



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

December 2014 - January 2015

A Word from the Dean

Greetings friends and colleagues,

By the time you read this, you will be heavily involved in the many music making opportunities, social events and services for the season of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. While this season is a busy and stressful time for a musician, it is also the time that we get to use our gifts to the fullest. I can't imagine a Christmas season without music or not being able to play a carol. What a gift we have, as musicians, to provide the vehicle for the joyful singing of carols, to lead a choir in presenting meaningful narratives of Christ's birth or meditation music for folks to partake of communion or light candles reminding them of the joy that fills this season.

Your Executive Committee met Monday, November 10 to discuss several items of business, among which was a discussion of how we might attract new members, as well as encourage previous members to rejoin the guild. The meeting led me to think that this newsletter article should be dedicated to support this discussion. I first thought I would come up with the "top ten" reasons for being a member of the AGO. I was trying to refine this list when I went to the AGO dinner honoring Alexander Frey at St. Luke's Episcopal Saturday night, November 15. I sat there eating a wonderful meal, listening to my friends share stories about their journey as organists, laughing and having such a good time that it seemed awkward to disrupt the festive atmosphere in order to invite our guest to speak. However, it was Alexander's words that reminded me of how fortunate I am to be able to play such a wonderful instrument. While his experiences as a professional organist, pianist and conductor in Europe are quite different than those of most of the

folks in the room, he spoke to the essence of being a musician when he said "I approach each performance as though it was my last." What a profound thought that we give our very best each time we sit down to play, whether it is a rehearsal, service or solo performance. After I left I reflected on what a delightful evening it had been and how enjoyable it was to be around folks who share a common interest. The evening made me more aware of what a unique gift we have as organists. One would be hard pressed to find a better reason for being a member of the Birmingham AGO chapter than the laughter-filled evening we experienced. Beyond this, the National AGO offers a wealth of information and resources from their monthly magazine *The American Organist*, a website full of information such as salary guidelines, job listings, educational opportunities, as well as links to a number of related areas, i.e. organ builders. In my opinion, the "icing on the cake" for being a member of the AGO is its conventions, chapter meetings and gatherings that provide the opportunity to share stories, make friends around the globe and experience programs on wonderful organs in fabulous places. What more can I say? Who can you enlist?

We appreciate Jeff McLelland and Independent Presbyterian Church for, once again, allowing us to share an evening with one of their recital artists. This year celebrates the 50th anniversary of the November Recital series that has been a gift to the city of Birmingham. I also want to thank St. Luke's Episcopal Church for allowing us to use their facility for this wonderful dinner and to Leslie Teardo, and Nathan Smock who planned and organized this wonderful evening.

I hope that this will be a wonderful holiday season for each of you. I look forward to seeing you at the Epiphany Party in January at the home of Stephen Schaeffer. It is always a highlight of my year and I hope it will be for you, as well.

Sincerely,
Dan Lawhon

**NOVEMBER CHAPTER EVENT:
DINNER WITH ALEXANDER FREY**



Fred Teardo, Alexander Frey, Charles Kennedy

As has become a favorite custom the last few years, the November chapter activity was dinner with an IPC November Recital Series performer. This year Alexander Frey of Berlin, Germany was our guest.

Following a wonderful meal, Alexander spoke of his experiences as a symphony conductor, pianist and organist and of his life in Berlin the last 24 years. Of particular interest were the insights he provided on his concept of performing the three Franck Chorales as a symphony and the reasons for the registrations he selected for his performance of these pieces in his Sunday recital.

Attendees enjoying the evening were Mike Burt, David Robertson, Nathan Smock, Natalie Tally, Dan and Sherrie Lawhon, Fred and Leslie Teardo, Barry Norris, Jeff McLelland, Charles Kennedy, Pat Anderson, Bill Richardson, and Sherelyn Breland.

**DO YOU KNOW OF ANY HIGH SCHOOL
ORGAN STUDENTS?**

We have \$500.00 to award to a deserving Alabama high school student who is currently studying the organ. As reported in last month's newsletter, there were no entrants last year for the Minnie McNeil Carr Scholarship Award Competition. We'd like to change that this year!

