



VOX ONONDAGA

Year End Banquet & Recital featuring Thomas Murray



Photo by Robert A. Lisak
PHOTO BY ROBERT A. LISAK

Friday, June 9th
Banquet 5:30 P.M, Recital 8:00 P.M.
Plymouth Congregational Church
See page 8 for details.

May / June 2017

From the officers & staff



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Syracuse AGO Organ Scholar Program

The Syracuse Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is offering a scholarship for Central New York students between the ages of 14 and 20 to study the pipe organ. Eligible candidates should already have piano skills and have a strong interest in learning about the *King of Instruments*. Students will

be evaluated based on their current skill level, and will be assigned a local instructor based on their location, availability, skill level, etc. Applications for the Fall 2017 semester will be accepted up until August 1st. Visit www.syracuseago.org for more details.

Dean's Message – Vince Guarneiri

I trust you are having a wonderful spring music season, and your special musical endeavors throughout were and continue to be successful! We all are subject to post-holiday slump after a few major services. The members of the executive committee had to take a deep breath and get our arms back around the issues and events at hand.

Our most significant announcement in many years is that of Thomas Murray performing for our annual Syracuse AGO banquet. Mr. Murray is well renowned for his interpretation of Romantic and orchestral organ music, and we're pleased to have him visit Plymouth Congregational to celebrate the sanctuary renovations, and the organ. The annual meeting, Banquet, and Recital will be held on June 9th, all starting at 5:30 PM.

To help make this event possible, we're soliciting donations from our members and surrounding chapters. Four donors have come forward so far, and it would be helpful to have a few more to offset the fees for this event. If you're able and interested in helping sponsor this event, please send your check made out to "Syracuse Chapter, American Guild of Organists" to our treasurer Wayne Skinner, 3202 East Ave., Central Square, NY 13036-2618. Any amount will be helpful in presenting this special event!

Other initiatives we have planned for this and next year include changes to our non-member sub list policy, developing a budget for coming program years, and a substantial update to the organization's by-laws. For many years now the non-member sub list on our website has been separate from our members list, to help highlight the importance of participating in the Guild. It came to our attention that many prominent chapters do not even provide a list to the general public by means of password protecting sections of their website. Though we do not want to be extreme in completely removing access for local musicians and churches, we want to emphasize that there are certain benefits that come with membership. Thus, we will be contacting those on the non-member list, asking them to join to continue their service to the community and removing the list from the website.

Annie Laver has been instrumental in the development of a new budget for our program year. We all understand how important budgeting is in our personal and professional lives, and this applies to our organization as well. Along with this initiative, we're taking a more detailed look at our program year over the summer months, and tying the two together so we can be sure we provide continuous high-quality programming in the years to come.

Finally, a long-overdue update to the chapter by-laws has been started. Unfortunately, because of declining membership and interest in members participating in the executive committee, we have not been able to be in compliance with our own policies on elections and some operational points. Also, the current by-laws do not account for any computer or digital voting. We have appointed a subcommittee to take a hard look at the current policies in the coming months, and provide an updated set, becoming of our 21st century organization.

As always, I thank you on behalf of the Executive Committee for your support of our organization. We strive to make your membership a worthwhile investment to your musical life in Central New York.



News from the Hill

Annie Laver



We are wrapping up another busy semester at Syracuse University and the students have been hard at work. I would like to highlight some of the achievements of the organ majors here.

Julia Tucker played her second graduate recital on April 4 for an enthusiastic audience of SAGO members, church members, and peers. She will be graduating this May and is excited to continue her graduate study in organ with Kimberly Marshall at Arizona State University. She received the Civic Morning Musicals award at the annual Setnor School of Music awards ceremony earlier this week as recognition of her excellence in music making these past four years at SU.

Chang Jong Lee experienced his first Holy Week as a choral scholar at St. Paul's. He successfully worked up a challenging anthem by Bairstow for Easter Sunday featuring registration changes from tuba solo to celestes. He did a round of successful grad school auditions but has decided to return to his native Korea to fulfill his military service obligations before starting a graduate program in organ.

