



## THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of  
the American Guild of Organists

Spring 2021

### A Word from the Dean

Greetings!

I hope you've had time for a bit of R & R after the hectic Lenten-Easter season. Several of you are already running full speed ahead with preparation for Evensongs, spring concerts, and so on. How wonderful to have so much variety and so many opportunities to enjoy!

As you've heard for some time, our chapter website is in need of modernization. We are taking a step in that direction by using an **online election software package to build, launch, and manage the election of the 2021-24 Executive Committee class.** Several AGO chapters have done this recently with great success, and the cost is less than \$30! I think you'll appreciate the flexibility of the process.

#### Other Items of Note in this newsletter:

**Laura Ellis**, good friend of our chapter and Professor of Organ, Carillon, and Harpsichord at the University of Florida, **invites you to attend this year's free, virtual Sacred Music Workshop;**

Notice from the AGO National Council of a membership initiative titled the "Year of the Young Organist."

See you soon,  
Sherelyn

### YEAR OF THE YOUNG ORGANIST

(FROM A LETTER TO CHAPTER DEANS SENT BY MICHAEL BEDFORD, AGO NATIONAL PRESIDENT, AND JAMES THOMASHOWER, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

*"The AGO National Council is committed to membership recruitment, retention, and growth within our organization. As more of our members have reached the "Special" membership category, we recognize that new initiatives must be developed to attract and welcome younger members into the Guild. We want them to experience the wealth of benefits, professional opportunities, and camaraderie we have enjoyed during our careers.*

*"To this end, we have established the "Year of the Young Organist," July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022. During these 12 months, any individual under the age of 30 can become a new member or renew her/his membership for free as part of this program.*

*"All will receive full membership benefits, including TAO. New/renewing young organists can take advantage of this offer by visiting AGOhq.org/free-membership."*

If you know of young people who might be interested in taking advantage of this, let's invite them to some chapter functions and show them what's possible with AGO membership.

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## Voting Is Underway

No additional nominations were received from the chapter, so the original slate announced by the Nominating Committee for the Executive Committee Class of 2021-24 remains in effect:

**Christopher Henley** - Asst. Director, Oxford Christian School Concert Choir; attended our 2011 POE; served on 2017 POEA Steering Committee

**Barry Norris** – Organist/Choirmaster, East Lake UMC; past chapter treasurer and EC member

**Greg Roberson** – Chorister, Independent Presbyterian Church; past chapter treasurer and EC member; treasurer of 2011 POE and director of 2013 POE

**Members in good standing may vote for up to two (2) of the nominees who will serve a three-year term as the Class of 2021-24.**

Please make sure you're current on your dues so that you can cast your ballot in the election. Everyone's vote is important!

Online and absentee voting runs from Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. In-person voting to conclude the election is tentatively scheduled for a May 10th chapter meeting. The actual date will be announced in late April.

Please contact Sherelyn Breland at [dean@birminghamago.org](mailto:dean@birminghamago.org) if you have any questions.

## So Nice to Speak with You!!

The Executive Committee is very interested in your thoughts on how best to resume in-person meetings and your ideas for setting the direction of our chapter activities through the summer and for the 2021-22 program year.

To that end, in the next couple of weeks you will be hearing from one of the members of our recently formed **Membership Contact Group**. They'll be asking such things as what would make you comfortable enough to attend an in-person meeting, whether you prefer an inside or outside location, your thoughts on Zoom sessions.

Also, if you want the COVID vaccine and are having trouble finding an appointment, let us know and we'll assist you in making an appointment and getting vaccinated.

We have a few open slots for program topics for the 2021-22 program year. We'd very much appreciate your input on possible ideas, presenters, and venues.

Those who'll be making calls are **Sam Burke, Jim Cook, Pat Fitzsimmons, Mark Hayes, Debby Holmes, Charles Kennedy, Dan Lawhon, Jeff McLellan, Jamie McLemore, Paul Mosteller, Natalie Tally and Barry Norris**.

We look forward to hearing your responses to these questions and any other info you'd like to share.

### Volunteers Needed – the Satisfaction is Great!

*Here are just a few of the ways you can share your talents with the chapter.  
If you can assist with any of these items, please contact Sherelyn 205-664-1373. THANKS!!!*

- Host a program at your church or home
- Assist with catering arrangements
- Coordinate logistical needs with presenter and venue
- Publicize chapter activities within the chapter and to outside groups
- Identify and recruit potential members
- Provide transportation for members and/or guests who might not be able to attend otherwise
- Maintain the chapter Facebook page
- Edit and publish the chapter newsletter (primarily on a quarterly basis)

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## Sacred Music Workshop University of Florida May 2 – 4, 2021

*"I'm excited to announce that the UF Sacred Music Workshop is going virtual for 2021! While I'm hopeful that many of us will be vaccinated by early May, I know it will be a while before the entire UF campus community is vaccinated. So, rather than bring everyone to campus right now, we'll play it safe and meet virtually! Bonus: it's FREE!"*

*"The workshop will be held during our normal timeframe: May 2 – 4, 2021. The event will include interactive Zoom sessions and a great line-up of presentations. Our primary guest clinician is Jonathan Hehn, Choral Program Director and Organist at Notre Dame, who will provide a hymn festival and other workshops. We'll have an organ literature session by R. Monty Bennett, an organ recital by Elena Barquerizo, and much more!"*

*"Complete details about the workshop may be found here: <https://uflsmw.wixsite.com/home>.*

*"Hit the "Click here to register" link and you'll be directed to a Zoom registration page.*

*"I hope you'll join me!"*

*Best,  
Laura*

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## 2021 UF SACRED MUSIC WORKSHOP "Going Virtual"

Visit <https://uflsmw.wixsite.com/home> to register

\*The link for all Zoom sessions will be provided upon registration; links to workshops and other programming will be sent a few days before the conference begins

### Sunday, May 2, 2021

4:00 PM CT      SMW Evening Social via Zoom  
Elena Barquerizo, guest

6:00 PM CT      Elena Barquerizo Organ Recital

### Monday, May 3, 2021

9:00 AM CT      SMW Morning Coffee via Zoom  
Jonathan Hehn, guest

*Sessions to view on your own throughout the day:*  
Best Practices in Planning Congregational Song  
(Hehn)  
Organ Music of Black Composers (Bennett)  
UF Organ Studio Performances

4:00 PM CT      SMW Evening Social via Zoom  
R. Monty Bennett, guest

6:00 PM CT      Hymn Festival: The Power of  
Congregational Song  
Led by Jonathan Hehn

### Tuesday, May 4, 2021

9:00 AM CT      SMW Morning Coffee via Zoom  
A live mini-workshop on music planning led by Jonathan Hehn

*Sessions to view on your own throughout the day:*  
Transformation of Presbyterian Worship (Hehn)  
Carillon Recital from Century Tower (Boole)

2:00 PM CT      LIVE panel discussion: Music at  
Notre Dame

4:00 PM CT      SMW Evening Social via Zoom  
Katie Boole, guest