

THE COUPLER

The Dean's Message



A few weeks ago, I was grateful to have had the honor of being the organist for the funeral of a great priest and friend of mine, Fr. Rick Curry, SJ. Just six short years ago, I was the also organist for his ordination. Fr. Curry was a member of the Jesuit

community at Georgetown. He was a tremendous person, both on and off the altar. He was born with only one arm. Not to be impeded by his handicap, he found ways to overcome his disability by serving as a leader for others.

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Mark your calendar for Saturday, January 23 for a very informative workshop on AGO certification.

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All aboard on February 15 for this year's President's Day Road Trip to Atlantic City .

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Start making plans to start your summer at the AGO National Convention in Houston, June 19-23.

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Why does certification matter? Jeremy Filsell offers some answers.

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AGO Certification Workshop

January Chapter Event

Saturday, January 23, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

Church of the Epiphany

1317 G Street, NW (Metro Center)

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2015-2016 DC AGO Chapter Schedule of Events

Monday, September 21, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Organ Recital and Installation of Officers
Mary Beth Bennett, Organist
First Congregational United Church of Christ

Sunday, October 4, 2015, 5:15 p.m.
Tri-Chapter Pipes Spectacular
Renée Anne Louprette, Organist
Washington National Cathedral

Saturday, November 7, 2015, 10:00 a.m.
Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza
National City Christian Church

Monday, January 4, 2016, 6:30 p.m.
Annual Twelfth-Night Dinner and Service
(with Northern Virginia and Potomac Chapters)
All Saints Episcopal Church, Chevy Chase

Saturday, January 23, 2016
AGO Certification Workshop
Jeremy Filsell, Clinician

Monday, February 15, 2016
Presidents' Day Road Trip
Atlantic City Boardwalk Hall
Steven Ball, Host

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DC AGO Board of Directors



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The Coupler

A monthly newsletter
published by the District
of Columbia Chapter,
American Guild of
Organists

J. Michael McMahon,
Editor

To contact the DC AGO
or for newsletter
submissions:
dcagochapter@gmail.com

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Wednesday, March 2, 2016

DC AGO Members' Evensong and Happy Hour
Church of the Epiphany

Friday, March 18, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

Silent Movie with Organ

La vie et la passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ

Thomas Ospital, Organist (co-titulair of St. Eustache, Paris)

Saint Jane Frances de Chantal Church, Bethesda

April (Date and Time TBD)

Theater Organ Concert

(Joint event with Northern Virginia and Potomac Chapters)

Jack Hardman Residence, Potomac, Virginia

Monday, May 23, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

Potomac Organ Institute Student Recital

All Saints Episcopal Church, Chevy Chase



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Your Sound...Our Passion

*Dean's Message**Continued from page 1*

Through the Archdiocese for Military Services, he created programs to rehabilitate wounded veterans. His work with the veterans sprouted one of his most successful projects, the opening of the Dog Tag Bakery in Georgetown, one of my favorite DC hangout spots. This wonderful place provides a transformative opportunity for veterans with disabilities by offering an education at Georgetown University and real life work experience at the bakery. Upon completion of the Dog Tag Inc. program, transitioned veterans are business ready, competitive and employable.

Fr. Curry's funeral was a standing-room only liturgy celebrated by his brother Jesuits, diocesan priests, the Archbishop for Military Services, and ecumenical

leaders. The service lasted about three hours. This man touched the hearts of so many people. During the eulogies that preceded the Mass, a common theme could be heard. The most powerful trait that Fr. Curry possessed was his ability to empower people through his desire to serve by example. At his Masses, Fr. Curry's homilies were always about 3-4 minutes long, yet, in that brief amount of time, he was able to offer an immense amount of wisdom, hope, and knowledge that would take others much longer to impart. He ended every one of his homilies with the same line, "And how do we come to know Jesus? We wash each other's feet." It made sense then that the Gospel read at his funeral was John 13: 12-17.

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AGO National Convention

Houston, Texas • June 19-23, 2016

The 2016 AGO National Convention will showcase vibrant performances, world-class instruments, enlightening workshops, creative new music, and inspiring worship. There will be many opportunities to meet fellow musicians and create dynamic connections. Come and experience a warm welcome at the Hilton Americas-Houston, at the various convention venues, and throughout this exciting city. This is a convention you won't want to miss! Registration and information at <http://www.agohouston2016.com>

*Dean's Message**Continued from page 4*

Service to others was a key component of Fr. Curry's personality. This is what caused him to be able to touch the lives of so many persons, and what attracted people to him. He was good at spreading the Gospel message through his actions. Fr. Curry has done so much to inspire people to reach their goals, including me. After every Mass that I played for him, he would come find me and tell me that my music helped him to be a better priest. I don't know if I'll ever understand the depth of that compliment, but I reflect on his generous and empowering words all of the time. He didn't have to say that, but he did, and in doing so, he commissioned me to want to become a better musical leader and example for others.

