

PipeNotes

American Guild of Organists – Milwaukee Chapter

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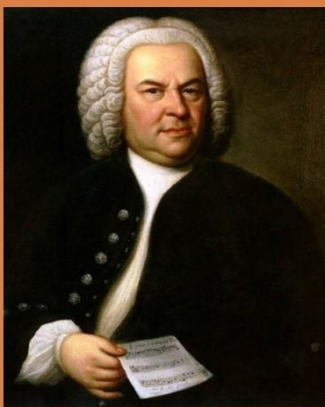
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Volume 67 – April 2021



THE AMERICAN GUILD OF
ORGANISTS – MILWAUKEE CHAPTER

PRESENTS



Sunday, May 16, 2021

2:00 pm Annual Meeting

3:00 pm Members Recital

The Leipzig Chorales of J. S. Bach

Sacred Heart Seminary

and School of Theology

7335 S. Lovers Lane

Franklin, WI 53132

Johann Sebastian Bach.

**Performers: David Beyer, Matt Lawrenz,
Sheri Masiakowski, Derek Nickels, Christian Rich,
John Seboldt, Benjamin Stone, Mary Jane Wagner, SSSF,
and Larry Wheelock.**



The Chapel will be limited to

1/2 capacity for seating.

Masks and Socially Distant Seating are

Required.



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AGO Milwaukee Chapter Upcoming Programming

May 16, 2021

2:00 pm Annual Meeting

3:00 pm Member's Recital

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
Hales Corners, WI

Slate of Candidates for Class of 2023

Fr. Tom Lijewski

Ingrid Pierson

Michael Hoerig

Delano Kahlstorf

Susan DeMarco

Zach Jones

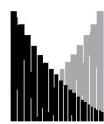
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April 2021

26 (Mon) 3:00 AGO Technology Committee
Do-Re-Mi's of Website Design Webinar

28 (Wed) 12:15 Tom Ajack, Guitar
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI
812 N. Jackson S
Milwaukee, WI

May 2021

3 (Mon) 3:00 Robust Chapter Scholarships
AGO Taskforce for Gender Equality Webinar

5 (Wed) 12:15 Anita Graef, Cello &
Julian Graef, Violin
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

12 (Wed) 12:15 Blue Violin Duo
The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson St
Milwaukee, WI

16 (Sun) 2:00 Annual Meeting
3:00 Members Recital
The Leipzig Chorales
Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
7335 S. Lovers Lane
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Hello! AGO Milwaukee Chapter Membership:

Easter and spring blessings! So much hope seems to ride on the spring season this year. The sunshine and warm weather brings joy and warms our hearts, too. There is much anticipation with the pandemic and the dispersal of vaccines. The hopeful return of our parishes with open doors for the people we serve remains varied throughout our area. The Alleluia refrains continue through live-streaming and in-person services. Hopefully those Alleluia refrains also sing in our hearts as we continue to daily walk the circumstances we each are given.

It has been a long year. It seems that we have been hopeful from the start in March 2020. Going back through emails to music ministry I found: "rehearsals are cancelled for two weeks...and then we'll continue with Easter preparations", "rehearsals are postponed indefinitely", in July "as we hopefully anticipate the opportunity to celebrate our Epiphany concert in some way, here is some music being considered", in August "rehearsals are being adapted in a way that will include everyone at some point during the year". Each place has worked to find its own way of providing worship in a manner that works for and reaches their people continuing to provide a foundation of faith that is truly a necessity at this time. Remember to step back and reflect. While in many ways it has been disconcerting, it has also been a time to "enjoy time" and to really think about the how and why of what we do.

Now, (almost with baited breath), we are again hopeful for a wonderful fall start to everything, quite literally. This also includes our chapter programming. In May, we will seek approval at our annual meeting for a much anticipated kick off of the next season, 2021-2022, with an informed recital by Jan Kraybill and the dedication of the new Juget-Sinclair organ at Christ King with a presentation by voicer, Robin Cote, and culminating in a recital by Isabel Demers. The popular organ crawl is anticipated in March 2022 along with our annual member's recital in May.

Voting for chapter leadership will take place on line again this year. We have an adept group of candidates for four at-large positions in the Class of 2023. Make it a priority to participate and cast your vote. Names are included in this issue of PipeNotes and biographies will be included in May. Emails will also be sent separately to our membership to keep everyone up-to-date. Thank you to our candidates and thank you to our membership for keeping our chapter vital and thriving!

So, come and join us Sunday, May 16th, at 2 pm, at Sacred Heart School of Theology, for our annual meeting. Reacquaint yourself with our chapter and its members, find out about programming, bring your ideas, and ask questions. We need your involvement. You are important to us and we want to know you!

Then, stay for the much anticipated presentation of all eighteen Leipzig Chorales on the beautiful Berghaus at 3 pm! Christian Rich and the performers have given a lot of time to this project. It is an undertaking that really only happens "once in a lifetime".

