



Lorain County Chapter American Guild of Organists

www.lcago.org

Newsletter for December 2011

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What Do You Want From the AGO?

November's issue of *The American Organist* had an interesting section of "Comments and Responses" from the Long-Range Planning Task Force (see pp. 54-56). The article included comments received from AGO members via a recent survey, along with responses from Task Force members and others.

Two things struck me in this article. First, the comments published included lots of totally opposite views, especially of the sort, "the AGO should be more of a union" and "the AGO shouldn't appear to be a union." Some of the commentators wished for more AGO involvement in employment disputes and salary negotiation, while others were concerned that the AGO was too involved in these things already and was setting itself up as an adversary to churches and denominations.

The second thing that struck me was the uniformity (and often brevity!) of the Task Force responses. Most of these responses came down to something like, "if you're concerned about this, your chapter should do something about it." They really stressed that it is at the chapter level that the AGO (should) function for its members.

So what do you want from the AGO? And what can a small chapter like ours do for each other, and for church music professionals who aren't member of LCAGO?

When I first joined the AGO, as a student, it was mostly for the *TAO* magazine. I enjoyed (and still enjoy) reading article about new organs, repertoire, and the interesting disputes that sometimes come up in the letters. But this is clearly not the limit of what AGO involvement can be (and once you're paying more than the student membership fee, it works out to a pretty expensive magazine!).

I'd like you to think about what you want from the AGO. Next month the newsletter will include our own survey to see what you think. Your Executive Committee is eager and willing to try new things, to plan programs, and to otherwise carry out our [mission statement](#). Let us know how you'd like our chapter to do that.



From the Dean

I love Advent; it's one of my favorite times of the year. It is a time of hope, of expectation, and of new life. I love the candles, I love the hymns, and I love the rituals (lighting the Advent Wreath, singing the great "O" antiphons, etc.).

I also like the quiet of Advent. Christmas is loud and obvious. It has its joys, certainly, but it also has a habit of showing up uninvited (like in the stores around Halloween). Advent, on the other hand, is quiet and subtle. No one is going to beat you over the head with Advent, so you're free to make of it what you like.

Of course, at this time of the year organists don't get much chance to be quiet and refreshed. We are busy planning, preparing, and practicing for Lessons and Carols, or Christmas Eve, or the Messiah sing-along ... But I hope you find a little time to be still and listen for unexpected, mysterious joy of Advent.

Brian

*Unexpected and mysterious
is the gentle word of grace.
Ever-loving and sustaining
is the peace of God's embrace.
If we falter in our courage
and we doubt what we have known
God is faithful to console us
as a mother tends her own.
-Jeannette Lindholm*

Chapter News

LCAGO Hymn Playing Workshop

Nicole Keller led a hymn playing workshop for chapter members, Oberlin students, and other area organists on November 20, at First Church in Oberlin. It was an interesting and informative program. Ms. Keller spoke briefly about hymn playing in general, but most of the time was spent reacting and giving suggestions to the sample hymns played by Brian Wentzel, Janet Campbell-Kuhl, Travis Gu, and Ira Cooper.

Ms. Keller had many helpful tips, including the following:

- There are many ways add variety to a hymn, including changing registration, texture, and touch. If possible, the varied treatments should reflect the text of that verse.

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Oberlin Events

December 2, 4:30, Warner
Jennifer Bower, Organ Recital
Conservatory Junior plays Scheide-
mann, Leyding, and Buxtehude.

December 2, 8:00, Fairchild
Collegium Musicum
Musica Angelica: music by Wylkyn-
son, Palestrina, Ockeghem, Hassler,
Scheidt, and de Lassus.

December 2, midnight, Finney
Friday Night Organ Pump
Come enjoy one of Oberlin's greatest
traditions—the Friday Night Organ
Pump. Listen to Conservatory organ
majors performing on the awe-
inspiring Finney Chapel organ.

December 3, 8:00, Fairchild
Collegium Musicum
Repeat of December 2 program.

December 4, 8:00, Finney
Musical Union and College Choir
Jason Harris, Director. Respighi:
Lauda per la Nativita del Signore
(Laud to the Nativity); Honegger: *King
David*.

