

THE COUPLER

THE DEAN'S MESSAGE



Welcome back, Coupler friends and DC AGO members!

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"
--Psalm 137

Indeed, how? I doubt any of us imagined a time when our vocation and passion would be disrupted as it has. Perhaps you can imagine a time when you would not be able to play because of a broken wrist, or a time when you would lead worship from the piano because the organ was being repaired or replaced, or even a time when you could not sing because of a sore throat. But for the places we work and the people we serve to halt singing as a congregation or choir??!! Or for us to become unemployed due to a pandemic? Unthinkable, and yet.... We are in a strange land.

And our creativity and flexibility are being challenged. In past years, I thought I was being creative when I used a last verse arrangement by [Paul Halley](#) or when

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SEPTEMBER 2020 IN THIS ISSUE



Chapter members will play frightful music perfect for Halloween at Pipes Spooktacular on Oct. 30.

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COVID-19 or not, the music must go on! Area organists are planning virtual events.

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A local treasure, the Casavant Frères organ at DC's Shrine of the Sacred Heart, is the focus of a restoration campaign.

5



Our chapter is sponsoring a national Service Playing Competition in January with \$7,500 in prizes.

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Mark Your Calendar!

*Installation of Chapter Officers
Monday, Sept. 14 at 7:30 pm
via Zoom
See Page 2*

2020-2021
DC AGO CHAPTER EVENTS

Monday, Sept. 14, 7:30 pm

Tri-Chapter Officer Installation Ceremony via Zoom featuring organ music from the DC, Potomac and Northern Virginia Chapters. Wayne Wold, regional councillor for the Mid-Atlantic Region, presiding.

Join the Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83851469047?pwd=UEttWTFEXbXlNV1M0VVVk2YWpXbEVRQT09>

Passcode: 596581

Sunday, Oct. 25, 5 pm

Online Pipes Spectacular 2020

Tri-Chapter event hosted by the Northern Virginia Chapter

Friday, Oct. 30, 7:30 pm

Pipes Spooktacular

Enjoy fellow DC AGO chapter members performing a virtual concert of frightful music perfect for the Halloween season.

Watch at

<https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonDCAGO/videos/>

Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021-Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021

National Competition in Service Playing

St. Paul's K Street

AGO Membership Assistance Program

Throughout the week of OrganFest 2020 in July the Guild shared a Donate button, providing everyone with the opportunity to contribute to a fund that would help membership renewals for members who had experienced job loss due to COVID-19. To date, more than \$6,000 has been donated. If you know of a member who has lost income due to the effects of the pandemic and cannot afford to renew his or her membership, please send their information to elizabeth.george@agohq.org.

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THE COUPLER

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Pat Henry,
Editor

To contact the DC AGO
or for newsletter
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EPIPHANY CONCERTS

The Church of the Epiphany is livestreaming performances each Tuesday at 12:10 pm to its [YouTube channel](#).

Sept. 1: U.S. Army String Quartet plays Giddens, Haydn, Morricone, and Balakrishnan.

Sept. 8: Thomas Sheehan, organist at the Washington National Cathedral, plays works by Vivaldi, Kile Smith, Carson Cooman, Adolphus Hailstork, and Timothy Tikker.

Sept. 15: The Evelyn Duo plays *The Long View: A Portrait of Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Nine Songs*. With Shari Eve Feldman, soprano, and Mackenzie Lyn Marr, piano.

Sept. 22: Ronn McFarlane and Carolyn Surrick, lute and viola da gamba duo.

Sept. 29: Daniel Aune, organist on the faculty at Peabody Conservatory, plays Bach, Bolcom, Bonnet, Pachelbel, and Schumann.

MEMBERS' EVENTS

Sunday, Sept. 20, 5:30 pm: Elizabeth Hill, artist-in-residence at Grace Episcopal Church in Silver Spring, performs piano music of Florence Price and William Grant Still. The program will be offered on the church's [Facebook page](#) as part of the Music of Grace Concert Series.

