



The American Guild of **ORGANISTS**

European Chapter

NEWSLETTER
Second Quarter
2023

The Dean's Corner

Dear European Chapter Members,

One of the reasons the European Chapter is unique is the geographic spread of its members across both sides of the Atlantic and even Australia. Needless to say, this leads to a unique Chapter working. Most Chapters organize regular activities such as concerts, recitals, educational programs and dinners. The European Chapter must necessarily stick to the yearly week-long Spring Meeting, with an additional Fall meeting occasionally.

This year we were able to offer a week-long Spring Meeting again for the first time since 2019 due to the known circumstances. And what a success this splendid edition was! I'm so glad our Board member Barry Jordan was able to work this magnificent Spring Meeting in Erfurt out for us!

Of course, there is the historical significance of iconic organs and places, the possibility not only to hear but also to play these instruments in their original environment, to feel the keyboard action and keyboard sizes, to walk in the same landscapes as Bach and Pachelbel.

Further, there was an enriching experience for participants to exchange views and experiences on the approach of music. The opportunity to hear and play a thoughtful selection of instruments, brought to life through various music choices and approaches, works very inspiring.

But perhaps the most important thing was the interhuman contact, the conversations along the way or at the dinner table in an atmosphere of friendship and closeness. It was fascinating to watch Chapter Chemistry do its work so that newcomers soon began to feel integrated.

You can read the report elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Chapter Board has already started preparations for the next Chapter Meeting. Meanwhile, enjoy reading this Newsletter!

Johan

The Board

Dean:

Johan Hermans

Sub-Dean:

Giorgio Parolini

Secretary:

Alissa Duryee

Treasurer and Membership Coordinator:

Ludo Vandersmissen

Newsletter Editor and Web-Master:

Barry Jordan

Members at large:

Bernard Sanders

Axel Wilberg

Katelyn Emerson

Contact details for office-bearers may be found on our web page (<https://www.agoeurope.eu>). Email sent to the address [board\[at\]agoeuropa.eu](mailto:board[at]agoeuropa.eu) will reach the entire board.

Cover photo: the Franziskus Volckland organ in St Crucis in Erfurt. Photo: Barry

From the editor

I look out of my study window, and it finally looks something like summer (although we are now in the week known as the *Eisheiligen*, the “frosty saints”, here in Germany, when the weather is usually cold and wet. The period begins with St. Mamertus day on the 11th May and ends with the “kalte Sofie”, Sophia’s day, on the 17th (in the south, the first of the icy saints is St Pancras on the 12th - because the cold weather comes rolling in from Scandinavia and takes a day to get to the south. If you’re interested, the other icy saints are Servatius (13th) and Boniface (14th). However, we seem to have got them over with in Erfurt - it wasn’t as cold as in Magdeburg in 2012, but not as warm as Warsaw!

Which is also of course to say that this Newsletter reaches you later than usual, even if well within the second quarter. It seemed logical to wait until the report on the Spring Meeting was ready, so we could publish it while memories were still fresh, and not make everybody wait until the third quarter for that. Many thanks to Ricarda Kossack and Axel Wilberg for writing that, and Bernard Sanders for the editing.

We have quite a bit of news from our members for this issue; some have quite exciting things to report! And we can welcome a new Scandinavian member too, as well as some American friends we met in Thuringia.

Best wishes to all

Barry Jordan



Spring Meeting 2023

On April 10th, 2023, members of the European Chapter of the AGO met in Erfurt/Thuringia for the first full-fledged Spring Meeting since 2019. Many of us had not seen each other for four years, so the Opening Dinner was a special event. Everyone was looking forward to a week full of interesting organs, beautiful towns, and, of course, time with old and new friends.

On Tuesday, the itinerary opened with organs in the city center of Erfurt. Our first stop, after climbing up 70 steps, was the Cathedral of Erfurt with its three organs, which are all playable from the main console. Silvius von Kessel, the cathedral organist, utilized this possibility effectively in his performance of Johann Bernhard Bach's Chaconne and an improvisation in the style of Messiaen. After some hesitation – as is rather typical for the first stop in our Spring Meetings – some chapter members took the opportunity to play the organs. After Alexia Tye had made a start with a *Plein jeu* by Guilain, we heard Agnes Goerke, Rosalind Mohnsen, and Alissa Duryee performing works by Robert Prizeman, Richard Key Biggs, and Jeanne Demessieux.

