

# THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

## Birmingham Chapter of The American Guild of Organists November 2013



Charles Kennedy, Dean

### A WORD FROM THE DEAN

Greetings! We are in the midst of a very busy season, and before we know it, Advent and Christmas will be upon us. Many exciting things have happened here in the Guild during the past two months. I would begin with the excellent program given by Dr. Sherrie Lawhon of Samford University, titled *Choral Tone for Dummies: Remedial, Reminder, Reinforcement*. It was a most informative session during which we learned much about the physiology of singing, put into easy-to-understand layman's terms – more specifically, what actually happens in the mouth as we form vowels and consonants, and what actually happens when we breathe. Sherrie's approach was both creative and entertaining.

On September 20, we were treated to an extraordinary organ recital by concert organist Stephen Tharp at the Cathedral Church of the Advent. Among the many superlatives of this recital, two items stood out especially for me – the Variations from Widor's Eighth Symphony, and Reger's Choral Fantasia *Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn*, both played expressively with an

extraordinary sense of architecture and form. Of course, the *Paeon for Organ Duet* of Stephen Paulus, with Tharp joined by my colleague Fred Teardo, was a real hit with the audience.

On October 6, our new chapter member and colleague Leon Couch, III made his Birmingham debut in a recital at Birmingham-Southern College, giving performances that were both thoughtful and entertaining. We look forward to hearing his insights on the music of Buxtehude later in the season.

On October 12, a few of us made the trip to Tuscaloosa for events celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holtkamp organ at the University of Alabama. Several current students played in a masterclass for Dr. Mary Lou Nowicki, a UA alumnae and former pupil of Warren Hutton who also did her doctoral study with Robert Glasgow at the University of Michigan. Chris Holtkamp gave an informative lecture on Warren Hutton's consultation work and the special relationship he had with the Holtkamp Organ Company, tracing the tonal influences back to early Holtkamp organs Hutton experienced during his studies at Oberlin and Syracuse University, culminating in the large organ in the Moody Music Building Concert Hall. The afternoon concluded with a concert by several UA alumni.

On October 13, the Guild cosponsored with First United Methodist Church a recital by Jonathan Biggers, who was among the UA alumni who played the day before in

Tuscaloosa. Biggers played with great poise and authority, coaxing many colors from the First Methodist organ and infusing his music making with lyricism and rhythmic strength. K.C. Hayes, wife of chapter member Mark Hayes, prepared for us a very lovely reception.

#### AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS AND CHAPTER OPERATING PROCEDURES

Soon we will be sending you, for your consideration, the proposed amendments to the Chapter Bylaws and Chapter Operating Procedures. The Executive Committee will take one more look at these to make sure all the language is fined-tuned and precise, and then it will be ready for online voting. Stay tuned!

#### CONDOLENCES

We send our condolences to chapter member Sam Burke, upon the passing of his father Mr. Samuel Burke, Sr., who had recently celebrated his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. We keep Sam, his sister and rest of their family in our thoughts and prayers. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

#### A PERSONAL NOTE

On a personal note, I had the privilege of performing a recital at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York City on Sunday, October 27, the result of an invitation extended to me by my colleague Fred Teardo prior to his departure from Saint Thomas to Birmingham. The program was deliberately Trinitarian in design, in three groups of three, all built around the theme of the Holy Trinity. On beautiful Loening-Hancock Organ in the gallery (Taylor and Boody), both the pedal and manual settings of the chorales *Kyrie*, *Gott Vater in Ewigkeit*; *Christe, aller Welt Trost*; and *Kyrie, Gott Heiliger Geist* were played (large settings first, then the manualiter

settings), followed by Charles Tournemire's *Triple Choral (Sancta Trinitas)*, Op. 41, on the Arents Memorial Organ in the chancel (Skinner/Aeolian-Skinner/G. F. Adams). I was very pleased at the positive response to this program, and I was especially happy to see our recent former chapter member John Oghia, who sends his greetings to the Birmingham Chapter. Sadly, being in New York over the weekend meant that I had to miss Christopher Houlihan's masterclass and recital at Samford (of which you can read more in Sherelyn's article).

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

We look forward to the many activities in the organ world during the month of November, most especially the November organ recital series on Sundays at Independent Presbyterian Church, a recital on Friday, November 8, 7:30 p.m. at the Cathedral Church of the Advent by Fred Teardo, and of course our dinner at the home of Gorman Jones with David Baskeyfield (see Dan's article below). I hope to see many of you at these various events during the next month!

Charles M. Kennedy, Dean



**Dan Lawhon, Sub Dean**

Dear Friends,

I hope this article finds all of you well as we approach the busy time of Advent and Christmas. This time of the year is full of wonderful concerts and times of making music together. Highlights of the year

include the organ recitals at Independent Presbyterian. This year our chapter has the privilege of spending the evening dining with David Baskeyfield, one of the guest organists for the IPC organ recital series. The dinner will be on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the home of Dr. Gorman Jones. Dr. Jones has not only agreed to host this event, but has graciously volunteered to sponsor the event. Make sure to visit our website to make reservations for this wonderful evening.

The reservation form will be on the Birmingham AGO website two weeks before the event.