May peace reside with you,
Audrey Rhinehart

Members Recital 2021

Christian Rich

This year's Milwaukee AGO Chapter members recital provides a rare opportunity to hear the complete *Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes* (BWV 651-668) of J. S. Bach performed in one concert on an instrument ideally suited for this repertoire. These so-called *Leipzig Chorales*, prepared by Bach in the last decade of his life (1740-1750), are large-scale chorale preludes in a breath of styles and forms. Most are revisions of compositions from his tenure in Weimar (1708-1717) where he was court organist for Wilhelm Ernst, Duke of Saxe-Weimar. Long considered as the apex of the chorale prelude genre, *The Great Eighteen* stand as a milestone in the history of the chorale.

Please join us on Sunday, May 16, 3:00PM, at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Franklin WI, for this program played on the 1994 Berghaus mechanical-action organ in the acoustical splendor of Sacred Heart Chapel. Performers are David Beyer, Matt Lawrenz, Sheri Masiakowski, Derek Nickels, Christian Rich, John Seboldt, Benjamin Stone, Mary Jane Wagner, SSSF, and Larry Wheelock.

Because of Covid-19 precautions, you are required to wear a mask at this event and socially distance in the chapel, which is limited to ½ capacity. Also, there will not be a reception following the recital.

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The Archives presents...

Liz Walloch
Milwaukee Chapter Archivist/Historian

As members of the Milwaukee Chapter, we share one thing in common, our interest in pipe organ music. What I also find interesting is the path each of us has traveled to pursue organ study and/or careers in music. What sparked our interest in the king of instruments, who encouraged and mentored us? This month's article does not come from the pages of the Archives, but from a conversation with one of our members.

A Conversation with Chapter Member - Wallace Cheatham

I invited Wallace to chat with me, via the phone, so he could share his musical journey and his careers in music.

When did the music begin?

It is fascinating to learn that music in Wallace's life was present in generations before his was born. Having both parents being singers, his mother was known for having a beautiful singing voice that was a "natural instrument." His mother also studied piano formally and Wallace grew up in a house with a piano. He had the added bonus of exploring the 88 keys at a young age. Here is a little history that Wallace shared about his Grandfather on his father's side. His Grandfather was a choral director in the State of Virginia and he was known for his beautiful bass voice. With music influences from family, Wallace started formal piano study at the age of 8 and "that was the beginning of [his] love affair with music and its still, as you know, an ongoing part of my life at 75."

When did Wallace meet the King of Instruments?

Up to this time all of his formal study had been with the piano. He didn't grow up hearing the pipe organ in any of the churches in his home town of Cleveland, TN. With none of the churches having organs, Wallace's interest in the organ came during his freshman year at Knoxville College. He became the student accompanist for the college choir and they toured to Westfield NJ and sang at Westfield Presbyterian Church. Wallace shared that this church had a "fabulous, fabulous organ." There was an organ on the college campus, but nothing compared to this instrument at Westfield Church. When Wallace heard the sound of that instrument and the master organist who played, it was a unique experience and he had just met a new friend. He was so influenced from this pipe organ experience, that when he got back to campus he wanted to change his major from piano to organ. The department chair, who was a pianist and an organist, advised him to stay with piano study instead of changing majors. The department chair said "that further down the road when you are graduated and you are still interested, you can go to the organ on your own and that is what [Wallace] did."

What brought Wallace and his love of music from Tennessee to Wisconsin?

After receiving his B.S. degree from Knoxville College in 1967, Wallace taught in the Knoxville school system for a year, 1967-68. In 1968 Wallace accepted a position in the Unified School District of Racine Wisconsin, 1968-1971. So his journey to Wisconsin brought him to the Badger State leaving his birth state of Tennessee. After three years with the Racine schools, there were life events that changed his focus. Wallace became a graduate student at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and had been the organist at St. Mark's church for a few years. It was early on in his time at St. Mark's that he met the love of his life, Faye Watson. With the long commute to Racine for work, being a graduate student, church ministry and being newly married, Wallace sought a position with less commute time. He became a music specialist in the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) system in 1971 and stayed until he retired in 2003. He continued his studies and was awarded his M.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1972 and in 1982 his Ph.D. degree in Music (composition) from Columbia-Pacific University. His dissertation was setting Psalm 119 to music. To compliment his studies, he pursued a Doctorate from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts Degree (DFA) in 2002. Along with his career with MPS, Wallace served through the years in church ministry in Racine, West Allis and Brookfield.

When did Wallace become a member of the Milwaukee Chapter?