Friday, Sept. 25 at 7:30 pm: Live organ recital with Eric Plutz playing at St. Ann Catholic Church, 4001 Yuma St., Washington, DC. Watch at stanndc.org/music or facebook.com/stanndc.

Members are encouraged to submit recitals and concerts for public listing on the DC AGO website. Submit your event for web or newsletter listing to dcagochapter@gmail.com

MUSIC AT MIDDAY

National City Christian Church, 5 Thomas Circle NW, plans to kick off a new season of Music at Midday concerts on **Friday, Sept. 18**, and continue with weekly performances every Friday at 12:15 p.m. through Dec. 18, with the exception of Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving weekend). These concerts are free and open to the public, although donations are gratefully accepted.

The church is planning for live, in-person, socially distanced concerts. Seating areas will be roped off and masks will be required to enter the building.

The weekly concerts will be broadcast on the NCCC [YouTube channel](#).

If a performer is unable to travel to Washington, the church may be forced to cancel one or more of its scheduled concerts. Check for the latest news about concerts on the church's [website](#) and on the [Facebook page for Music at Midday at National City Christian Church](#).

Sept. 18: Tyler Canonico (Harrisburg, Pa.) will perform three selections from *Star Wars* along with works of J.S. Bach, Louis Vierne, Herbert Howells, and Max Reger.

Sept. 25: David K. Houston (College Park, Md.) will perform a "spirited" program of organ music based on the Latin hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* by Nicolas de Grigny (1699), Maurice Duruflé (1929-1930), and Jeanne Demessieux (1947).

DEAN'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I worked out an interlude and modulation between Communion hymns – and wrote it down. Or perhaps very clever and creative with a *snazzy* concert program of disparate pieces flowing together with an elegant thread.

And yet, we have been incredibly creative these days with the H6 Handy Recorder and our cell phone, filming at the right time of day so that the sunlight comes in the upper windows at just the right angle, making sure to film our best side, getting the words of the hymn to line up with the sound just so. Electronic music in church??!! *Not on my watch – Over my dead...* huh. Well, yes, electronic music in church and over Zoom. Virtually. Prayerfully. And hopefully with virtue.

And, yes, we do more than we ever imagined. This is now our vocational duty: to make beautiful music as we are able within the limitations of health guidelines and technical capacity.

We are learning new skills, asking for help with recordings, keeping ourselves apprised of the new developments regarding singing, aerosol and face masks. We are researching the new findings from studies put out by [National Association of Teachers of Singing](#), [American Choral Directors Association](#) and other organizations. We are looking at resources from the [national AGO](#), the [Hymn Society](#) and various denominational organizations. We are doing our best.

Just yesterday evening, one of my parishioners came up to me after a well-distanced and limited-attendance eucharist and asked me, “Whenever it gets to be too much these days, do you ever find yourself here at the organ playing to help you deal with it all?” And I did not have to think long for the answer.

We have a unique opportunity to make music to help us deal with frustrations, outrages and sorrows, as well as hopes and joys. We can also make opportunities to help our congregations and friends deal with their frustrations and joys.

This is music.

This is what we do.

Keep making music, stay in touch with colleagues and friends, get some exercise, stay healthy.

All the best to you,

David Houston



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The Organ of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart

Casavant Frères Ltd., Opus 943
3211 Sacred Heart Way NW
Washington, DC 20010
Article by Robert Church, CAGO
Treasurer of the DC AGO Chapter



The Shrine of the Sacred Heart is a Roman Catholic parish established in 1899 in the Mount Pleasant/Columbia Heights neighborhood of Washington. The church is home to a large four-manual Casavant organ that dates from 1922, making it the oldest Casavant instrument in the city and until recently the largest as well.

The organ was designed in the grand symphonic style of the early 20th century. Organs of this period featured higher wind pressures, warm foundation stops and colorful orchestral reeds, allowing the performer to make seamless adjustments to volume and tone. Such instruments are ideal for the expressive performance of Romantic music and orchestral transcriptions.

