



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

November - December 2016

A Word from the Dean

Greetings friends and colleagues,

I hope you are doing well. If you weren't at the October meeting, you missed a fine program presented by Leslie Teardo, Beth Middleton and Brian Kittredge. Leslie gave an overview of the various examinations available through the American Guild of Organists. It is always good to be reminded of the wide range of learning opportunities/challenges the AGO provides through these exams. If you are interested in finding out more about these exams, visit the national AGO website for more information.

Beth gave a thorough overview of working with both younger and older children's choirs. She demonstrated several helpful techniques and had a whole "basket of tricks." She was a delightful presenter and we learned much. Brian presented choral techniques emphasizing warm-up techniques and techniques that help with precision and clarity of tone. All presenters did an excellent job and it was a great evening spent having dinner with colleagues. We appreciate Fred Teardo and Charles Kennedy hosting us once again at the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

We have had several new or returning members join in the last month thanks to some of our members making the effort to reach out and encourage folks to join. Let me encourage everyone to do the same.

I hope your holiday season goes well; I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Dan Lawhon

NOVEMBER CHAPTER ACTIVITY: MASTERCLASS WITH WOLFGANG RUBSAM

At 10 AM Saturday, November 19th, Wolfgang Rubsam will be our guest clinician for a masterclass at Baptist Church of the Covenant. Mr. Rubsam will be in town to play the November 20th recital of Independent Presbyterian's November Recital Series.

Mr. Rubsam has studied with Erich Ackermann, Helmut Walcha, Robert Anderson, and Marie-Claire Alain. During his illustrious career he has taught church music and organ at Northwestern University in Illinois, served as professor of organ at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken, Germany, and been artist-in-resident and university organist at Lawrence University in Wisconsin.

He has taught masterclasses in Europe and the US, both in interpretation of early and romantic organ repertoire, and interpretation of the keyboard music of J.S. Bach. An active recitalist, he has over 130 recordings of organ works from the Baroque and Romantic periods.

All are invited to play in the masterclass. If interested, contact Dan Lawhon dlawhon@bcoc.net by November 10th with your selection and to schedule practice time on the church's two-manual 34-rank mechanical action Noack organ. We want to keep the length of the works to 5-6 minutes so that there will be time for several folks to participate. Following the masterclass, please plan to join us for a Dutch treat lunch at an area restaurant.

We've enjoyed these masterclasses over the last several years. They have been a wonderful opportunity to hear personal experiences of these

noted performers as they provide insight to those playing, and it is always a pleasure to hear the various performers and the literature they select.

We hope you'll join us from 10 AM - noon Saturday, November 10th and for lunch afterward. The church address is 2117 University Boulevard, Birmingham AL 35233. There is ample parking in the church's two parking lots and along 22nd Street South.

Welcome New Members

Whether long-time area residents or recent arrivals from other parts of the country, we are pleased to welcome these new members to the chapter.

Jeff Binford – Organist, First Presbyterian Church, Tuscaloosa, AL

Russell Nelson - Director of Music, Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood, AL

Dr. Tim Thomas – Director of Music, First Presbyterian, Birmingham, AL

CHANGE IN CHIFF PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

At our October business meeting the chapter voted, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, to publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis with special editions issued as needed. For the last few years we have issued monthly editions from September through May with combined issues for November/December and a summer edition.

While we have received feedback that the newsletter is read and enjoyed, many of you rely on the website for the most current information regarding chapter activities and directory information. Much of the newsletter information is available on the chapter website www.birminghamago.org. We'll continue to keep this information updated, and send the chapter emails as changes and other items of interest are received. All are encouraged to submit items of interest to newsletter@birminghamago.org for inclusion in future editions of *The Birmingham Chiff...off the old Blockflute* or for posting on the website.

REMINDER: SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

Our Birmingham chapter **Minnie McNeil Carr Scholarship** is available again this year to a deserving high school student who is currently studying the organ. The competition for this \$500.00 award will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2017 at 2 PM at The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills.

Deadline for applications is April 1, 2017. All competitors must play a piece by J. S. Bach and a piece written after 1800. Competition guidelines and application forms may be downloaded from <http://www.birminghamago.org/Scholarships.html>.

For further information, please consult the above website or email Ms. Natalie Tally at ntally@me.com.

Did You Figure It Out?

Bill McElwee shared the answers to the Brain Teaser in the September newsletter. The color photo is of the 1911 Odell & Company organ in the sanctuary of Southside Baptist Church. This organ was replaced in 1968 with the current Holtkamp. The second photo is of the 1930 Kimball KPO 7068 in Ensley Baptist Church. Firmon Hardenbergh is the chapter member standing to the right of the console.

Coming Soon ...

Friday, Jan. 13 Epiphany Party 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Save the date for one of our favorite chapter gatherings: the annual Epiphany Party. Stephen Schaeffer has again generously agreed to host this event at his home. Nathan Smock will announce the dinner details, and reservations will be available online the beginning of January. We'll keep you posted on the website home page and with chapter emails as plans develop.