Please help us identify students who qualify for our competition to be held on April 19, 2015, at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension. If you have no high school organ students of your own, please contact other musicians in your denomination to see if they know of students who might be interested. Several professional music organizations are also publicizing these scholarship awards, but our best leads for competitors will be found here among our members. Applications for the Minnie McNeil Carr competition must be postmarked by April 1. Please give serious thought to identifying potential applicants and help us spread the news of this wonderful opportunity.

The Scholarship Awards Committee also invites you to identify students for our Hutton POE award which will be granted in the Spring. Students between the ages of 13-18 who are interested in attending a Pipe Organ Encounter (POE) or POE Advanced next summer and who meet a few basic requirements are eligible for this grant. A POE will be held in our region in Columbus, Georgia, in July of 2015.

Additional information and applications for the Minnie McNeil Carr and the Hutton POE Scholarship Awards are available on the chapter website at <http://www.birminghamago.org/Scholarships.html>. You may also contact one of my fellow committee members, Dr. Patricia Fitzsimmons and Dr. Jeff McLelland, for further information.

Natalie Tally

FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

The next issue of *The Birmingham Chiff...* will be published on February 1. If you have articles or other info to be included, please send it by January 20 to newsletter@birminghamago.org. Thanks!

LAST CALL!!! WINSTON-SALEM CHAPTER STUDENT COMPETITION

The Winston-Salem (NC) Chapter of the AGO is happy to announce the 4th annual HS Organ Festival & Competition that they co-sponsor with the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

We would be grateful if you would please forward this information to your chapter's members and to any potentially interested student organists.

The competition is open to any high school senior or younger who has not previously won the competition's First Prize. In addition to cash prizes and potential scholarships, all prize winners (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Hymn Prize) will receive a copy of one of the eight volumes of Bach works published by Wayne Leupold Editions, compliments of the publisher.

A CD recording and application is due (received) by December 19, 2014. For full information about the competition, festival events, and instruments, please see: <http://www.timothyolsenorganist.com/hs-competition.html>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Timothy Olsen
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There's Still Time... to reduce your taxes

Did you know all donations to the chapter made by December 31 are tax-deductible on your 2014 tax return? If you like, you may designate your gift to be applied to the Patrons and Sponsors fund, the Warren Hutton POE Scholarship fund, the Minnie

McNeill Carr or the Myrtle Jones Steele Scholarship Awards funds. Treasurer Mike Burt will provide donors a letter for tax records which acknowledges receipt of the tax-deductible donation.

Gifts should be addressed to
Birmingham AGO
P. O. Box 59181
Birmingham, AL 35259-9181.

For further information, contact Mike Burt at treasurer@birminghamago.org. Please consider supporting the chapter in this way – a gift of any amount will help in providing educational programs for the chapter and scholarship awards to students studying our craft.

Members' Corner

Master's Degree Recital



Richard Byrd, assisted by Adam Cobb

On Sunday afternoon, November 9, an appreciative audience gathered at Reid Chapel on the campus of Samford University to hear chapter member **Richard Byrd** in recital as part of his Master of Music degree requirements. Richard performed works of Bach, Franck, and Duruflé. Congratulations to Richard for a job well done!



Southeast Regional Convention Charlotte, NC July 1 – 4, 2015

Registration for the 2015 Regional Convention is now open. The theme of the convention is ***French Connections: Diverse – Dynamic – Divine***. Among the performers are Renée Anne Louprette, Olivier Latry, Stephen Tharp, Herndon Spillman, and Jack Mitchener. Former chapter member Patrick Scott is one of the presenters on Improvisation, and there are special sessions planned for student members.

Early registration fees are available through April 1: AGO member \$325, AGO senior rate \$300, student rate \$200. A daily rate of \$125 and non-AGO member rate of \$425 are also available. All rates increase \$50 after April 1. The convention fee includes ground transportation to the venues, a wine and cheese soirée, two lunches, dinner, banquet, evening concert receptions, and a farewell brunch.

