

THE COUPLER

THE DEAN'S MESSAGE



Music to shake us awake

Written Thursday, Dec. 17

Early this morning, while surfing the Web, I had an experience that I had certainly not anticipated and that completely surprised me. I was searching for particular recordings from the annual Christmas Lessons & Carols at King's College in Cambridge, England, but I could remember neither the year nor the piece. So I was indeed surfing freely.

I saw in the video stills a photo of a beautiful building and ceiling of somewhere I assumed was in England. It turns out it was a recording from the Academy of Ancient Music and VOCES8 of Handel's Messiah recorded at the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge.

I skipped over Symphony/Overture, the first movement, and landed somewhere in "And the

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JANUARY 2021

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A chapter colleague shares his story of odd funeral music requests at a historic church.

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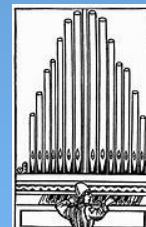
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A four-manual Wurlitzer theater organ in Great Falls, Va., needs a new home.

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Mark Your Calendar!

Our Jan. 25 online program will feature an interview with chapter historian and life member Iro Lawless, who has cared for many local organs during his 45 years in the business.

See Page 3.

LET ME TELL YOU...



TED GUSTIN AT CHRIST CHURCH

By Ted Gustin

A family for a funeral at historic Christ Church, Alexandria wanted a string quartet (sitting in the George Washington pew!) to play "Send in the Clowns" as part of the prelude music.

Another family wanted me to play "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" as part of a funeral prelude.

I didn't.

I told my mother about it and her response was: "I guess it just depends on which way the deceased is going."

One benefit of AGO membership that we are missing in the time of Covid-19 is in-person fellowship. Chapter get-togethers provide the chance to swap tales about the quirks of our jobs – and we do have some stories!

So, please tell us what is the weirdest...scariest...funniest... thing that has happened to you as an organist? What is your wackiest wedding tale?

We'd like to share some of your stories in upcoming newsletters. There's no need to name names (except your own). Email them to pathenry33@gmail.com. Include a photo if you'd like.

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THE COUPLER

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CHAPTER NEWS

Irv Lawless interview in January

On Monday, Jan. 25 at 7:30 pm, our chapter will present via Zoom an interview with Irv Lawless, retiring president and tonal director of Lawless & Associates Pipe Organ Company. Irv is a life member and historian of the DC AGO chapter.

Irv has spent 45 years doing organ installations and tonal finishing for Lewis & Hitchcock, Aeolian-Skinner, Möller and his own company.

He has also been organ curator at the Kennedy Center since its opening in 1972. Chapter treasurer Rob Church will conduct the interview.



IRV LAWLESS AT THE ORGAN

Watch your email for a Zoom link for the program. It will be posted later on the chapter's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/WashingtonDCAGO/video>. We recommend high-quality speakers or headphones for the best listening experience.

A "lovely" February program



Can you lend a hand (or two hands and feet) for a potential online chapter event? The theme is LOVE in all its secular or sacred glory. We are looking for music videos of five minutes or less. Got a great rendition of the Beatles' "All You Need Is Love"? Or an interesting arrangement of "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"? Bring it on. Please send an email by Jan. 15 to dcagochapter@gmail.com to indicate your interest. Videos must be edited into finished products and are due by Jan. 31.

Join the DC AGO Board!

Our chapter will elect 2021-22 officers in May. Current board members have been working since the summer to revive our organization, but much more remains to be done and your ideas are needed. Please consider running for a position – dean, subdean (program coordinator), membership liaison, treasurer, secretary, Coupler editor/website administrator or education and certification coordinator. Indicate your interest by sending an email to dcagochapter@gmail.com.

Chapter programs available online

Our Dec. 14 program, Advent and Christmas Bonbons from the Board, is available at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/WashingtonDCAGO/video>. It featured accessible seasonable music.

The Nov. 16 program, in which chapter members Joy-Leilani Garbutt and Eileen Guenther discussed Joy's research on women composers in France, is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPf8xM3RuOo>.