**December 6, 4:30, Fairchild / Peace
Church**
Jacob Street, Organ Recital
Masters in Historical Performance re-
cital with music of Sweelinck, Pachel-
bel, Buxtehude, Bach, and others.

December 11, 7:00, Warner
Messiah Sing-Along
Free admission, with donations to
benefit Lorain County Interfaith Hos-
pitality Network.

Other Area Events

**November 30, 12:15, First Church,
Oberlin**
Cauffiel Memorial Advent Series
James David Christie, with harpist Re-
bekah Efthimiou and string quartet.

Dec. 4, 3:00, First Lutheran, Lorain
Advent Music
Musical prayer service with organ and
choral music by Johannes Brahm.
Brian Wentzel plays and directs.

Dec. 5, 8:00, St. Sebastian, Akron
Voices of Canton, Inc. in concert
Free concert of holiday music.

Dec. 7, 12:15, First Church, Oberlin
Cauffiel Memorial Advent Series
James Feddeck plays.

Dec. 11, 2:30, First UMC, Elyria
CityMusic Cleveland
Corelli: *Christmas Concerto*; Dvorák:
Serenade for Strings; Mozart: *Violin
Concerto No. 3*.

Dec. 11, 3:30, St. Sebastian, Akron
Ceremony of Lessons and Carols
With parish choirs. Free.

Dec 14, 12:15, First Church, Oberlin
Cauffiel Memorial Advent Series
Nicholas Capozzoli, Dexter Kennedy,
and Jacob Street play.

Dec. 16, 8:00, First Church, Oberlin
**Empty Mugs: Holiday Brass and
Organ Spectacular**
Organ and brass, a sing-a-long, hand-
crafted pottery, and complimentary
beverages.

Dec 21, 12:15, First Church, Oberlin
Cauffiel Memorial Advent Series
Travis Gu plays.

Chapter News (continued)

- Within this variety, make sure the hymn is still a cohesive artistic unit.
- Always have a plan for how to move between verses of a hymn, and be sure to be consistent.
- The tempo must be absolutely solid and steady, and this solid tempo must start from the first notes of the introduction. This was perhaps the point that Ms. Keller emphasized the most.
- Don't be afraid to be simple! The overriding goal is to be clear so that the congregation knows exactly what to do. It's better to be simple and clear than fancy and confusing!

“Marty” Gras on February 19

Our next chapter event will be a pre-Lenten gathering at Lorain Lighthouse United Methodist Church (3015 Meister Road in Lorain), hosted by Marty Bruner. This pot-luck supper will take place on Sunday, February 19, at 5:00 (ending by 8). Bring an appetizer or dessert to share; dishes and beverages will be provided.

For our entertainment, we will be able to tour the brand new sanctuary (opened on October 2), which includes an Allen organ. Bring a mystery hymn to play, and the person who identifies the most hymns will win a prize! You can also bring a favorite piece of any kind to try out on the organ. If you have a favorite board game, bring that too! This will be a time to relax with colleagues before the busy Lent-Easter seasons starts. Feel free to invite other organists or music-loving friends.

Please RSVP to Marty at hurst@bright.net or 440-322-9749 by February 12.

Cleveland Orchestra Special Offer

The Cleveland Orchestra is offering a special deal for AGO members for their upcoming performance of the Saint-Saëns *Organ Symphony*. AGO members will get a 20% discount on tickets (discount price \$39.20 – to \$96.00) for the December 10 performance. After the concert, there will be a private reception with the Orchestra's principal keyboardist, Joela Jones, who will be the soloist for the concert. You can order online at www.clevelandorchestra.com or call (216) 231-1111 and use promotion code 11176.

OHS Convention

The Organ Historical Society is inviting AGO members to join them for their 2012 convention in Chicago. It will be held July 8-13 and will feature more than 25 organs in the Chicago area. For more information, visit www.organsociety.org/2012.

Directories

If you didn't get your LCAGO directory at the hymn playing workshop, it is in the mail and should arrive shortly.

AGO Mission Statement

The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is:

- to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles;
- to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music; and
- to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members.

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Please email any newsletter information to the Dean by the 20th of the month.