Omni Hotel Charlotte is the convention hotel. Daily convention room rates include a gourmet breakfast buffet, applicable taxes and many complimentary amenities upon registration in the free OMNI Select Guest Program. Room rates are valid for three additional days before and after the convention so you'll have time to extend your trip and get in a little vacation sight-seeing.

Occupancy Rates:

SINGLE	\$143.62
DOUBLE	\$173.15
TRIPLE	\$202.67
QUAD	\$232.20

To find the schedule, venues, and complete details of the convention, log on to the convention website <http://agocharlotte2015.org/welcome.htm>. You can download a convention brochure, register for the convention, and reserve a hotel room from the site.

Event Highlights

December – February 1

Please See the Calendar of Events for Details

Services of Lessons and Carols

Dec. 5	BSC at Canterbury UMC	7:30 PM
Dec. 7	Cathedral Church-Advent	9:00 & 11:00 AM
	BSC at Canterbury UMC	4:30 PM
Dec. 14	Vestavia Hills UMC	8:30 & 11:00 AM
	Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Gadsden	3:00 PM
	Cathedral Church of the Advent	3:00 PM
	St. Mary's on-the-Highlands	5:00 PM
Dec. 28	Shades Valley Lutheran	10:00 AM

Sunday, Dec. 7

Christmas Concert – IPC 4:00 PM
Christmas anthems accompanied by string orchestra.

Tyler Canonico, Organ Recital – St. Paul's 4:15 PM
Works by Franck, Bach, Langlais, Wold, and Merkel

Sunday, Dec. 14

Bruce Ludwick Jr., Organ Recital – St. Paul's 4:15 PM
Works by Yon, Vivaldi/Bach, Respighi, Bossi

Sunday, Dec. 21

Bruce Ludwick Jr., Organ Recital – St. Paul's 4:15 PM
Works by Franck, Tournemire, Langlais

Thursday, Dec. 25

Merry Christmas!

Thursday, Jan. 1

Happy New Year!

Sunday, Feb. 1, 3:00 PM

Charles Kennedy, Concert Series - Advent
The program includes *Rhapsody No. 4* by Herbert Howells, *Toccata and Fugue in D minor ("Dorian")* by J.S. Bach, *Psalm 116* by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, works by César Franck and Louis Couperin, and the Alabama premiere of Pamela Decker's *Faneuil Hall*

Scheduled Chapter Events 2015

January

Epiphany Party

Friday, January 9, 2015, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Home of Dr. Stephen Schaeffer

April

Minnie McNeil Carr Organ Award Competition

Saturday, April 18, 2015, 1 PM
Episcopal Church of the Ascension

Calendar of Events 2014-15

For complete details on these items, see the Online Calendar on the chapter website www.birminghamago.org

December 5, 2014 7:30 PM

BSC Annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Birmingham-Southern College Concert Choir, Southern Chorale, Alumni Choir, Leon Couch, organ. Featured composers include Barber, Biebl, Britten, and many arrangements of beloved spirituals and carols for the season. Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mt. Brook, AL

December 7, 2014 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM

Advent Lessons and Carols. The Cathedral Choirs, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

December 7, 2014 10:30 AM

Seasonal Choral Music on the Second Sunday in Advent. Canterbury UMC Choir, Lester Seigel, Choirmaster/Organist. Anthems by Hassler, Howells, Rutter and more. Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mt. Brook, AL

December 7, 2014 4:00 PM

Christmas Concert. IPC Choir and Jeff McLelland. Independent Presbyterian Church

December 7, 2014 4:15 PM

Organ Recital. Tyler Canonico. Works by Franck, Bach, Langlais, Wold, and Merkel. Cathedral of St. Paul.