You can also watch the Oct. 25 tri-chapter Pipes Spectacular featuring Nicholas Sheehan at the organ at the Washington National Cathedral. Go to: <https://cathedral.org/event/tri-chapter-american-guild-of-organists-online-pipe-spectacular/>.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

David Houston, chapter dean

What got you interested in the organ?

I had been playing piano for our church and attempted making sounds on the church's Hammond organ during my teenage years. Then when I was a senior in high school, I took some classes at the local state college: Music Theory, Piano and Organ, and with organ, I had no idea what to expect.

I arrived at my first organ lesson at First Presbyterian in Charleston, WV, where Dr. Carol Eich played the "Little P & F in C Major" of Bach and I was instantly hooked on the physical sound of the pipe organ. I think it was the first time I'd ever heard a pipe organ live, in-person.

Where did you study the organ?

One year with Carol Eich, then my bachelor's degree from Mt. Vernon Nazarene College in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, with Lois Brehm; coaching with John "Jack" Russell at the College of Wooster; a year in Paris, France, studying with Mme. Marie-Louise Jacquet-Langlais (focusing on the works of Franck and improvisation); and in 2015 finished my master's degree in organ from the Conservatory in Lausanne, Switzerland.

What jobs have you held on and off the bench?

OFF the bench, oh, my.... waiter, VISTA Volunteer in West Virginia with Cabin Creek Quilts Cooperative, restaurant manager, part-time retail at garden centers and Restoration Hardware.



ON THE TRAIL IN CALIFORNIA 2019

ON the bench, accompanist for various groups in Charleston, WV (I love accompanying!). My first organist and choir director position was at St. Paul's Lutheran, Charleston, WV, then various other positions including Epiphany Episcopal in Atlanta, St. Mark's Episcopal in Glendale, CA, a part-time position in Farvagny, Canton de Fribourg en Suisse, where some of the choir members owned cows that produced milk used in making Gruyère cheese. I am now organist and choir master at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in College Park.

In your spare time: I love cooking, tinkering and puttering around our small house in the Forest Glen neighborhood of Silver Spring, hiking, traveling, long walks with my dog. I love to read and write, though I find it difficult to dedicate time to doing so. I also love to get around on my bicycle!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sunday, Jan. 10, 3:30 pm: Paul Hardy, principal organist at St. Matthew's Cathedral, plays a live recital at the cathedral, 1725 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Masks and social-distancing will be observed. Also to be [live-streamed](#). For more information, visit the Cathedral [website](#). Donations accepted, but not required.

Sunday, Jan. 10, 4 pm: David Houston (St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, College Park, MD) plays a livestream recital at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Northeast DC. Log onto myfranciscan.org to view.

Sunday, Feb. 14, 4 pm: Carol Feather Martin (Trinity Presbyterian Church, Arlington, VA) plays a livestream recital at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Northeast DC. Log onto myfranciscan.org to view.

Sunday, Feb. 21, 3:30 pm: David Lang plays a recital at St. Matthew's Cathedral, 1725 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Masks and social-distancing will be observed. Also to be [live-streamed](#). For more information, visit the Cathedral [website](#). Donations accepted, but not required.

Members are encouraged to submit recitals and concerts to dcagochapter@gmail.com for public listing on the DC AGO website as well as in the newsletter.

Music at Midday

No concerts during January.



The officers of your DC AGO chapter wish everyone a happy, healthy 2021 full of wonderful music!

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Please advise the web administrator at pathenry33@gmail.com if any position has been filled.

Maryland

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

Organist will provide music for Sunday/Thanksgiving morning and Wednesday evening services. Position could be shared. Submit a resume, references and three recent recordings to Joan Beecham at jmckenzieb@hotmail.com or call 301- 929-8624.

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

A minimum of a bachelor's degree in music or related training is preferred. Email cover letter and resume to oxonhillumcmd@gmail.com.