In this New Year, how might we be able to serve others as Fr. Curry did? How could we possibly use our roles as musicians, both in and out of a church setting, to empower people to want to be the best version of themselves? One answer to this might be to act as a "servant leader."

By using our musical abilities and knowledge in a holistic response to the events, personalities, challenges, and celebrations around us, we can inspire and lead others towards living healthy and happy lives. Fr. Curry never did anything for himself; instead, he always strived to act as a model for others to follow.

When we perform music, are we engaged in the act of offering "musical nourishment"? If not, perhaps we can push

ourselves to become more attentive to playing music that will offer our listeners knowledge, healing, and joy. Don't let your musical focus be on "me"; rather, focus on others, and how as part of a community, you and those you influence can better understand how music can offer inspiration and delight.

Sometimes you may not enjoy the music that you are called to play, the compensation, or the persons performing with you, but these matters are usually out of our control. Fr. Curry never succeeded in his life by complaining for what he wanted. Complaining would have been a waste of valuable time for him. In the time that some political leaders took complaining about the care for veterans, Fr. Curry built a bakery and offered them a job, and education, and a future. He spent his time working on solutions, not complaints.

To end my message, I want to leave you with this: Being a member of this chapter is about working together to spread the joy and knowledge of organ music as "musical nourishment" to others. We are all skilled and talented individuals in our knowledge and in our playing. Now, serve by example.

Rest in peace, Fr. Curry. You are dearly missed!

Your #1 Fan,

Russ

AGO Certification Workshop

Join us on **Saturday, January 23 at 10:00 a.m.** at the Church of the Epiphany (1317 G Street, Metro Center Metro Station) for an educational workshop led by **Dr. Jeremy Filsell**, our chapter's Educational Coordinator.

Jeremy will assist chapter members in preparing for AGO Certification Exams at all levels (Service Playing Certificate, Colleague, Choir Master, Associate, Fellow). He will focus on ideas of musicianship, sight-reading, transposition, open score reading, harmonization, and improvisation – all skills necessary and valuable for any organist whether or not he/she is preparing for a certification exam.



Why AGO Certification Matters

Jeremy Filsell

In my capacity as Education Officer, your Dean, Russell, asked if I might highlight the certification offered by the AGO. The AGO was chartered in 1896 to administer a comprehensive series of examinations for professional certification, and it did so, following closely the precedent set by the Royal College of Organists in England, for whom examinations had been central since its founding in 1864. Ever since the late 19th century then, both institutions, either side of the Atlantic, have aimed to promote the highest standards of the artistic practice of organ playing and choral directing through their examinations.

In the UK, the RCO's diplomas remain as highly prized now as they were more than a century ago, principally because they

continue to demand a level of technical and interpretative skill combined with stylistic, analytical and historical understanding; attributes which mark the accomplished musician. All young organists in the UK see obtaining the ARCO and FRCO diplomas as career benchmarks - they are highly regarded qualifications and virtually all aspiring organists obtain the Associateship during college years, and the Fellowship soon after. There is no doubt that these examinations' demands are more easily assimilated during one's formative study years than when one is midst profession. However, the advantage for any of us undertaking such a challenge during

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Why AGO Certification Matters
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professional years grants a highly appropriate level of 'in-service training'.

Here in the US, the AGO certification is arguably more varied and extensive than the RCO's with certification available for differing levels of accomplishment. The Service Playing and Colleague certificates are less demanding, but remain good preparation for AAGO and FAGO. The Choirmaster certificate, while offering non-organist certification, still expects keyboard skills to the degree that a rehearsal can be accompanied at the piano. Service playing and Colleague examinations can be submitted by recording and there is no paperwork or aural component. Associateship, Fellowship and Choirmaster involve 'live' examination at local centers, overseen by local AGO-appointed examiners. At present, our local examination center is in Baltimore.

Through the AGO's examinations, all-round musicianship is developed – at the keyboard, the skills of interpretation, sight-reading, transposition, score-reading, figured bass, harmonization and Improvisation are core, alongside aural dictation and paperwork requirements (the writing of a fugal exposition, analysis, the completion of a tonal organ composition, and for Fellowship, history and a rudimentary knowledge of orchestration). This list of demands might seem daunting, but the aim is always to encourage and nurture candidates towards success as much as possible. All the AGO's qualifications are structured in a modular fashion so that they can be gained cumulatively.