It was during Wallace's employment in Racine that he considered joining the Milwaukee Chapter. In the late 1960s a person could not just join an AGO chapter you had to be recommended by a current member of the Chapter or have a clergy person write a letter of sponsorship for you. Having just relocated to Wisconsin, Wallace didn't know anyone within the Chapter or anyone who could recommend him. However, Wallace was playing for a church in Racine as part of his involvement in the community. He shared with the pastor he was interested in becoming a member of the Milwaukee Chapter and asked if he would write a letter of sponsorship for him. The pastor assisted him and in 1972 with Lois Toeppenor as Dean, Wallace became a member of the Milwaukee Chapter. I want to add this background information from the Archives on the membership process in the earlier days. As prospective members were being reviewed for membership by the board, there was one final

piece to accomplish. Prior to the annual meeting every May, all the new members joined together and performed a joint recital. This final piece of the process brought these new members into full membership with the chapter.

Who influenced Wallace to become a music composer?

Wallace shared in writing music he continues to learn. Composition is a “very, very organic involvement and it keeps developing all the time...each composition is fully equipped with its own unique set of encounters and things to develop.” He became interested in composition when he was a student at Knoxville College. He was mentored by Ernesto Pellegrini, his music theory teacher, who recently passed at the age of 87; Wallace had kept in contact with him through the years. He praised his teacher for the foundations of study that assisted him to explore composition.

Here is a sampling of Wallace’s compositions through the decades: “Glory Hallelujah Since I Laid My Burdens Down,” 1980; “Three Songs,” 1982; “Missa” (1983); “Portraits,” (1983) performed by the Racine Symphony; “Ebenezer,” (1985); “Symphony,” (1986) published by Jomar Press and a “String Quartet,” (1987).” Additional compositions include “Austrian Variations for Organ” published in 1991. There is an interesting story later in this article on how this piece came to be composed. One of Wallace’s organ compositions was performed by chapter member Martha Stiehl, his “Passacaglia and Fugue” published in 1988. “Fanfare and Toccata,” recorded on Cortège Label; two Spirituals based on “Way Over in Beulah Land” and “Over in Glory Land” were published in 1999. The Southern Nevada Chapter of the AGO premiered his composition “Fanfare and Toccata” on an organ recital program of African American Music on March 20, 2000. Additional pieces include “Meditation on GFH,” 2006; “There Shall Come Forth” for choir and organ with text from Isaiah, 2010; “Playing Around with BACH,” 2012; “Done Made My Vow” for mixed choir 2013; “Heaven on Mother Earth” 2016; “Suite for Soprano Saxophone and organ” in 2010. Through the years Wallace has had his music published by a variety of publishers including Shawnee Press, Oxford University Press, American Composers Alliance, and Jomar Press. A few years after Wallace retired from MPS, he was honored by the students of the Milwaukee Children’s Choir in a concert in February of 2019 in which they sang his choral work of “Glory Hallelujah Since I Laid My Burdens Down.” Being the honoree of this concert he was interviewed by Talis Shelbourne of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for a story.

The University of Maine Singers programmed and recorded his choral work “You Must Come in Through the Door,” with conductor Dennis Cox. This piece was also performed and recorded by alumnus Michael Martin, currently professor of choral music at Methodist University. He was one of the original students in the University of Maine performance. Professor Martin made a vow to himself that if he ever had a choral group, he would program a performance of Wallace’s piece. Wallace shared that Methodist University did a very good recording of his piece.

Who and how was Wallace requested to commission a piece of music for the University of Michigan?

Wallace received a commission to compose a piece for the now late Marilyn Mason, professor at the University of Michigan for organ and brass quartet. Let me share the musical network on this commissioned piece. Professor Mason became familiar with Wallace’s works through George Shirley, the first African-American man to attain international distinction in opera. On a visit to Milwaukee, George Shirley met up with Wallace and George was impressed with Wallace’s on-going research in opera and the African-American experience. George mentioned Wallace’s works to Professor Mason and the commission to compose for her was set in motion. Wallace’s original plan for the piece held true as he composed a work based on a theme and variations. The completed piece is in one-movement with five variations entitled “Austrian Variations based on the hymn tune Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” for organ and brass. The texture of the piece is choral in nature with some counterpoint composed in 1991. His piece was performed at Marilyn Mason’s church with one of her doctoral students playing the organ with the brass players being students from the University of Michigan. Wallace shared that the premiere of his piece in Michigan “worked out to be a very, very good performance.” It has always been his hope to have his “Austrian Variations” programmed for a performance in Milwaukee.

What defines Wallace’s composition style?