Virginia

Organist/pianist, Pender United Methodist Church, 12401 Alder Woods Drive, Fairfax

Minimum of 10 hours per week. Apply [here](#).

Part-time Catholic Mass pianist/organist, 1099 position with Music Ministry International at Fort Belvoir. Apply at <https://music-ministry.jobsoid.com>.

For sale: Walnut Clavichord made by Robert Goble of Oxford, England



Measures 48 inches long, 16 3/8 inches wide and 31 1/4 high. Has 56 notes. Tuning fork, tuning hammer, extra strings, key to lock keyboard, and original packing crate included. Detachable legs. Located in Washington, DC. \$3,000. Call 202-526-2220.

Want to help?

Our five board members are steadily working to rebuild our chapter but we could use some help. This is especially true now that we are hoping to return to in-person activities once the pandemic is controlled.

Would you be willing to serve on a committee or as an adviser on either short- or long-term projects? If so, please contact us at dcagochapter@gmail.com.

Another way you can help is to encourage other organists to join the AGO.

You can direct them to our website, www.dcago.org, where they can find issues of the Coupler (under the Media tab), upcoming events, job openings and a link to initiate their memberships (under the Membership tab).

The Dean's Message from Page 1

glory, the glory of the Lord" – lovely -- and then skipped again and landed on the alto solo "O Thou, that tellest good tidings to Zion." A very interesting interpretation.

For so many years early in my career, I was the one in the small town and university who was called on to annually accompany community groups or university choirs who wished to put on The Messiah. I was the one eager to perform, though there were others who had played in years past and could do just as well, or better, but – truthfully – I was the gullible one who would play anything.

A dear friend with a brilliant mind and wit, who also had Tourette syndrome, would regale me with unending melismas of repeating texts of whatever came to his mind for weeks after hearing a performance of Handel's masterwork. I loved his renditions, but once I reached 30 years old, I had had enough of The Messiah.

But this morning, perhaps because of the pandemic, perhaps because I have not heard anything from The Messiah for many, many months, Katie Jeffries-Harris' performance and her expressions shocked me into joy and anticipation once again. After singing the first "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion," she smiled at the audience and even gave a chuckle. Then after the second phrase, "get thee up into the high mountains," she gave a big smile, took an audible breath in through her nose, as if to savor the goodness of the joyful news, as if she'd just come inside after an invigorating walk in the cool air.

The pleasure and joy and excitement were palpable, even over YouTube, and she exuded every ounce of the text she was singing.

You can listen for yourself at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFjQ77ol2DI&t=1648s>.

While I'm writing this, I just went back to the video to listen some more, and I found "But who may abide the day of his coming," which includes the lines and melismas regarding a refining fire. Again, she was mesmerizing in presenting the text. And she shocked me again by including a "she," as in "for she is like a refiner's fire" (at 16 minutes, 45 seconds). I loved it.

I write this to say that in these days of January, looking forward to brightening daylight and yet in the middle of winter and cold, music that will shake you awake and enliven your heart will burst in upon you when you least expect it. And when you most need it. We are music-makers, but sometimes we need some inspiration and a spark to generate the fire.

Search for music on YouTube, listen for the music in your friend's voice when you talk on the phone, hear the tunes the catbirds and cardinals sing outside your window, or listen for the strumming tones of your cat's purr.

All the best to you for a wonderful 2021, filled with much love, peace and music.

David Houston

FREE TO A GOOD HOME Wurlitzer organ up for adoption

Mildred and Jack Hardman of Great Falls, VA, are offering their fully restored four-manual, 38-rank Wurlitzer theater pipe organ for donation to a suitable venue. They are moving to Oregon to be close to their daughter and her family.



The concert-ready organ is available for free to a responsible tax-exempt organization having an appropriate acoustical environment, where it can be seen, played and heard in performance on a regular basis, and where proper security, long-term care and maintenance are assured.

Possible venues include a civic or school auditorium, performing arts center, church,

concert hall or a movie theater. Can you suggest a place the Hardmans should consider?