December 7, 2014 4:30 PM

BSC Annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Birmingham-Southern College Concert Choir, Southern Chorale, Alumni Choir, Leon Couch, organ. Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mt. Brook, AL

December 14, 2014 3:00 PM

A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. The Choir of the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection and members of the Gadsden Symphony under the direction of Choir Master, Glenn Day. Works of Vivaldi, Bach, and traditional carols. Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Gadsden, AL

December 14, 2014 3:00 PM

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

December 14, 2014 4:15 PM

Organ Recital. Bruce Ludwick, Jr. Works by Yon, Vivaldi/Bach, Respighi, Boss. A pre-Vespers recital of organ music by Italian composers. Cathedral of St. Paul

December 14, 2014 5:00 PM

An Advent Service of Lessons and Carols. The Parish Choir of St. Mary's Church. Works by Thomas Brown, Howard Helvey, Robert Twynham, Gerald Near, Gary Davison, Philip Ledger, and Craig Phillips. St. Mary's on-the-Highlands Episcopal Church

December 18, 2014 7:30 PM

"Most Highly-Favored Lady" - Music for the Christmas Season. Sursum Corda, Lester Seigel, conductor. Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mt. Brook, AL

December 21, 2014 4:15 PM

Organ Recital. Bruce Ludwick, Jr. Works by Franck, Tournemire, Langlais. The Ste Clotilde Tradition: a pre-Vespers recital of compositions by former Organistes Titulaires of Ste. Clotilde Church. Cathedral of St. Paul

December 28, 2014 10:00 AM

Service of Lessons and Carols. Adult choir with winds. Idabelle Gay, Organist and Choirmaster. Anthems and Carols of the season. Shades Valley Lutheran Church

December 28, 2014 3:00 PM

Service of Choral Evensong. IPC Camerata. Independent Presbyterian Church

January 18, 2015 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

January 23, 2015 12:30 PM

Mid-Day Music. Joseph Sargent, recorder, with other musicians. Cathedral Church of the Advent

January 25, 2015 3:00 PM

Service of Choral Evensong. IPC Camerata. Independent Presbyterian Church

February 1, 2015 3:00 PM

Charles M. Kennedy. Organ Recital. Advent's Associate Director of Music and Organist will present a program that includes the *Rhapsody No. 4* by Herbert Howells, *Toccata and Fugue in D minor ("Dorian")* by J.S. Bach, *Psalm 116* by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, and works by César Franck and Louis Couperin. A special feature will be the Alabama premiere of Pamela Decker's *Faneuil Hall*, commissioned for the 2014 AGO National Convention in Boston. Cathedral Church of the Advent

February 13, 2015 12:30 PM

Mid-Day Music. Rhonda Sider Edgington, organ. Cathedral Church of the Advent

February 15, 2015 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

February 22, 2015 3:00 PM

Service of Choral Evensong. IPC Camerata. Independent Presbyterian Church

March 1, 2015 3:00 PM

Leon W. Couch III. Organ Recital. Compositions include Buxtehude's *Praeludium in D Major*, Vierne's *Scherzo* from *Symphony No. 6*, Franck's *Piece Heroique*, Bunk's *Passacaglia*, Diemer's *Folk Hymn*. Hill Recital Hall, Birmingham-Southern College

March 8, 2015 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

March 22, 2015 3:00 PM

Service of Choral Evensong. IPC Camerata. Independent Presbyterian Church

March 29, 2015 2:30 PM

Frederick Teardo. Organ Recital. Cathedral Church of the Advent

April 10, 2015 6:30 PM

Choral Concert. Canterbury Cathedral Choir, England. Saint Luke's Episcopal Church

April 19, 2015 4:00 PM

Choral Concert. The choirs of IPC. Independent Presbyterian Church

April 21, 2015 7:30 PM

The Tallis Scholars. Cathedral Concert Series. Cathedral Church of the Advent

April 24, 2015 12:30 PM

Mid-Day Music. The Alabama Choir School Concert Choir. Cathedral Church of the Advent

April 26, 2015 3:00 PM

Service of Choral Evensong. IPC Camerata. Independent Presbyterian Church

April 26, 2015 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

April 28, 2015 11:00 AM

Lecture-Recital on Rhetoric and Buxtehude. Leon W. Couch III. Hill Recital Hall, Birmingham-Southern College

May 14, 2015 6:00 PM

Choral Eucharist for Ascension Day. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

May 17, 2015 3:00 PM

Cathedral Concert Series. The Cathedral Choir, Frederick T. Teardo, Charles M. Kennedy. Cathedral Church of the Advent

May 24, 2015 3:00 PM

Service of Choral Evensong. IPC Choir and Jeff McLelland. Independent Presbyterian Church