Ultimately, and beyond the clear musical benefits to developing one's skill base, AGO certification grants leverage within the job market. Those with AGO certification can legitimately press for salary scales recommended by the Guild (available on the AGO website) and while Masters or Doctoral level achievers can qualify for salary scales in similar fashion, it can be argued that the range of skills developed through AGO certification sometimes exceeds those of graduate qualifications. Were it within my jurisdiction, I would recommend AGO certification as mandatory for all graduate organ students during the time of their formal university studies!

If you are interested in finding out what is required, do consider coming to our DC AGO Certification Study Day in January. We will look at the requirements of the examinations, discuss repertoire and try some practical hands-on work with the keyboard tests. Do peruse the AGO website for more information: A skeleton outline of the requirements is here:

<https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TAO-Certification-update-cropped.pdf>

and further details:

<https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2016-Certification-Req.pdf> .

Lastly, I might offer that, since past written and organ test papers are readily available from the AGO, the most vital and valuable part of this certification process is one's preparation and study *before* the examination. Have a go!

Members' Events

Sunday, January 10, 4:00 p.m.

Organ Recital
Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land
Ronald Butts-Boehmer, organist

Sunday, January 10, 4:00 p.m.

Chevy Chase Concerts
Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church
Philip Kettler, cellist

Sunday, January 10, 4:00 p.m.

Organ Recital
Immanuel Chapel at Virginia Theological
Seminary
Janet Yieh, organist

Sunday, January 31, 4:00 p.m.

Chevy Chase Concerts
Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church
Apollo Orchestra

Sunday, January 31, 5:00 p.m.

"The Spiritual Bach"
Saint Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring
Marvin Mills, organist
Marlissa Hudson, soprano

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

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Looking Ahead: President's Day Road Trip to Atlantic City!

Join us on **Presidents' Day - Monday, February 15** - for the trip of a lifetime! This year, we will travel by luxury motor coach from Bethesda, Maryland to Atlantic City, New Jersey! We will be offered an exclusive tour and demonstration of the famous organ in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall by **Dr. Steven Ball**, the Hall's resident organist. This organ is the largest musical instrument in the world, controlled by a 7 manual console and comprised of 33,114 pipes!

Space is limited so sign up soon by sending your reply to dcagochapter@gmail.com. Cost is \$40 per person.



Itinerary:

7:30 a.m. - Depart Saint Jane Frances de Chantal Church

11:30 a.m. - Arrive in Atlantic City

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Lunch on your own in one of the surrounding casinos or restaurants

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Tour/Demonstration in Boardwalk Hall

5:00 p.m. - Depart for Bethesda, Maryland

9:00 p.m. - Arrive back at Saint Jane Frances de Chantal



Music @ the Monastery



Located on forty-four acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, the Franciscan Monastery (Mount St. Sepulchre Franciscan Monastery) is a beautiful architectural gem hidden in the northeast corner of Washington, D.C. Built in 1899 in the shape of a Jerusalem Cross in neo-Byzantine architectural style, the Monastery includes gardens, replicas of various shrines throughout Israel, a replica of the catacombs in Rome, an archive, a library, as well as bones of Saint Benignus of Armagh, brought from the Roman Catacombs and originally in the Cathedral of Narni, Italy. The Monastery's Lively-Fulcher pipe organ was built in 1998 and contains forty ranks of pipes over three manuals and pedal.

Together with the Franciscan Monastery, the DC AGO is proud to support a series of community outreach musical events titled, "Music @ the Monastery". These events are free of charge and take place on the second Sunday of every month at 4pm, followed by a reception. All are welcome!

2015-2016 Recitalists

October 11: Russell Weismann (St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Bethesda)

November 8: David Houston (St. Andrew's Episcopal, College Park)

December 13: Sarah Bereza (Trinity Lutheran, Bethesda)

January 10: Ronald Butts-Boehmer

February 14: Russell Weismann (St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Bethesda)

March 13: Brass and Organ (Brass of Peace Ensemble with Lisa Galoci, Organist)

April 10: Carolyn Booth

May 8: Dr. J. Thomas Mitts (Shenandoah Conservatory and Augustana Lutheran Church)

Welcome, New Members!

Chuyoung Suter

Erik Wm. Suter

Steve Kim

Dr. Joby Bell

William Neil

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