The Casavant organ must have sounded amazing in the shrine's very reverberant space. Unfortunately, the instrument is now in a state of severe disrepair. But there is hope that the organ will sound again.

The current church is the second building for the Shrine of the Sacred Heart community. The building, dedicated in 1922, was influenced by the City Beautiful architectural movement that swept Washington in the early 20th century. The large domed Byzantine structure was modeled after the Cathedral in Ravenna, Italy.

The church, at 16th Street and Park Road, was designed by the architectural firm Murphy and Olmsted. For the interior, artisan John Joseph Earley used an innovative technique to beautify concrete by infusing the mixture

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with fragmented quartz stones, then scraping away the surface of the concrete as it was drying to expose the stones as the concrete set. The same technique can be seen in Earley's work at Meridian Hill Park, a half-mile south of the church.

The church is administered by priests of the Franciscan Capuchin Order. Mass is regularly celebrated in Spanish, English, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. Multiple flags hang from the choir loft, celebrating the diverse heritage of this congregation.

The Canadian company Casavant Frères Limited has been building pipe organs since 1879. Casavant brothers Claver (1855–1933) and Samuel (1859–1929) started building organs in the shop of their father, Joseph. Claver later went to Versailles, France, to apprentice with a local organ builder. He and Samuel visited many organs and workshops in western Europe before returning to Canada in 1879 to open their own workshop in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec.



A VIEW OF THE NAVE FROM THE FRONT DOORS

The Casavant brothers' reputation was firmly established in 1891 when they built the organ for Notre-Dame de Montréal Basilica. This large four-manual, 82-stop organ brought them international acclaim. The Casavant company has built organs for churches and concert halls around the world. Their largest instrument in Washington is in the Kennedy Center Recital Hall.

Casavant Frères' organ for the Shrine of the Sacred Heart was completed in 1922, when the building was



THE LOFT AND THE RIGHT-SIDE CHAMBER CONTAINING SWELL, GREAT AND CHOIR PIPEWORK. THE LARGE PEDAL PIPES AND SOLO DIVISION ARE IN THE LEFT-SIDE CHAMBER.

dedicated. The organ is located in the choir loft in two large chambers. The console is centrally located in the middle of the loft. The organ features multiple independent 8' stops on each manual, orchestral reeds, 73-note wind chests, and multiple 16' stops in the manuals and pedal. (The original specification from Casavant is at the end of this article.)

The organ served the parish faithfully for six decades. However, as the instrument began to need major repairs and restoration in the 1980s, the church stopped using it.

Tragically, decades of neglect, roof leaks, rodents, construction debris, and even vandalism took their toll.

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But there is hope for us to hear Opus 943 make beautiful music once again. The church has just begun a campaign to renovate the building for its 100th anniversary and there is a strong desire to restore the organ to its original, unaltered condition. This instrument would be used not only for worship, but also for community recitals, workshops, and grand symphonic concerts.



IN THE GREAT DIVISION, PIPES ARE KNOCKED OVER AND SOME APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN STEPPED ON.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of work to be done. I had the privilege of visiting the organ chambers before the Covid-19 pandemic began and took photos from inside the chambers. Time has not been kind to this organ. It appears people have stomped through the chambers without any regard for the delicate pipework inside. Many pipes will need to be carefully reconstructed, due to damage not only from careless humans, but also from rodents and falling debris. Casavant representatives have visited the organ and are preparing a proposal to restore it to its original condition.

Stay tuned for more updates, including how you could adopt a pipe, or a whole rank, to get this project across the finish line. Visit the church's website, <https://www.shrineofthesacredheart.org/>, for details.



ABOVE: IN THE SOLO DIVISION, THE RACKING THAT SUPPORTED THE 8' TUBA SEEMS TO HAVE FAILED, CAUSING THE PIPES TO COLLAPSE UNDER THEIR OWN WEIGHT.

LEFT: INSIDE THE SWELL BOX.