Having climbed the flight of stairs served us well because right next to the Cathedral, on the same hill, there is the church of St. Severi, one of Germany's most important Gothic buildings. It houses a three-manual organ by Klais, installed in a baroque organ case. Although the organ is equipped with only one independent pedal stop, it makes a very powerful sonic impression. After the organ demonstration, also by Silvius von Kessel, our chapter members Helen Rodgers and Giorgio Parolini played pieces by Mendelssohn and Brahms before Christa Rakich was heard with her own composition *Hommage à Schumann*.



Our next stop was St. Crucis with an organ by Volckland (completed in 1737, restored by Schuke), which, with a great variety of foundation stops and mixtures including a tierce rank, gave us the first impression of typical Thuringian organs of Bach's time. Organist Martin Schwabenhaus started with selections from a French Suite by Bach before moving on to improvisations. Participants, among them Christian Michel, Chery van Ornam, and Chapter Dean Johan Hermans who played Böhm, Bach, and Pachelbel, then took turns exploring the organ.

Now was the moment to realize that our organizer Barry Jordan was absolutely right when saying: "Everything gets later on its own." After a really quick lunch, we met at the former monastery of the Predigerkirche, where Pachelbel was the organist from 1678 to 1690. To pay tribute to his predecessor, organist Matthias Dreissig played Pachelbel's *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* on the brand new Winterhalter organ in the refectory before demonstrating the Schuke organ in the

main church. Johan Hermans also chose to play Pachelbel whereas Mike Irvine performed *Petit Prélude* by the 20th century composer Joseph Jongen. Theo Meurs tried out the organ with one of his own pieces before Johan Hermans once more had to start a sentence with the well-known words "On behalf of the European Chapter of the American Guild of Organists..." to thank our host.

The day was rounded off by a carillon concert played by participants Ariane Toffel, Georg Wagner, and Christian Michel. Although it started raining with the first note of the concert all of us enjoyed this event, after which the city carillonneur offered a demonstration in the tower for those interested. At the end of the day, everyone agreed that the first day had been a total success.

After dinner in small groups in different restaurants, cocktails in the hotel bar, a few hours of sleep, and a good breakfast on Wednesday morning, we met at the coach park. Every organizer of a Spring Meeting fears that moment: three buses, but none of them was ours. Fortunately, the bus arrived soon, and we could start off with only a few minutes delay. – “Everything gets later on its own.”

The first town we visited on Wednesday was Gräfenhain, where Giorgio Parolini gave a rather spontaneous demonstration of the organ because Barry had just found out that Giorgio knows the organ very well. The special feature of this organ is the glockenspiel in the façade. Bach himself wanted to have one of these for his organ in Mühlhausen. Wim Riefel tried out the organ with Scheidemann’s Präludium in C before Bernard Sanders played Bach’s Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier followed by a performance by Jennifer Chou with a piece from Bach’s Orgelbüchlein.



Listening to bells in the rain



What followed then was the highlight of the week: the biggest Thuringian baroque organ in Waltershausen with its unique sound. Theophil Heincke provided a comprehensive demonstration of the organ with works by Bach and Krebs before many (if not to say all) organists of our group spent time on this wonderful instrument.

The last organ of the day was in Mechterstädt where Barry Jordan himself demonstrated the instrument with variations by Johann Gottfried Walther. After that, we went on to the Bach House in Eisenach. There we experienced a short concert on the historical instruments in

the collection before heading off to the Wartburg. After a really interesting guided tour through the building, including Martin Luther’s monks’ cell, Barry was again proven right: “Everything gets later on its own.” What happened then was quite extraordinary. Since the ascent to the Wartburg is much more challenging than the steps up to Erfurt Cathedral, a bus shuttle is provided. Five of our members decided to take advantage of this possibility – which worked perfectly for the way up. After the guided tour, the “hikers” arrived at the bus whereas the other five members were missing. Why? Easy to explain, hard to believe: The bus driver had already finished work for the day and gone back to Eisenach. Thanks to Barry, he came back (even though a bit grumpy) and reunited our group. Here it is inevitable to quote from the booklet: “Bus leaves for Erfurt at approximately 6.15, or as soon as we are all there.” How could our organizer know that in advance? – Spooky!