For me it is amazing to understand how a musician gets inspiration for composing a piece of music. I asked Wallace what is the kernel that helps him take a musical idea or a hymn tune and start composing the notes on the staves? Wallace asked me a question. “Did I ever meet member Martha Stiehl?” I replied, “yes and I studied with her at UWM.” Wallace shared that Martha premiered a work of his for organ, his “Passacaglia and Fugue.” She premiered this organ work in a program for the Wisconsin Composers at Carroll College. Martha described Wallace’s composition style as “architecturally [Wallace’s] writing is very classical but harmonically and melodically it is very contemporary.” He expanded on Martha’s description of how he blends multiple layers within his music pieces. Wallace spoke of the organic, the beginning of the piece and how he expands upon it and what he brings from the past, present and future to complete the piece. Drawing all of these elements together into his compositions offers a vast continuum to compose for a specific program, and/or a specific instrument. Adding to that is the variety of organ instruments themselves and the endless registration possibilities which he says “is a study within itself.”

How is technology reshaping music and the arts?

Wallace was honest with me and said he is “not too optimistic” for the future. He does not like what he is seeing during worship and the standards of music in general. With the arts being trimmed or dropped from school district budgets, he views this as a disservice for the future of quality music and the arts. Wallace shared that the style and quality of music at St. Marks has revolved through the decades. For him “it’s like day and night.” He recalled in his early days there, they had a full Music Department for Worship with six choirs. The days of actually meditating on the prelude music before worship is a distant memory. Wallace recalls the pastor at St. Mark’s when he was musician as a person who appreciated the value of organ music and the skill of the individual leading from the console.

A friend and colleague of Wallace’s, Wayne Barr, a tremendous organist and choral conductor at Tuskegee University is researching the “Pipe Organ Culture within the Black Church.” The findings of his research showed that there were far more pipe organs in use in predominately black churches 100 years ago than there are today. The research continued to show that the leadership of these churches viewed the use of the pipe organ as a higher standard of music and wanted to have the pipe organ lead the music. Also, in years past there were more individuals studying pipe organ and the current number of individuals studying is greatly decreased. Wallace added that if he was attending Knoxville College today, he knows the approach of his studies would be significantly different then when he attended 50 years ago. He gives credit to all of his teachers as he “is still building upon what [he] learned on that campus” today. As new technology is introduced into worship this opens up new paths for exploration as the pendulum continues to swing.

Wallace-- a Lifetime Learner, Mentor, Musician and Achiever

As Wallace shared at the beginning of our interview his “love affair with music” continues. Besides composing, performing, teaching, he authored a book “Dialogues on Opera and the African American Experience in 1997. While still employed for MPS, he was named Milwaukee Public Schools Distinguished Music Teacher in 2002. In the following years Wallace continued to be in the spotlight as Knoxville College awarded him “Outstanding Alumni of National Prominence Award” in 2004. His composition “Toccata, Adagio and Fugue” received an award in 2006 at the Annual Festival of New Organ Music held in London England. Wallace was one of 17 composers selected from around the world for this award. That same year he held the position of Adjunct Professor at Cardinal Stritch University. At the 2006 AGO National Convention in Chicago, Wallace presented a session “The Celebration of Black Saints in Hymns.” He presented an incredible excursion into the lives of Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ss Monica, Augustine of Hippo, Simon of Cyrene, Cyprian of Carthage and Philip the Evangelist. His travels took him to the University of California at Irvine to be part of a composer’s panel on the African American Art Song Alliance Conference in 2007. The following year he was an intercultural music Lecturer for Shakespeare in Color, a Symposium on Macbeth at Rhodes College. Also in 2008 Wallace was the organist for the 50th Anniversary of the Thanksgiving Remembrance and Hope celebration for Operation Crossroads. Wallace contributed in 2014 two of his pieces for the Milwaukee Chapter’s “Milwaukee Organ Book” of “Meditation on GFH” and “Playing Around with BACH.” Wallace is the Artist Director for the New Jubilee Choral Ensemble in Milwaukee a position he has held since 2007. Wallace was looking forward to conducting Schubert’s MASS in G at Carnegie Hall this year; however with the pandemic, it has been rescheduled to May 28, 2022.

Today Wallace continues to explore and practice regularly. He is still a member of St. Mark’s, but not the organist, so he has had access to the sanctuary for daily organ practice until the pandemic hit. Until the church “reopens” and is given an “all clear” Wallace’s preparation to take the AGO Colleague exam is on hold.

Wallace’s musical endeavors are his legacy to us and future generations. He has been dedicated to his career as a music teacher, using his gifts of music by composing, serving as music director, musician for churches and local music groups, being an author and Chapter member. Along with all of his musical endeavors, he has served on the Executive Board and various chapter committees for our Milwaukee Chapter. The Milwaukee Chapter honors you Wallace for sharing your gifts with us and the music world. He shared with me by serving the Chapter “it has been a wonderful experience.”

Post Script

As Wallace and I wrapped up our phone conversation, he shared some special news with me. On May 22, 1971 he married the love of his life, Faye Watson whom he met while musician at St. Mark’s Church. This year is their golden wedding anniversary--50 years. May Wallace and Faye continue to share an abundance of good health, love and God’s blessings in their lives.