Casavant Op. 943 1922 4/49

Courtesy of the Casavant Frères Archives
St. Hyacinthe, Québec, Canada

	GREAT		CHOIR		
16'	Double Open Diapason	73	16'	Dulciana	73
8'	Open Diapason	73	8'	Geigen Principal	73
8'	Violin Diapason	73	8'	Melodia	73
8'	Hohlflöte	73	8'	Dulciana	73
8'	Dolce	73	8'	Unda Maris	73
4'	Octave	73	4'	Waldflöte	73
4'	Harmonic Flute	73	4'	Violina	73
2 2/3'	Twelfth	73	8'	Clarinet	73
2'	Fifteenth	61		Tremulant	
IV	Mixture	292		Sub	
8'	Tromba	73		Unison Off	
4'	Clarion	73		Super	
	Unison Off			Chimes	SO
	Super			Celesta & Sub	
	Chimes	SO			
	SWELL			SOLO *	
16'	Bourdon	73	8'	Grossflöte	73
8'	Open Diapason	73	8'	Violo d'Orchestre	73
8'	Stopped Diapason	73	8'	Violo Céleste	73
8'	Viola da Gamba	73	4'	Flute	73
8'	Voix Céleste	tc 61	8'	Tuba	73
4'	Principal	73		Sub	
4'	Flauto Traverso	73		Unison Off	
2'	Piccolo	61		Super	
III	Dolce Cornet	183		Chimes	25
16'	Double Trumpet (soft)	73			
8'	Trumpet	73		PEDAL	
8'	Oboe	73	32'	Double Open	--
8'	Vox Humana	73	16'	Open Diapason	32
4'	Clarion	73	16'	Bourdon	32
	Tremulant		16'	Dulciana	32
	Sub		16'	Gedeckt	SW
	Unison Off		8'	Octave	12
	Super		8'	Stopped Diapason	12
	Chimes	SO	8'	Violincello	32
			4'	Flute	12
			16'	Trombone	32 *
*	higher pressure				

Positions available

District of Columbia

Principal Organist, St. Dominic Church, 630 E St SW

Organist will serve as primary accompanist/instrumentalist for three designated weekend liturgies as well as other Holy Day, Feast Day and special event liturgies. Call or text J.C. Cantrell at 703-346-9969 for details. Include a résumé and two professional references/contacts with the initial contact message.

Maryland

Organist, First Church of Christ Scientist, 7901 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase.

Organist will provide music for Sunday/Thanksgiving morning and Wednesday evening services. \$205 for Sundays/Thanksgiving and \$140 for Wednesdays, with 3 Sundays and 3 Wednesdays of paid leave. Position could be shared. No choir but a vocal solo every Sunday/Thanksgiving. Submit a resume, references, and three recent recordings to Joan Beecham at jmckenzieb@hotmail.com or call 301- 929-8624.

Part- or full-time director of parish music, Ascension Lutheran Church, 7415 Buchanan St., Landover Hills

Familiarity with Lutheran liturgy and experience with choirs desired. Salary negotiable depending on experience and skill set. Contact the Rev. Richard Cox at pastor.richardcox3@gmail.com or 240-440-9960.

Director of Music (organist/pianist/director of church choirs), Oxon Hill United Methodist Church, 6400 Livingston Road, Oxon Hill.

A minimum of bachelor's degree in music or related training is preferred. Salary \$382 per week. Email cover letter and resume to oxonhillumcmd@gmail.com.

Virginia

Full-time music director, St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church, 5222 Sideburn Rd., Fairfax. \$31,000 - \$61,000 a year.

Will oversee music for all six weekend Masses and important feast days; direct and accompany a four-part volunteer choir; and organize, direct, and accompany music for all funerals. Health benefits are offered. During COVID-19, director may work from home, except for weekend Masses, funerals, and major feast days. Apply [here](#).

Organist/choir director, Church of the Covenant, 2666 Military Rd., Arlington. Position estimated at 10 hours per week, \$30 per hour with time and a half for weddings and funerals. Applications and enquiries should be sent to resumecovenant@gmail.com.

