassed. Don't we want to be known for more than *that*? Don't we want to share the rest of Bach's unbelievable work? Not to mention Messiaen! The great Vierne *finales*! Our hymn tradition! A vast wealth of chorale preludes, a source of theology better known and knowable than the Fathers of the Church—dismissed as irrelevant by, because too difficult for, most of our local seminary graduates!

Life is difficult, and culture is difficult. Religion is difficult, and relationships are difficult. Thank God for difficulty. Thank God that we organists are called, in whatever religious tradition, to step away from the easy and live in the difficult. There is so much we know that we scarcely dare admit that we know, for fear of the consequences in a society consecrated to the world, the flesh, and the easy. Personally, I'm so sick of the easy that I smell brimstone in it. And for decades, I've played my heart out to show a better way, and to live in that way myself, lest, preaching to others, I myself should be a castaway.

And there they are, week by week, asking for *Phantom*.

I substituted once at a Catholic church on the Upper East Side. Here, surely, I thought, I can preach freely! Yet still I pulled my punches, playing only a *recit de tierce*. A lady came up, gushing and excited, afterwards. In Monsignor's hearing, she said, and I quote: "I mean, WOW, it sounded like the mad scientist's laboratory!" Monsignor sneered, delighted to the depths of his soul—all three inches of it. I wanted to slap them both, and cry for her.

Are we serious about our work? Of course we are. Is the institution that called us into being serious about it? Obviously not. Even when we are not slapped around by miserable "contemporary ensembles" sounding the last onanistic moan of the 1960's, we are challenged for being insensitive, hard, theoretical, and so on and on.

*And yet...*

Right now, as Halloween approaches, I feel strangely kid-like. I love the absurd brightly-colored fantasy of this season, and the easy way in which pre-Christian mythology still trumps fifteen centuries of Christian dogma: theological arrogance defeated by a simple drive to the pumpkin farm. What is the effortless, innocent persistence of paganism saying to our certainty? And why, frankly, should we organists resist our campy, candy-corn association with the holiday? Thank Lon Chaney, thank Vincent Price, thank the wacky human soul that finds truth in absurdity, and absurdity in truth.

Perhaps the message for us, if we can decode it, is that the ball is really in our court. People sell us short, but love us nonetheless; they see us as somehow, oddly, on *their* side—the side of truth. Perhaps, we are holding open a door to the spirit in an age when the church is hopelessly market-driven, and thus failing. Perhaps, we shape the breath of the Holy Spirit through our boxes of tin and leather, a treasure in earthen vessels. Perhaps, we pro-create the *ruakh elohim*; perhaps, we midwife the Incarnation.

In any case, drag out that Toccata. Play *Phantom* this month; and perhaps you'll tickle somebody into really hearing.

**RETURN ADDRESS:**

Jonathan Hall  
4916 11th Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11219

**MAIL TO:**

---

**Put this on your fridge with a magnet!**

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 4 PM,  
St. Charles Borromeo, Brooklyn Heights.

We are the fastest-growing chapter in the nation. Keep the trend going!