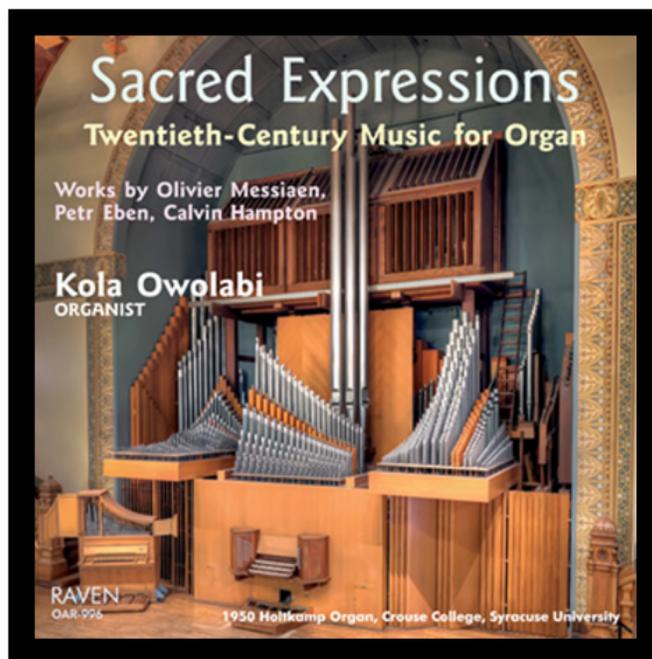
Samuel Kuffuor-Afriyie worked hard to learn Franck's A Minor Chorale for a competition put on by the Brooklyn, NY chapter in March. In April, he accompanied the Hendricks Chapel Choir for Sung Evening Prayer, working up his own hymn arrangements and the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Herbert Murrill for choir and organ. He has many exciting things planned for summer, including a trip to his native Ghana and attending the Organ Historical Society Convention in Minneapolis/St. Paul as Biggs Scholar. Samuel will be back in the Fall for his sophomore year.

Alan Lynch successfully juggled a demanding job at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the work of a graduate performance major. He passed his pre-recital jury on the Tuesday of Holy Week and then went on to play several masses at the Cathedral. He will be presenting his first graduate organ recital on Wednesday, May 3 at 5 P.M. in Crouse Auditorium. He will be back in the fall to begin preparation for his second graduate recital.

Alan and Julia will present their research projects on Tuesday, May 2 at 2:30-3:30pm in Crouse room 212. These presentations are open to any SAGO members who would like to hear what they have been working on. Julia will present on the compositions of twentieth-century Swedish composer Bengt Hambraeus and Alan will present on the Oxford Movement and its implications for organ building and sacred music in Victorian England.

I am so proud of these students, not only for their musical achievements but also because they are such lovely people. I feel so fortunate to be able to work with them week in and week out!

New Recordings



Sacred Expressions: Twentieth-Century Organ Music
Kola Owolabi, Organist
1950 Holtkamp Organ, Crouse College, Syracuse University
 [Raven OAR-996]

Kola Owolabi plays 20th-century organ music on the landmark organ built in 1950 by Walter Holtkamp, Sr., in Crouse College auditorium at Syracuse University. Many readers of *Vox Onondaga* will fondly recall Kola's tenure at Syracuse University as Associate Professor and University organist from 2006 to 2014. Kola now serves as Associate Professor of Organ at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