New day, new experiences. On Thursday, our excursion began in Büßleben, an idyllic town with a big organ built by Sterzing, who was a friend of the Bach family. After an amazing performance of Pachelbel and Böhm played by the host, Tom Anschütz, several AGO members tried out the possibilities and limitations of an organ in meantone temperament, among them Wim Riefel with Scheidemann's Präludium in d minor, Lois Holdridge with Buxtehude's Nun bitten wir, and Peggy Sniezek and Jill Hunt with works by Bach.



The next stop was Suhl where we visited the noble Köhler organ from 1740 and listened to Philipp Christ, whose demonstration of the instrument included Bach's Concerto in G major. Bernard Sanders played pieces from his own composition Stations of the Cross before we heard Bach's Christ lag in Todesbanden, played by Giorgio Parolini.

The beautiful historic city center of Arnstadt, which is a special place for Bach fans, was our last destination for that day. On the upper gallery of the church there is a reconstruction of the Wender organ, which includes seven stops of Bach's original instrument. The second organ, a romantic Steinmeyer, is located on the lower gallery. Organist Jörg Reddin provided a splendid performance of pieces by the young Johann Sebastian Bach. Then participants played on the two organs alternately. Works by Ad Wammes, Johannes Brahms, and Johann Sebastian Bach resounded when Jennifer Chou, Cheryl Duerr, Barbara Gulick and Helen Rodgers played the organs.

Friday the day started with a trip to the Saxonian border. Our first destination was Kahla, the hometown of Johann Walther, an important composer of early Protestant church music. The church in Kahla houses a new choir organ by Späth, which shall be part of a bigger organ installation to be completed in the near future. The special quality of the new choir organ is the possibility to switch between equal and meantone temperament. Ina Köllner played variations by J. G. Walther to demonstrate the organ. Axel Wilberg performed one of Hassler's canzonas with meantone temperament before Meredith Baker gave the equal temperament a try.

In St. Marien in Greiz, the participants gained an impression of the newly renovated, romantic organ. Organist Ralf Stiller played pieces by Buxtehude and a local modern composer. There was also some time to visit the beautiful town center.

The final organ of this year's AGO Spring Meeting was the Silbermann organ in Fraureuth. This famous instrument was another highlight and clearly showed the differ-



ence between Thuringian and Saxonian style. After the demonstration, almost all participants also played the organ here.

Since the end of our meeting is approaching, and thus also the end of this report, it is time for a little anecdote whose keyword is "toilet". Many readers will wonder why one should write about toilets in a Spring Meeting report, whereas all participants will smile knowingly. Anyone who needed to use the restroom in Fraureuth had to go to a big basin, fill a watering can and take it to the sanitary facilities (outhouse) which resembled a small stone hut. This special experience was the perfect ending of a perfect excursion..Why?



Because Barry had to answer the question "Do you know where the toilets are?" at least 100 times in those few days. This time, nobody could miss it.

The Meeting concluded with the closing dinner in the city center of Erfurt where some delicious local cuisine was served.

Although Barry Jordan himself would be too humble to say something like this, we would like to finish the report with a photo and a quote by our member Ariane Toffel:

"Barry saw all that he had made, and it was very good."

... and there was evening, and there was morning - everyone had to go back home.

Axel Wilberg and Ricarda Kossack



News in Brief

Barry Jordan has completed (well, nearly) a new organ piece commissioned by the chapter of Turku cathedral in Finland for the 50th anniversary of their summer organ festival. He will premiere *Ox and eagle, angel, lion* there on the 12th July.

