

THE BIRMINGHAM CHIEF
...off the old blockflute

Birmingham Chapter of
The American Guild of Organists
December, 2011



Jamie McLemore, Dean

December 2011

I cannot believe that Advent is here. The very busy time has arrived for all of us. Extra rehearsals, performances outside of church services, plus the many gatherings and parties make this season festive—but exhausting. And this year includes Christmas Day and New Year's Day on Sundays! I realize we all try to do too much during this season, so please try to get some R&R when you can.

It was good to see many of your at our last meeting. Kudos goes to Stephen Schaffer and Charles Kennedy for hosting and Greg Roberson for securing the caterer. Charles presented a superb program on the music and life of Herbert Howells. While Howells' music is demanding, it is not that out of reach for everyone. Of course, having the resources of the Cathedral organ is a great help! I enjoyed Charles' insight to the performance of Howells and his

music. I've had the opportunity to play a lot of his choral works and they are always a joy to learn and perform.

One word about our meetings: several members did not make dinner reservations. We were very fortunate to have ample food. However, we cannot continue to plan dinners without the exact number of reservations. If you do not make a reservation for dinner and attend, understand that **members with reservations will be served first**. If ample food is still available, then those without reservations will be served. Therefore, **PLEASE** make your reservation if you are attending the dinner.

Our next event is the Epiphany party on **Friday, January 6th** at the home of Dan and Sherri Lawhon beginning at 6:00 PM. After dealing with ice and snow last year and having to postpone, we decided that Friday night is much better for everyone. For those of you who would like to carpool or follow to the Lawhon home, we will meet in the parking lot of Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills at 5:20 and depart at 5:30. **We will not wait past 5:30** to leave for their home. If you would like to do this, please let me know. Since our chapter hosted the first meeting of

the year we will need to need to charge for the Epiphany Party to cover some of the expenses. The cost will be \$15 for members and guests. Reservations must be in to me by **Noon, Wednesday, January 4th**. Due to the caterer's contract, I cannot accept any reservations past that date. If you are planning on attending, **call or email now!!** You can reach me at 726-2440 (SU) 706-0536 (Cell) or email me at jmclemor@samford.edu. or jamiemcl@centurytel.net. We will have a called meeting of the chapter that night, so make every effort to attend.

The UA Church Music Conference will be held in Tuscaloosa Friday, January 27 and Saturday, January 28. Registration is only \$90! On Friday night, there will be an organ recital by the UA Organ Scholarship competition winner and with Dr. Joby Bell, guest clinician. Dr. Bell is on the faculty at Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. The conference ends Saturday evening with a choral concert featuring the University Singers and Honor Choir. You can see more of this and register on line at music.ua.edu/departments/organ.



I have registered and made my hotel reservations to attend the Nashville National Convention July 1-6. Have you done this? It is very easy to do; just point and click if you would like to register online. There are some great recitals and workshops being presented, and Nashville is only 3 hours away. Try to take advantage of attending this if at all possible. If you are going to attend the convention I would highly encourage you to include the bus transportation in your registration fee. While Nashville is certainly not as large as DC or Chicago, traffic can be quite heavy and you will run the risk of being late to the next venue.

This has been an exciting year for our chapter. We hosted our very first POE and received *rave* reviews from the kids and faculty that attended. We have welcomed several new members into our chapter. The new Dobson organ is installed (the new façade is stunning!!) at IPC and is waiting for voicing and tonal finishing; a new Noack is headed to Baptist Church of the Covenant. The rebuilt E. M Skinner organ will be installed beginning next month in the chapel of South Highland Presbyterian. Our chapter has a lot to be thankful for and many things to look forward to in the New Year.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, and a Blessed New Year.

Cheers!
Jamie



Charles Kennedy, Sub Dean

Dear Members,

Greetings to all you during this busy time of the year. It was a real privilege and pleasure to give the chapter program last month on the organ music of Herbert Howells—something I had wanted to do for many years. I recorded the entire presentation (not yet edited), and would be happy to provide CD copies for anyone who missed the meeting, or who might otherwise wish to have one. As an addendum to the program, I hope to develop an annotated list of Howells's organ works with special indications regarding level of difficulty and accessibility to 2-manual organs. I would be happy to send this list (once completed) to anyone interested.

As noted by Jamie, we will have to charge at the door this year for the Epiphany Party on Friday, January 6, given that the Chapter covered the full cost of the September meeting. Please be sure to send your reservation to Jamie by no later than noon, Wednesday, January 4. We are most appreciative of Dan and Sherri Lawhon for graciously hosting the party this time.