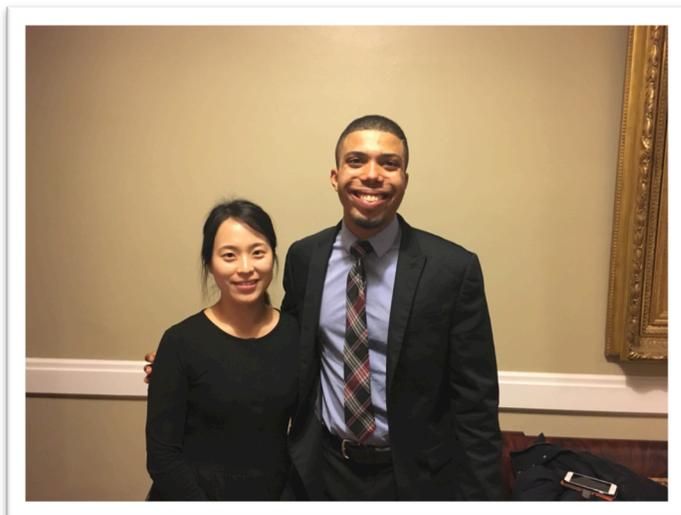
Works Featured

Calvin Hampton: Prelude and Variations on Old Hundredth
 Olivier Messiaen: *L'Ascension*
 Petr Eben: Four Biblical Dances

"In choosing a program for this recording, I decided to feature two rarely recorded works by significant twentieth-century composers and play them on an iconic instrument that was pivotal in the development of mid-20th-century American organ building. I have chosen major works by Calvin Hampton and Petr Eben, presenting them alongside Olivier Messiaen's *L'Ascension*, a staple of 20th-century organ repertoire. Each of these composers has a distinctive musical voice and all found inspiration in sacred themes from the Christian tradition: while Eben's music gives us programmatic descriptions of biblical stories, Messiaen explores the mystical side of Roman Catholic spirituality, and Calvin Hampton provides a set of variations on a very popular tune from the Genevan Psalter."

Copies of this CD will be available for purchase at our banquet, June 9th.

Poister Competition Results



The annual Arthur Poister Scholarship Competition in Organ Playing took place on Saturday, April 1, 2017, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Syracuse. First Prize went to **Yunjung Lee** of South Korea. Yunjung completed her bachelor's degree at Yonsei University with Dongil Shin and is currently pursuing a performance diploma at Southern Methodist University as a student of Stefan Engels. Yunjung will play a winner's recital in September in Setnor Auditorium (the Crouse Holtkamp, 1950) at Syracuse University.

Second Prize was awarded to **Alcee Chriss III**, a DMA candidate at McGill University, where he studies with Hans-Ola Ericsson. Prior to his studies at McGill, Alcee completed bachelor's and master's degrees at Oberlin Conservatory with James David Christie. His "Rising Star" recital will be scheduled in the Malmgren Concert Series at Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University, in the spring of 2018.

There were four additional contestants invited to perform in the finals at Syracuse: **Tyler Boehmer**, a MM candidate at the University of Kansas studying with James Higdon; **Nathaniel Gumbs**, a DMA candidate at the Eastman School of Music studying with David Higgs; **Josiah Hamill**, a MM candidate at Yale University studying with Martin Jean; and **Janet Yieh**, a MM candidate at Yale University studying with Thomas Murray.

The judges for the finals were Dr. Judy Congdon, Professor of Organ and College Organist at Houghton College in Houghton, NY; Dr. Frederick Hohman, concert organist and recording artist of South Bend, Indiana; and Dr. William Neil, organist of The National Presbyterian Church, and organist and harpsichordist of the National Symphony Orchestra and National Philharmonic in Washington, D.C.

The organizers of the competition wish to thank St. Paul's Episcopal Church for hosting the event, Chang Lee and Jim Potts of St. Paul's for providing hospitality and building access for contestant practice the weekend of the competition, Ruth Adams for hosting contestants and providing breakfast and lunch on the competition day, Alice and Norm Hatt, Ann Schwartz, and Glenn Armstrong and Steve Block for hosting contestants, and Allison Evens Henry, Joe Downing, and Glenn Kime for serving as judges for the preliminary recorded round. Ben Merchant, Annie Laver, and Will Headlee worked as a team to coordinate this year's competition.