Bernard Sanders was commissioned by Carson Cooman, editor for the Lorenz Corporation, to compose a memorial for Franklin D. Ashdown (1942-2023). Ashdown was a medical doctor, organist, and composer based for much of his life in Alamogordo, New Mexico. Both Cooman and Sanders were longtime friends of his. "Elegie en fa" in memoriam Franklin D. Ashdown will appear in the April subscription of "Lorenz Online" and then in print in "The Organist's Library" later in the year. Carson Cooman will be doing a recording of it to come out with the publication.

During Lent Sanders performed his own "Stations of the Cross" for organ solo in four concerts in Schwenningen, Tuttlingen, Nusplingen and Albstadt (Baden Wuerttemberg, Germany). The cycle is perhaps unique in that the 14 stations are musically depicted in a series of 7 Preludes and Fugues. Parallel to the music, pictures of the stained glass windows in the church of Mary Queen, Tuttlingen, designed by Wilhelm Geyer were projected onto a screen in the front of the church. A further performance took place on Good Friday in the Magdeburg Cathedral with Barry Jordan at the organ. After his premier performance in 2021 Reiner Schulte recorded the entire cycle on the Kreis organ (1997) in the catholic church of Christ the King in Backnang and put it on YouTube, where it can still be accessed under <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g0wy6x4LLk>

The Christoph Dohr Verlag in Cologne has accepted the "Stations of the Cross" (2020), the "Magnificat Versets" (2019), "St. Clare of Assisi" (2019) and "Zacchaeus the Tax Collector" (2020) for publication. Both St. Clare and Zacchaeus are Suites with optional Narrator. The collection should become available later this year.

Additionally, Bernard's "Deutsche Messe" was performed by 600 singers, organ and brass in Brixen cathedral at the diocesan Choir Day on the 25th April.



Jens Korndörfer has been appointed associate professor of organ at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, as from August 2023. He succeeds Isabel Demers and Joyce Jones. Currently, he is Director of Worship and the Arts at First Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia, and Area Coordinator for Organ Studies at Georgia State University.

Welcome!

At the Spring Meeting we were pleased to meet and greet several new American friends: Cheryl van Ornam, Jill Hunt and Lois Holdridge, as well as Tina Brandt and Maria Muschawek. We hope we have a long and pleasant journey together.

Also new is Anders Samuel Börjesson from Sweden. He will introduce himself!



Anders Samuel Börjesson is a Swedish organist and composer. He received a Master of Fine Arts in Church Music in 2000 and a Master of Arts in Music Performance and Postgraduate Diploma in Organ in 2002 from the University of Gothenburg where he studied with Mikael Wahlin. As part of the Diploma Program he spent a year in Paris studying with Sophie-Veronique Cauchefer-Choplin at Saint-Sulpice. Since 2011 Anders Börjesson has been the organist of Mariestad Cathedral (on the eastern shore of Lake Vänern in central Sweden), where

he gives weekly organ concerts.

In 2015 he was the winner of the International Contest in Organ Composition of the Swedish Organ Society and in 2019 the winner in two categories (out of three) of the Orgelkids Composition Contest in the Netherlands. In 2020 Börjesson became one of the 'House Composers' of US-based publishing house Leupold Editions, a Division of The Leupold Foundation.

His compositions appear on Pro Organo with James D. Hicks and Hyperion Records with Christopher Herrick. Börjesson's works are published by Cantorgi (Sweden), Norsk Musikforlag (Norway), and Leupold Editions, a Division of The Leupold Foundation (USA).



Also Spring Meeting: food, fun and friendship!

A photo gallery is online

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.613549744145421&type=3>

Copy and paste the address!