Speaking to Jamie's concern about Chapter members making dinner reservations for Chapter meetings, it has come to my attention that a few of you may not be successfully receiving email reminders sent via the Birmingham Chapter's web server,

with the messages perhaps being blocked as spam or sent into the junk mail folder. If, for some reason, you have not been receiving the email reminders, please be sure to let me know (kennedy@cathedraladvent.com), so that I can be aware of the problem as it affects certain members. If you are among any of these people, you might want to double-check your junk mail folder, or, if it is a work-based email account, speak with your computer tech person. In either case, check your contacts or address list and be sure that 'webmaster@birminghamago.org' is included. With most email readers, having that address in your contact/address list will insure that your messages are received.

I encourage Chapter members to register for the University of Alabama Church Music Conference in Tuscaloosa on January 27 and 28, featuring guest clinician and recitalist Joby Bell, professor at the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. A number of interesting classes on a wide variety of topics by various presenters have been organized for the conference.

I trust that, in this busy time of the year, you will discover and experience the peace and joy of Advent, Christmas and Hanukah as you help to bring it to others through music.

Charles M. Kennedy, Sub Dean

Calendar of Events

December 2, 2011: 6:30 PM

Christmas at Arlington Antebellum House
Joshua Bullock, Greg Evans, Idabelle Gay, William
McElwee, Christopher Henley, David Renaker,
Dan Lawhon, Melanie Couch
Sacred and secular Christmas works
Chapter members will perform organ, piano and vocal
selections during this annual city-wide event
through 4 December.

Arlington Antebellum House Museum, 331 Cotton
Ave SW, Birmingham
For further information:
<http://www.informationbirmingham.com/arlington>

December 4, 2011: 09:00 AM

Advent Lessons and Carols
The Cathedral Choirs; Stephen G. Schaeffer, Director
of Music; Charles M. Kennedy, Music Associate;
Sharon Benefield, Director of Children
Cathedral Church of the Advent, 2017 Sixth Avenue
North, Birmingham, AL 35203
For further information:
<http://www.adventbirmingham.orgkennedy@cathedraladvent.com>

December 4, 2011: 11:00 AM

Advent Lessons and Carols
The Cathedral Choir; Stephen G. Schaeffer, Director
of Music; Charles M. Kennedy, Music Associate
Cathedral Church of the Advent, 2017 Sixth Avenue
North, Birmingham, AL 35203
For further information:
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December 4, 2011: 4:00 PM

IPC Christmas Concert
IPC Choir and Orchestra
Magnificats by J.S. Bach, Franz Schubert, and C.V.
Stanford
Independent Presbyterian Church
For further information:
<http://www.ipc-usa.orgbfillmer@ipc-usa.org>

December 11, 2011: 4:00 PM

Choral Concert
First Church Chancel Choir
Magnificat by Andrew Carter, for SATB choir,
children's choir, orchestra, organ, and handbells

First United Methodist Church, Downtown
Birmingham

December 16, 2011: 12:30 PM

Mid-Day Musical Menu: A Christmas Celebration
G. W. Carver Concert Choir; Bobby Stringer, director
Cathedral Church of the Advent, 2017 Sixth Avenue
North, Birmingham, AL 35203
For further information:
<http://www.adventbirmingham.orgkennedy@cathedraladvent.com>

Chapter Programs and Events 2012

Friday, January 6, 2012 Epiphany Party

Home of Dan and Sheri Lawhon
6:00 – 8:00 PM

January 27-28, 2012 Church Music Conference

University of Alabama
Joby Bell, Guest Clinician and Recitalist

Monday, February 13, 2012

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church
6:00 Dinner; 6:30 Business Meeting;
7:00 Program Eric Mathis on Church Music

Monday, March 12, 2012

South Highland Presbyterian Church
Dinner 6:00; 6:30 Business Meeting
Program 7:00 The E. M. Skinner organ, Opus 576,
from Ensley Highland Presbyterian Church, restored
and relocated to the chapel at
South Highland Presbyterian Church

Monday, April 16, 2012

First United Methodist Church
6:00 Dinner; 6:30 Business Meeting
7:00 Program Student Recital

Monday, May 14, 2012

Independent Presbyterian Church
6:00 Dinner; 6:30 Business Meeting
7:00 Program Hymn Festival and
Installation of Officers