Event Reviews

Downtown Organ Crawl

Hosted by the Cathedral Square Neighborhood Association

Sunday, April 23rd, 2017 - Review by Ben Merchant

For the past several years, the Downtown Organ Crawl has been hosted by four churches surrounding Columbus Circle: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Plymouth Congregational; Park Central Presbyterian; and St. Paul's; as a fundraiser for the Cathedral Square Neighborhood Association. This year, because the Cathedral is undergoing major renovations, the latter three churches participated.

We began at Plymouth Church in their newly renovated sanctuary. The acoustics have been vastly improved in the sanctuary, as the old carpet was removed and a new quarry tile floor installed in its place. The Plymouth organist, Joe Downing, ably demonstrated the organ with four pieces for percussion and organ, beginning with a transcription of "Fanfare for the Common Man," and following with one of his own compositions. Joe continued with an organ arrangement of the spiritual "Go Down Moses" and concluded with "The Emperor's Fanfare" by Antonio Soler. It cannot be overstated how much better the 1930 Möller organ sounds in its new acoustic environment. Symphonic organs like this one have many stops at 8' pitch, which are subtly different in color. For decades, much of that subtlety had been masked by carpet. Incidentally, the Syracuse Guild of Organists will be hosting Tom Murray in concert at Plymouth Church on June 9. This ticketed event is open to the public. Tom is considered an international authority on Symphonic pipe organs and this event is not to be missed!

We then walked from Plymouth church past Columbus Circle and Immaculate Conception Cathedral to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Jim Potts, Organist and Choirmaster along with Cheng Lee, Organ Scholar, welcomed us to their beautiful English Gothic Revival building and played five pieces chosen to show off the lush Moller/Quimby instrument. This large organ is one of the most versatile instruments in the area and plays all literature well. Jim demonstrated a "Tuba Tune", by Norman Cocker, a velvety "Adagio" by Frank Bridge, two Walcha "Preludes" to highlight the organ's Cymbalstern and Rossignol, and a lovely piece by Syracuse Composer Stuart Raleigh based on the hymn tune Sine Nomine. Organ Scholar Cheng Lee concluded the demonstration with a rousing rendition of Vierne's "Allegro" from *Symphony II*.

For our final demonstration, we walked two blocks east on Fayette St. past Firemen's Park to Park Central Presbyterian Church, where we heard their 1967 Neo-Baroque Möller pipe organ. Will Headlee, organist at Park Church, greeted us and explained he had been recovering from heart surgery and had asked Syracuse University Organ Professor Dr. Annie Laver to demonstrate the organ in his place. Dr. Laver is an outstanding teacher and player, and wasted no time in pulling out all the stops: beginning with a joyous Bach "Sinfonia" (from *Cantata 29*) arranged by Guilmant; moving on to a deceptively difficult Mozart musical clock piece; introducing the jazzy "Miroir" by Dutch composer Ad Wammes (who wrote music at one point for Sesame Street;) and ending with the powerful and majestic Rheinberger "Passacaglia" from *Sonata 8, op. 32*.

Thanks to all these excellent organists who donated their time and talent to raise money for the Cathedral Square Association. Organ playing is still alive and well in downtown Syracuse!

POPS CONCERT



Wayne Skinner & Deborah Cunningham

Piano and Organ

Michael Bull, Percussion

Join us for an afternoon of novel solos, duets, and trios.

Some Musical Highlights

The Heavens are Telling – Haydn – Piano and Organ Duet

March Militaire – Schubert – Piano Duet

Rhapsody in Blue – Gershwin/Crawford – Organ Solo

Praise – Barnett – Organ and Steel Pan

Ragtime – Callahan – Organ Duet

Shady Grove - Walker - Piano Solo

Fiesta - Callahan - Organ Duet with Percussion

and much more!

A Special Musical Tribute will be offered to members of the Armed Services and veterans who are invited to dress in uniform and stand for recognition as their respective Service Anthems are performed on Organ and Snare Drum.