All teachers of future organists, a reminder that the Minnie McNeil Carr Organ Scholarship Competition for high school students and the Myrtle Jones Steele Organ Scholarship Competition for college students will be held in April 2014. The date and location will be announced soon. We encourage you to set this as a goal for your students. For full information regarding the Competition Guidelines, follow the links provided or call (205)602-0597. While the Myrtle Jones Steele Competition is for students of Birmingham AGO members, we have opened the Minnie McNeil Carr Competition to any student in Alabama. We hope to have a significant number of competitors.

Finally, let me encourage you to visit the Birmingham AGO website and reserve the dates of the spring events. We have some strong programs lined up, as well as the fun-filled Epiphany Party to be held at the home of Fred and Leslie Teardo at 6 p.m., Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. *Note that this is a different date than was originally published.*

We look forward to seeing you at the various events.

Most Sincerely,  
Dan Lawhon, Sub-Dean

### **Houlihan Masterclass and Recital**

On Saturday morning, Oct. 26, several of our Samford student members participated in a masterclass led by Christopher Houlihan. Jim Dorroh's students performing were graduate student Richard Byrd (Maurice Durufle's *Prelude and Chorale Variations on "Veni Creator," Opus 4*), senior Grant Frederick (Joseph Jongen's *Chorale, Opus 37, No. 4*), and sophomore Adam Cobb (Bach's *Prelude in C minor BWV546/1*). Isaac Johnson, student of Dan Lawhon, played Olivier Messiaen's *Le Banquet Celeste*. Birmingham chapter members in attendance were Pat Fitzsimmons, Firmon Hardenbergh, Natalie Tally and Shereilyn Breland. Jim Dorroh organized the weekend activities which concluded Sunday afternoon with a recital by Christopher Houlihan. Samford University sponsored both events which were held in Reid Chapel.

### **GREETINGS FROM YOUR REGION IV COUNCILLOR!**

Ah, fall is in the air. Congratulations to our own Greater Columbia Chapter for hosting a fantastic regional convention this past summer. If you weren't there – you missed a great time! Summer 2014 is the national convention in Boston; summer 2015 is the Regional Convention in Charlotte. Let's have a great Region IV turnout for both events! Please *check out* the Region IV blog at: <http://agoregionivblog.blogspot.com/> or like the Region IV facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/AGO-Region-IV/312313912115500?ref=hl> to get the latest news and updates from your Regional Councillor.

I just returned from the Fall meetings of National Council . . . here is my "Top Ten Things the Local Chapter Should Remember."

10: *On-line dues are coming!* The system, called ONCARD (Online National Collection and Remittal of Dues) will be rolled out during the next fiscal year. What does this mean for your chapter? A Chapter Administration Guide will be available on February 1 to assist the chapter administrator figure out the system. The Regional Councillors will have a full tutorial during our November WebEx meeting. (I'll try to pay special attention so that I can help answer everyone's questions!)

9: *Annual Fund.* Yes, we hear about it every year, but for a reason! The annual fund has two categories: chapter and individual. Does your chapter contribute? Do *you* contribute? A high percentage of participation in both categories assists in national grant applications . . . consider donating today.

8: Forms, forms, forms! Has your chapter submitted the *dues report forms*? This form lets National know who has renewed and keeps everyone up-to-date with their TAO subscription.

7: Forms, forms, forms! Has your chapter kept up-to-date with the *IRS*? There is a pesky postcard to fill out every year, get behind on this and the chapter can lose its non-profit status. Treasurers, please double check!

6: Host a Regional in 2017? Deadline for applications is January 2014.

5: Host a January Jubilee? Deadline for applications is January 2014.

3: Host a POE in 2015? Deadline for applications is March 15, 2014.

2: Need somewhere to go this summer? How about Boston . . . it'll be great!

1: I love meeting Region IV members – perhaps I'll show up at *your* chapter soon.

A hearty thank you to all of you for giving your time and energy to guild activities. The strength of our organization is the individual member—YOU!

Best,  
Laura Ellis

E-mail me at: [LRELLIS@ufl.edu](mailto:LRELLIS@ufl.edu)

Visit the Region IV Blog:

<http://agoregionivblog.blogspot.com/>

"Like" the Region IV Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/AGO-Region-IV/312313912115500?ref=hl>

## Calendar of Events 2013-2014

### November

#### Dinner for David Baskeyfield

Saturday, November 16, 2013, 6:00 p.m.  
Gorman Jones' Home

### January

#### Epiphany Party

Friday, January 10, 2014, 6 p.m.  
Fred and Leslie Teardo's Home

### February

#### Dr. Leon Couch

#### Organ Works of Buxtehude

Monday, February 10, 2014  
Baptist Church of the Covenant  
Dinner 6:00 p.m.;  
Business meeting 6:30 p.m.;  
Program 7:00 p.m.

### March

#### Bruce Ludwick, Teaching Chant

Monday, March 10, 2014  
St. Paul's Cathedral  
Dinner 6:00 p.m.;  
Business meeting 6:30 p.m.;

Program 7:00 p.m.

## **April**

### **Student Recital**

Monday, April 7, 2014

Cathedral Church of the Advent

Dinner 6:00 p.m.;

Business meeting 6:30 p.m.;

Program 7:00 p.m.

## **May**

### **Hymn Festival/Officer Installation Service**

Episcopal Church of the Ascension

Monday, May 12, 2014