This historic instrument is fully described with many pictures at its website, HardmanWurlitzer.com. Click "listen" on the menu bar to hear streaming audio from in-concert recordings.

The Hardmans can be reached at Jack@Hardman.net or 703-678-5281.

OBITUARIES

B. Michael Parrish

B. Michael Parrish of Annandale, VA, died Dec. 14 of complications from a stroke at age 69.

Born in Lexington, KY, in 1951, he was the beloved husband of Alice, father of Michael (Reston) and William (Annandale), and brother of Ronald Wash (Lexington).



In his youth, Michael sang in the Christ Church boys choir in Lexington under Robert Quade. An organist from an early age, he studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal School of Church Music in London as an English Speaking Union Exchange Scholar during his final year of high school.

He was a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where he studied organ with Arnold Blackburn, and subsequently studied at the Royal School of Church Music Course for Overseas Musicians. His teachers included Christopher Herrick, Sir George Thalben-Ball, Dr. Herbert Howells, Dr. Gerre Hancock and Dr. Paul Calloway.

As guest organist with the Choir of St. Michael and St. George (St. Louis), he played services in St. Paul's and Canterbury Cathedrals, Westminster Abbey and St. George's Windsor. Michael often gave recitals, including on the great organs of Washington and New York City.

Michael was the organist and choir director of Washington Hebrew Congregation for 23 years. He also served at St. Paul's Rock Creek, First Church of Christ Scientist and All Souls Memorial Episcopal, all of Washington, DC; The Old Presbyterian Meeting House of Alexandria, VA; St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church of McLean, VA; and First Presbyterian Church and Broadway Christian Church of Lexington, KY.

He held positions in the American Guild of Organists, District of Columbia chapter from 1981 to 2004, including dean from 1995 to 1998. He was also active in the Anglican Association of Musicians, the Guild of Temple Musicians, the fund-raising panel for the Virginia Arts Council, and the Board of Directors of the Performing Arts Association of Alexandria.

A memorial service will be held at Christ Church Georgetown at a later date.

Donations in Michael's memorial may be made to the Cantorial and Concert Fund at Washington Hebrew Congregation (whctemple.org), the Music Fund at Christ Church Georgetown (christchurchgeorgetown.org), or Sprout Therapeutic Riding Center (sproutcenter.org).

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OBITUARIES

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Michael Shuford Howe

Michael Shuford Howe died Dec. 19 at his home in Hamlet, NC, at the age of 76 following several occurrences of cancer over the past 10 years.

Michael grew up in Hamlet and started playing the organ for church at age 13. Following graduation from East Carolina University as their first organ performance major, Michael taught choral music in schools in North Carolina and Virginia, was musical director at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, and was the director of Cole Auditorium at Richmond Community College.



Michael was director of music for Rock Spring Congregational Church in Arlington, VA, for 25 years. Following his retirement from Rock Spring Church, Michael returned to Hamlet to provide care to his mother during her last days.

From 1997 to 2017, Michael was the director of music ministries at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, from which he retired a second time.

Even after his second retirement, Michael was frequently called on to fill in for local organists in churches all around the Sandhills. Whether it was a Christmas Eve service, a wedding or funeral, or Sunday morning worship, these invitations to play continued to provide Michael much joy in his retirement.

Surviving Michael are his older brother, John Elmer Howe Jr. of Palm Springs, CA, his sister-in-law, Gay Phifer Howe of Wilmington, NC; two nieces and their daughters; and many cousins. Michael was preceded in death by his younger brother, Alan Massey Howe, in 2010.

Due to the pandemic, Michael's life will be celebrated in a service of witness to the resurrection later in the spring at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Southern Pines, NC.

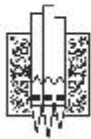
His body was interred at Richmond Memorial Park in a private family service Dec. 28.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Music Fund at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, 330 S. May Street, Southern Pines, NC 28387 or to a charity of your choice.

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