Grand Finale is **“Stars and Stripes Forever”** by John Philip Sousa!

Sunday May 21, 2017 at Pitcher Hill Community Church

605 Bailey Rd. North Syracuse, NY 13212 at 2:00 pm

General Admission: \$10:00 for adults, children under 18 free.

For more information call Pitcher Hill Community Church at 315-457-5484

To preview samples of the concert visit Wayne Skinner’s Facebook page.

Chapter Events

Online Music and Liturgy Planning Resources

Saturday, May 6th, 10:00 A.M.

First Presbyterian Church, Cazenovia

Tech-savvy members of our chapter will be on hand to share numerous apps and websites that will be sure to be a big help to organists, choir directors, choir members, and any and all who train musicians. Topics covered include:

- Working with children's and seniors' voices
- Safely downloading public domain music
 - Teaching music theory
 - Choral warm-ups
- Care & feeding of musicians
 - Liturgy planning
 - Baroque ornamentation
 - Gregorian chant
 - Practice techniques

There will be something for everyone!

Lunch will be served so R.S.V.P. to Armand DiScenna:
discenaj@gmail.com

Year End Banquet, Annual Meeting, and Recital

Friday, June 9th, 5:30 P.M.

Plymouth Congregational Church, Syracuse

We are pleased to announce that we have engaged renowned organist Thomas Murray to perform for us at our year-end event.

Mark your calendars NOW and plan to attend!

5:30 P.M. – Wine & Hors d'oeuvres

6:00 P.M. - Annual Meeting with
banquet dinner to follow

8:00 P.M. – Recital by Thomas Murray

Tickets for Banquet & Recital:

AGO Members & Spouses \$30, Non-AGO \$35

Tickets for recital only:

\$15 Adult, \$10 Student

You are STRONGLY urged to R.S.V.P for the banquet.
Please email Armand DiScenna with your reservation.
discenaj@gmail.com

K&M Corner

We are happy to report that we've survived the Easter tuning season, and are looking forward to our spring and summer projects.

Easter Monday brought the demolition of the sanctuary at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. This is only a slight exaggeration as Msgr. Neil Quartier stated during Masses the following weekend, "It looks like a war zone over there!"

Indeed it did. The week following Easter, we thoroughly wrapped the entire organ case in plastic and installed a roof over the Great division to protect the pipework from any falling debris. The entire wall behind the organ will be stripped of plaster and rebuilt, and the remainder of the sanctuary will have the plaster repaired as it has experienced noticeable moisture damage over the past few decades. Construction crews were jackhammering the floor out in three-foot square sections while we worked in the balcony.

It was quite a sight!

This summer we have two large, exciting projects. First, we will be expanding and installing K&M Op.3 at Christ The King Church, South Bend, Indiana. Second, we will be rebuilding the large four manual console of the 1930 Casavant organ at St Francis of Assisi Church, Albany, New York.

Calendar of Events

Alan Lynch – Graduate Organ Recital

Wednesday, May 3rd – 5:00 P.M

Setnor School of Music, Syracuse University

Glen Kime – Organ Rededication Recital

Friday, May 5th – 7:00 P.M

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Cazenovia

Come celebrate the renovation of the Pipe Organ and refurbishment of the Sanctuary at St Peter's. The console was completely refurbished and upgraded with a new control system, and the formerly unpainted façade pipes are now a brilliant shade of gold. The sanctuary interior was completely repainted, but retains the pre-existing look. Glen's recital will feature works by Vivaldi, J.S. Bach, Böhm, Mendelssohn, and many others.

Spring Festival of Song

Sunday, May 7th – 3:00 P.M

First Presbyterian Church, Ilion

As part of the Spring Festival of Song in the Welsh Tradition, Dominic Fiacco, 12 year old organist from Poland, NY, will be the guest musician, performing at First Presbyterian Church, Ilion, NY, on the church's 2006, 52 rank Casavant organ.