Minister of Music, St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church, 4801 Ravensworth Road, Annandale. Contact Stephen Ackert at stephen@rkac.com for more information.

National Competition in Service Playing

January 7-9, 2021

Sponsored by the DC Chapter of AGO, Schoenstein and Co. Organ Builders, and St. Paul's K Street, Washington, DC

Competition Guidelines:

Preliminary Recorded Round

Candidates submit video or audio digital recording of a live performance with their local singers, to include

1. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen (How lovely are thy dwellings) by Johannes Brahms
2. Hymn of their choice with singers
3. Solo: The Call (from Five Mystical Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams) with soloist
4. Psalm setting of their choice, recorded with singers; either
 - a. Responsorial style with antiphon and accompanied solo verses or b. Anglican Chant

Submission qualifications and deadline:

Open to all American citizens under age 30 at the time of application.

Applicants must submit a scan of their US passport or state-issued ID.

Submission deadline for preliminary round: November 15, 2020.

Submission fee of \$35 payable to DC Chapter AGO or via Paypal

Submission location: via Dropbox, details to come

Selection of Four Finalists:

Candidates will be notified of their qualification by December 1, 2020.

Housing in Washington, DC, will be provided for finalists for three nights.

Final Live Competition January 7-9, 2021, at St. Paul's K Street (Alternate dates June 10-12, 2021 in the event that COVID-19 requires postponement):

Finalists arrive Jan. 7 or 8 to work on the organ for three hours each.

Friday 6-10 pm: Finalists rehearse with a local choir in 45-minute increments.

Saturday 10 am-noon: Public lecture-workshop by Professor Thomas Murray on accompanying Benjamin Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb."

Lunch on your own.

1-3:30 pm: Finalists perform publicly with a local choir conducted by Dr. Jeffrey Smith.

Jury deliberation and announcement of winner.

6 pm: Dinner with judges, finalists and committee.

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Repertoire for live Final Round

1. Vocal solo. Choose one from
 - a. Ex ore innocentium by John Ireland
 - b. Clouds and darkness or He delivered the poor (from Hear my Words) by C.H.H. Parry
 - c. Easter (from Five Mystical Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams)

2. Psalm setting. Choose one from
 - a. Anglican Chant of at least 6 verses
 - b. Responsorial Psalm of at least 4 verses
 - c. Gregorian Introit Antiphon including verse and Gloria

3. German choral or Genevan psalm tune of candidates' choice

4. Hymn composed after 1830 of candidates' choice
(Items 3 and 4 should include at least three stanzas, with introduction, interlude and free harmonization, as if accompanying an enthusiastic congregation of some 200.)

5. One of the following:
 - a. Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in A by C.V. Stanford
 - b. Give unto the Lord by Edward Elgar
 - c. Sanctus and Agnus Dei from Gabriel Faure's Requiem
 - d. Te Deum from Collegium Regale by Herbert Howells

Panel of Judges

Professor Thomas Murray

Dr. John Walker

National Cathedral Canon Michael McCarthy

Prizes

\$5,000 1st Prize provided by Schoenstein & Co.

\$2,500 2nd Prize provided by Schoenstein & Co.

Housing for finalists will be provided for three nights.

MUSIC @ THE MONASTERY

Music @ the Monastery is a community outreach and members' recital series sponsored by the DC AGO at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land. Recitals, currently on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic, normally take place on the second Sunday of each month (September-May) at 4 p.m. If you are interested in performing in the next series, please send an email to dcagochapter@gmail.com. Playing the monastery's wonderful Lively-Fulcher organ in its amazing acoustic is a sheer joy!

LIFE MEMBERS

Blanche Curfman

Nancy Dodge

Robert Grogan

Eileen Guenther

Irv Lawless

Kenneth Lowenberg

Albert Russell

NEW MEMBER

Barbara H. Haggh-Huglo

THE COUPLER

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