



Central Hudson Valley Chapter
of the
**American Guild of
Organists**

Newsletter – December 2023

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802-309-8407

Chapter Web Site

www.chvago.org

Editor's Note: Continuing our series of articles written by other chapter members besides the Dean, this month we present a column by Board Member Johannes A. (John) Vanderlee. While John, a retired Senior Electronics Technician who was born in Holland, is not an organist himself, he has had a lifelong interest in all things organ from a musical as well as a technical perspective, whether the instrument be pipes or digital. He initiated and completed the renovation of the Bardavon theatre pipe organ under the New York Theatre Organ Society's banner, of which he currently serves as Chairman. We welcome John's unique perspective on the King of Instruments.

The other point of view

You may well wonder: what is a non-organist doing writing the Chapter letter for this month?

Perhaps it might be interesting to show the non-organist point of view.

In my earlier years I went to church in downtown Schiedam, in Holland, where the 11th-century St. Jan's Kerk has a pipe organ with a 15th-century case; much of the original instrument was intact, although it has been renovated in recent years. I remember Easter

Sunday mornings when we sang “U zijdt de Glory” (Thine is the Glory) from Handel’s *Maccabeus*, with a trumpet playing descant, an experience that I found truly celestial! Little did I know that a trumpeter was behind the balustrade up above; this kid thought that the carved angel atop of the case was playing the trumpet!

I also knew that my mother had some organ lessons although I never really heard her play, perhaps just a little bit when she had an opportunity in people's houses where they had pump organs, which I already found fascinating.

In those same days Dad also tried to build a simple electronic organ, and I’m sure that is why I still admire electronic instruments. However, my love of pipe organs persisted likewise. I recall my grandmother saying that maybe I should be taking organ lessons, but it being post World War II, money was tight so that was never in the budget. One thing I did musically was to learn to play the guitar – somewhat. But I hated practicing. In later years I did try organ lessons, but the patience to practice always eluded me. Yet, if no one was listening, I’d whale away as if I knew what I was doing – such fun to make a grand sound!

Obviously, no instrument ever intrigued me as much as an organ did. I knew there were different kinds of organs: pipe organs, electronic organs, whereof I knew very little then, but the mysterious technical intricacies of how they worked were fuel for an inquiring mind. Downtown Schiedam had a nice art deco theater, the Passage Theater, which had a wonderful Standaard theatre pipe organ that played songs for us kids when we attended summer programs there. My enduring involvement with the Bardavon Theatre perhaps harkens back to those days!

When I came to the US in 1960, I was blown away (not literally) in Radio City Music Hall by hearing that glorious instrument, which currently is a neglected shadow of its former self. Later, in High School, I was kind of an outsider who would listen to organ records for fun. Amazingly, during my stint in the US Navy I found a few like-minded souls that shared my passion and I recall some of our discussions which were, incidentally, based totally on ignorance. One day, while in port, we read about an AGO concert in Norfolk, VA. and while the details escape me, one thing I recall very clearly. We spoke with the AGO people afterwards and were treated as interlopers. A request to be put on their mailing list was basically ignored. But that’s OK, I have since forgiven the AGO!

Much of what I learned came from recordings, and while still in the Navy that I found a record from a Reader’s Digest set with Virgil Fox recordings. I understand the late Virgil had met mixed reviews from the AGO’s upper crust, but to this organ ignoramus he was the first one whose performances registered something within me.

Shortly after my discharge, I had the opportunity to attend several of Fox’s concerts, including the much maligned/admired “Heavy Organ “concerts. As opposed to earlier experiences, this man spoke to me – in more ways than one. He stood up, faced his audience, spoke to them, told them what he was going to play, and explained what to listen for. Johann S. Bach finally made total sense to me! “*Komm Susser Tod*” as played by Virgil on the Wanamaker Organ was transcendental. A girl friend who listened with me thought it would be great with some weed! That never happened, but it was the early seventies, you know?

Over time, I learned to listen closer to organ music of all kinds – yes, every type of organ from Hammond to tracker, and everything in between that has since come along digitally. I learned something about organists that never occurred to me before: an organist is not just a musician playing an instrument. An organist is an “Orchestrator” in every sense of the word! The artist selects multiple instruments of many tonalities, molds the symphonic sounds and dynamics cohesively to his/her liking, chooses the interplay among differing instruments, and “conducts” the whole. Because that is what is available at the organist’s periphery: a full orchestra!

Yet, how many people fully understand, and have an appreciation for that? The organist is often unseen or partially hidden and the music that emanates is taken for granted. Perhaps that’s why the theatre organ fascinates. It’s meant to show off the artist’s skills. A merchant sells his wares by openly displaying them; the value of what’s offered can be clearly seen as well as heard. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not suggesting we make a show of worship; I’ll leave that to that “other” type of worship, but the craft of the organist needs to be made more public. I’m sure everyone in the AGO aspires to lift the spirits of the worship, but do the parishioners understand what it takes? Most think you walk in, play the music, and just go home after. Organists need to find ways to educate those that we touch with the music.