Dominic's selections:

Mendelssohn: Sonata 4 in B flat (complete)

Widor: Symphony 7, Moderato

Takle: Heart of Peace

Widor: Symphony 6, Finale

The singing will be led by Jay G. Williams III, with Susan Bartholomew at the organ and Jeanne Jones at the piano. The public is invited free of charge.

Editor's Column

The form and frequency of this newsletter may change over time to suit the needs of our readers, and the ability of our staff to compile useful information for your enjoyment. Please know that your feedback is not only welcomed, but also encouraged.

Submissions for the newsletter are due the 20th of August, October, December, February, and April, for newsletter issues to be published on or around the first of the following month. All items for the newsletter should be sent to:

newsletter@syracuseago.org

Submissions for the website calendar can be sent in at any time, and should be sent to:

events@syracuseago.org

To be included on our list of substitutes or to update your sub listing on our website, please visit the chapter website and fill out the form. Also, you may send an email directly to: substitutes@syracuseago.org

Calendar of Events

Sacred Sites Open House & Organ Recital – Alan Lynch

Saturday, May 20th – 12:00 P.M.
Church Of The Saviour, James St, Syracuse

The New York Landmarks Conservancy sponsors this Sacred Sites Open House event. The church will be open for self-guided tours from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Following the recital at 12:45 P.M. is an historic Eucharistic celebration from the First Prayer Book of 1549.

Alan's program will include:

J.S. Bach: Prelude & Fugue in D minor

Hindemith: Organ Sonata No. 2

Sweelinck: Ballo del Granduca, SwWV 319

Widor: Symphony for Organ No. 5 in F minor, Op. 42, No. 1,
Adagio & Toccata

Ample free parking located behind the church in St. Joseph's lot,
access from Willow Street.

Spring Pops Concert

Sunday, May 21st – 2:00 P.M.
Pitcher Hill Community Church
605 Bailey Road, North Syracuse

For more info, see flyer on page 7

Organ Recital – Chelsea Chen

Sunday, May 21st – 3:00 P.M.
First Presbyterian Church
90 Morgan Street
Ilion, New York

From the Executive
Committee

We would like to thank all of our members who attended, and supported our chapter events throughout the year. We enjoy putting together programs for your education and enjoyment.

If you have any suggestions for recitals, workshops, or other events for the coming year, please don't hesitate to contact us. We not only welcome, but also encourage your input for or programming.

Organ Recital

presented by

Thomas Murray

Friday, June 9th 2017
8 p.m.

Plymouth Congregational Church
232 East Onondaga Street, Syracuse

Tickets : \$15 – General Admission
\$10 – Students



Photo by Robert A. Lisak

“Murray played ... with a keen sense of style, and technique to burn. He’s more than an organist, he’s an artist.” *San Francisco Chronicle*

“Murray’s elegant playing and astonishingly smooth control of the instrument had the audience out of their seats the moment his hands came off the keys ...” *ClevelandClassical.com*



Featuring Plymouth Congregational Church's historic 1930 Möller organ with 4 manuals and over 3100 pipes!

Come see the newly renovated sanctuary featuring new flooring, and greatly improved acoustics!

Upcoming Special Event!

SAGO SACRED CHORAL READING SESSION

Thursday, August 17, 2017

DeWitt Community Church, Miller Commons

3600 Erie Blvd. E, DeWitt, NY 13214

6:30 – 7:00 pm Check-in/Snacks

**7:00 – 9:00 pm Reading Session – Dr. José “Peppie” Calvar, clinician
Mr. Abel Searor, pianist**

J. W. Pepper will provide all participants with a packet of music valued at over \$50.00.

Free to SAGO members!

\$20.00 for non-members

Submissions for this newsletter are due by the following dates: August 20, October 20, December 20, February 20, and April 20. The Vox Onondaga will be published on or around the first of the following month.

Syracuse AGO

104 Johnson Street
East Syracuse, New York 13057