Recitals by Chapter Members

- Sunday April 16, 5:00 pm Chelsea Chen
De Pere, Wisconsin, USA, St. Norbert Abbey. J.S. Bach, Camille Saint-Saëns, Henri Mulet, Maurice Duruflé, Claude Debussy, Chelsea Chen, Bernard Sanders
- Saturday April 22, 7:00 pm Barry Jordan
Warsaw - Anin, Poland: Bach
- Sunday April 23, 7:00 pm Barry Jordan
Warsaw, Poland, Reformed church: Ritter, Hindemith, Brahms, Kee
- Tuesday April 25, nT Rhonda Sider Edgington
Detroit, MI, USA, Jefferson Ave. Presbyterian: Battle of the Organs with Tony Monaco (Hammond)
- Saturday April 29, nT Rhonda Sider Edgington
Cedar Falls, IA, Northern Iowa University: Music of Japan with Carolyn Koebel (percussion)
- Sunday April 30, 4:00 pm Alexia Tye
Paris, France, Chapelle St Louis de la Salpêtrière: Bach, Couperin, Guilain, Brahms, Boehm
- Sunday May 7, nT Rhonda Sider Edgington
Holland, MI, USA, Hope Church: Tulip Time concert with Dutch music
- Sunday May 7, 11.30 am Barry Jordan
Saarbrücken, Germany, Stiftskirche St Arnual: Ritter, Klatzow, Kee
- Sunday May 14, 5:00 pm Gabriel Dessauer
Munich, Germany, St Margaret
- Saturday May 20, nT Rhonda Sider Edgington
Wheaton IL, St Michael's Catholic Church: Great Lakes Duo
- Sunday May 21, nT Rhonda Sider Edgington
East Lansing, MI, All Saints Episcopal: Great Lakes Duo
- Tuesday May 23, nT Rhonda Sider Edgington
New Albany, IN, USA, St John Presbyterian: Great Lakes Duo
- Thursday May 25, 6:00 pm Barry Jordan
Magdeburg, Germany, Cathedral: Duruflé, Vierne
- Saturday May 27, 3:00 pm Johan Hermans
Eindhoven, Netherlands, St Cathrien's Church
- Monday May 29, 5:00 pm Giorgio Parolini
Lengefeld/Sa, Germany, Kirche zum heiligen Kreuz
- Tuesday June 20, 8:00 pm Gabriel Dessauer
Mainz, Germany, St Stephan

We can only report news and list recitals of which we are aware! Be an active member and report news and concert dates which you would like to see in print!

Our internet site is at <https://www.agoeurope.eu/index.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/agoeurope>

Saturday June 24, 11.00 am Alexia Tye
Cathedral Notre Dame, Luxemburg: Rachmaninov, Vierne, Liszt

Saturday June 24, 7:30 pm Jennifer Chou
St John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Islington, London

Thursday June 29, 6:00 pm Barry Jordan
Magdeburg, Germany, Cathedral: Schmidt, Wagner, Ritter

Monday July 3, 12:00 noon Jennifer Chou
Propsteikirche, Recklinghausen, Germany

Thursday July 6, nT Barry Jordan
Kuopio, Finland, Cathedral: Reubke, Klatzow, Schmidt

Saturday July 9, 12:00 noon Jennifer Chou
Hamburg, Germany, St. Michaelis

Tuesday July 11, 8:00 pm Barry Jordan
Turku, Finland, Cathedral: Schmidt, Bach, Jordan, Jongen

Thursday July 13, 7:30 pm Jennifer Chou
Stege, Denmark

Tuesday July 18, 7.30 pm Jennifer Chou
Randers, Denmark, Sct. Mortens

Wednesday July 19, 8:00 pm Jennifer Chou
Helsingør, Denmark, Sct. Mariae

Thursday July 20, nT Barry Jordan
Heiligenhafen, Germany, ev Stadtkirche: Ritter, Bach, Mendelssohn, Kee

Saturday July 22, 6:30 pm Judith Trifellner-Spalt & Philipp Pelster,
Salzburg Cathedral, Salzburg, Austria

Saturday July 29, 6:00 pm Gabriel Dessauer
Meißen, Germany, Cathedral

Sunday July 30, 5:00 pm Giorgio Parolini
Gräfenhain, Germany, Dreifaltigkeitskirche

Don't miss the next issue, because there you will find out where the next Spring meeting will be held! The dates are of course already set and can go into your diary: 1st - 6th April.