Some lessons have been learned from NYTOS’ annual Christmas events at the Galleria Mall. The public mostly accepts the music as being part of the furnishings, until they actually see it being made, which brings no end of questions: What’s he doing with his feet? Why so many keyboards? What are all those buttons? Is that a big piano? How long did it take to learn that? etc. Those seem like silly questions, but they are really opportunities to engage. Yours truly enjoys being the producer rather than being the artist, because of this opportunity to educate. I find people invariably leave with a higher appreciation of what it takes to make that music.

A word about public “organ concerts”; they can have a bad name. It’s fine for organ scholars to get together and perform some obscure and/or atonal music to be performed and later analyzed and discussed. But in a public performance where you hope to gain admirers of the music, be selective of your program. After all, while you are there to show what can be done on an organ, include something familiar as be part of the program. It is the “hook” that pulls in those who are curious to explore the medium. I’m thinking of hearing German organist Barbara Dennerlein playing Fats Waller’s *Ain’t Misbehavin’* on a tracker organ. Or when in Orwell, Vermont we heard Ives’ *Variations on America* on a single manual tracker. Sometimes just a few chestnuts thrown in will make the program memorable to the newbies, and it makes it easier to sell them on the more complex repertoire.

Advent and Christmas make the season where the organ shines. Take advantage of it. Show your stuff and make sure people appreciate what you are doing. Let them know it is your Christmas gift to them. Play joyously to elevate the Christmas Spirit. The Holiday worship would not be the same without you. Have a blessed Christmas. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

John Vanderlee
Board member CHVAGO

Member News

- Stu Ballinger has a new phone number, effective immediately, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM: 845-309-5398.
- As announced in last month's newsletter, our chapter has recently awarded two scholarships. Both recipients have received grants for organ lessons and organ shoes, and a one-year Young Organist membership in AGO. Susie Gilgert, 17, is a student at Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie. Tommy Leung, 16, is a student at Roy C. Ketcham High School in Wappingers Falls. Both are now taking lessons with Dillon Streifeneder, Director of Music at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Poughkeepsie. Be sure to welcome and encourage them at our next social gathering!

List of Organ Substitutes

The following chapter members have indicated on their membership application that they will serve as substitute organists. Please contact them directly if you would like more information. Please note that only CHVAGO members in good standing are eligible to be included in this list, unless otherwise approved by the Board. More information about each substitute is provided on our web site at www.chvago.org. If you would like your name listed, or if you need to update your information, please contact the editor using the information above.

Meredith Baker	845-565-3321	Eric Hepp	845-489-2625
Joe Bertolozzi	845-337-1216	Wesley Joseph	845-849-0104
Luca Cantone	703-554-5906	Maris Kristapsons	845-635-0411
Greg Citarella	845-559-4013	Timothy M. Lewis	914-374-2608
Richard C. Ehlenberg	845-687-6013	Michael Oosterhout	301-910-5307
James Fitzwilliam	845-849-3606	Edward Palange	914-213-3460
Justan Foster	518-965-2389	Joanne Reed	845-361-3474
Carl J. Geiselhart	845-457-4830	Nancy Vanderlee	845-266-3858
Susan Guse	845-242-1478	Christopher Wynkoop	845-926-7389
Larry Hazard	845-452-0119		

List of Organ Teachers

The following chapter members have indicated on their membership application that they are accepting new organ students. Please note that only CHVAGO members in good standing are eligible to be included in this list. More information about each teacher is provided on our web site at www.chvago.org. If you would like your name listed, please contact the editor using the information above.

Meredith Baker	914-261-0028	Timothy M. Lewis	914-374-2608
Gregory Citarella	845-559-4013	Michael Oosterhout	301-910-5307
Justan Foster	518-965-2389	Dillon Streifeneder	845-532-2488
Larry Hazard	845-452-0119		

Deadline for Next Newsletter

We are always glad to receive input for the chapter newsletter in the form of calendar items, reviews of recent concerts and events, biographies, letters, photographs, etc. In order to make sure these submissions can be processed in a timely fashion, please make sure they are received by the 23rd of each month. However, material such as calendar items may be submitted at any time; even if the material may not make it into the printed newsletter, it can be quickly posted on our web site at www.chvago.org. You may submit newsletter or web site material by mail, e-mail, fax or phone. Just contact the editor, Susan LaGrande, using the information given above. Remember, the deadline for the next printed newsletter, to be available the first week in January 2024, is December 23.

Editor's Corner

This newsletter is published by the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The editor is:

Susan LaGrande

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Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

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Position Openings

Editor's Notes

- The AGO, and by extension the Central Hudson Valley chapter, now requires all posted jobs in our Career Center include salary information. This change improves transparency for applicants and complies with applicable New York State laws, where the AGO is headquartered. We believe this change will encourage a more positive experience for our members seeking employment.
- *Hiring institutions are encouraged to check references from applicants' previous employers. It should not be assumed that applicants who learn of position openings via these listings are endorsed by the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Position openings are listed without charge for three months unless an extension is requested. If you would like to place a listing, please contact the editor, Susan LaGrande at 845-235-7203 or email chvagoboard@gmail.com.*
- *Because there are so many new position openings this month, we are choosing not to list all of them in their entirety. If you have questions about a position, please contact the prospective employer directly using the information provided in the complete listing online at http://www.chvago.org/CHVAGO_Positions.php. If you need help accessing the online information, please call Susan LaGrande at 845-235-7203.*

ORGANIST - (Part-Time)

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY - POUGHKEEPSIE, NY

12/1/2023

ORGANIST - (Part-Time)

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SPRING VALLEY - SPRING VALLEY, NY

9/19/2023

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC - Part-Time
THE CHURCH OF ST MARY - WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY
4/21/2023

PARISH DIRECTOR OF MUSIC - Part-Time
**THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-ST.JOSEPH AND OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL -
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY**
4/19/2023

ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR - (Regular Part-Time)
ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH - GOSHEN, NY
Revised 6/13/2023

MUSIC LEADER - (Part-Time)
CHRIST'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - WOODSTOCK, NY
11/28/2022

CHORAL DIRECTOR - (Part-Time)
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - POUGHKEEPSIE, NY
Renewed 4/20/2023

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST - Part-Time
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - MIDDLETOWN, NY
Filled

Calendar of Events

If you are interested in having an event posted on this calendar, please contact the web site administrator, [Susan LaGrande](#). Events are selected for inclusion based on their relevance and interest to the members of the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The chapter reserves the right to decline or withdraw listings at any time.

Sunday, December 17, 2023 through Sunday, December 24, 2023	Deck the Mall Back by popular demand, NYTOS and the Touring Theatre Organ will fill the mall with music this holiday season. Daily 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM, except for December 24, where the schedule will be 1:30 AM to 2:00 PM. Stay tuned for the official artist lineup! Free. Galleria Mall , 2001 South Road, Poughkeepsie, NY. Info: 845-297-7600.
Sunday, January 14, 2024 4:00 PM	Organ Recital Series - Featuring Malik Jardine Malik Jardine, currently enrolled at Borough of Manhattan Community College applied studies program, is the only organist in the Community College CUNY system. He studies with Dr. Nathaniel Gumbs, who is Director of Chapel Services at Yale University. St. Mark's Episcopal Church , 85 East Main Street, Mt. Kisco, NY 10549. \$20 suggested donation. Info: 914-666-8058

Sunday,
January 21,
2024
Snow Date:
Sunday,
January 28,
2024
5:00 PM

Annual Spuds & Sundaes Social
Spuds & Sundaes Social - Music Sale - Seasonal Organ Music
Three events in one! And a great opportunity to bring a guest.
Baked potatoes and ice cream, with appropriate toppings for each. A
great opportunity for good food and fellowship. If you would like to
contribute a topping, please contact Susan LaGrande.
If you have organ- or choral-related sheet music that you no longer want,
bring it here and let other members browse. Take what you want and
leave a donation to benefit the Scholarship Fund.
There will be an opportunity to play/hear seasonal organ music on
the [Emmons-Howard tracker organ](#) (1904).
[Hopewell Reformed Church](#), 143 Beekman Road, Hopewell Junction,
NY 12533

Saturday,
February 3,
2024
3:00 PM
NOTE DATE
CHANGE!

Romanian Organ Landscape: Renée Anne Louprette, Lecturer
Renée Anne Louprette ([website](#)) is Assistant Professor of Music and
College Organist at Bard College where she directs the Bard Baroque
Ensemble and leads an annual Bach cantata series. She spent the Fall
2022 season as a Fulbright scholar in Brasov, Transylvania, surveying
the preservation of historic Romanian pipe organs. [St. James Episcopal
Church](#), 4526 Albany Post Rd., Hyde Park, NY 12538-1564. Free
admission. Reception to follow. Info: 845-229-2820

Sunday,
February 18,
2024
4:00 PM

Organ Recital Series
Featuring Marco Jimenez, organ, and Bowie Ma, Violin
[St. Mark's Episcopal Church](#), 85 East Main Street, Mt. Kisco, NY 10549.
\$20 suggested donation. Info: 914-666-8058

Sunday, April
14, 2024
2:00 PM

West Point Cadet Chapel Organ Recital by Katelyn Emerson
[Katelyn Emerson](#), Concert Organist. Program to be determined.
Venue: [Cadet Chapel, USMA, West Point, NY](#).
All recitals require a Department of Defense ID or Visitors' Pass from the
Visitor Control Center to enter West Point. Entry to the Cadet Chapel and
recital are free to the public. All Cadet Chapel organ recitals and concerts
are free to the general public. Info: craig.s.williams58.civ@army.mil

Sunday, April
21, 2024
3:00 PM

Annual Members' Recital
A recital of Organ Music by women composers performed by members
of CHVAGO. Free will donation will help support our chapter's many
programs, including the Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in
playing a piece in this recital, please contact Acting-Dean Laura Russell
at laurarus629@gmail.com or 845-232-8601. [The Reformed Church of
Poughkeepsie](#), 70 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.



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Soli Deo Gloria