



The American Guild of **ORGANISTS**

European Chapter

NEWSLETTER

Fourth Quarter

2022



The Dean's Corner

Dear European Chapter Members,

This past weekend the European Chapter Board had its first offline meeting in a long time. Because the Board Members live scattered over different countries, real meetings involve quite a long journey for some and a hotel stay for all. Still, being back together in person clearly added value after such a long period of online meetings.

I am sure you will be pleased with the upcoming spring and fall meetings we are preparing. You will find some teasing information about them in Alissa's report on the meeting!

By going through the membership list, we notice that some new members have not yet introduced themselves. You are cordially invited to write something about yourselves for this newsletter – please send it to Barry, the newsletter editor, and let us welcome you properly. A photo would also be very nice.

Offline Board Meetings provide time for informal conversations as well. I learned, for example, that the increasingly acute shortage of church musicians also occurs in places where the church council can pay a full salary. A concern related to this is that organ teachers in many areas face similar problems due to less inflow of new pupils.

Therefore, reaching out to the next generation of organists remains a concern. Let's share experiences of approaches that have proven successful.

Above all, let us share our common passion for the organ!

Enjoy the read of this Newsletter

Cordially,

Johan
Chapter Dean

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\[at\]agoeurope.eu](mailto:board[at]agoeurope.eu) will reach the entire board.

Cover photo: the Eilert Köhler organ in the Kreuzkirche in Suhl. Photo: Barry

From the editor

Winter is coming inexorably; we are slowly emerging from the pandemic which has beset our lives for nearly three years now (or are we?), but there seems to be no end to the crises which beset us. War is on our doorsteps, we have no idea whether and for how long we will stay even reasonably warm and financial anxiety is tangible everywhere. But people are also impatient to take up their lives again, and a certain resilience which seemed lost is beginning to make itself felt. Or possibly it is a recklessness, a “who cares?” kind of dare-devilry? The proverb “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die” comes to mind, though it is perhaps worth remembering that this does not come from the bible in quite that form. Still, the book Ecclesiastes tells us “Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry”, and in both Isaiah and the first letter to the Corinthians we find “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we [shall] die.” In this spirit, your board has planned a full 5-evening 4-day Spring meeting as we used to know it for 2023 and is working on plans for a Fall Meeting too. A report on the board’s meeting in Cologne last weekend (Sunday/Monday, as Monday was a public holiday here in Germany), written by Alissa, can be found following. Of course, our meetings are not primarily for eating and drinking, but certainly those activities play a not unimportant role! After all, conviviality is what holds us together.

The coming of winter makes itself felt in the length of the list of members’ recitals, which is short. There is a certain amount of news, but there is also a further preliminary announcement of the Spring Meeting with a little more detail of our planned (but not yet definite) itinerary. I hope you enjoy the read!

Barry Jordan

The Board Meeting

The board members of the AGO’s European Chapter met recently, as they customarily do each month of October/November. We had been hopeful that pandemic related issues would return to normal, allowing us to enjoy each other’s company in person, but coronavirus (as well as the changing travel landscape) did create obstacles for some of us. We set out to have an in-person meeting, and then found ourselves in a hybrid situation.

Bernard, Axel, and I converged in person at the Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Kirche in Köln-Junkersdorf for a Sunday afternoon concert showcasing the church’s new Muhleisen organ. Organist Johannes Geffert performed a program of concertos by Bixi, Stanzl, and Rheinberger, accompanied by the Kammerphilharmonie St. Petersburg (an orchestral ensemble based in Köln), Frank Stanzl, conductor. Following the concert, we met with Mr. Geffert, who showed us the console of the 20-stop instrument.

Following the concert, we connected with Ricarda Kossak and Johan Hermans at our hotel. With only four of us present, we knew that we needed extra energy to carry us through our meeting, and quickly resolved to fuel up at a nearby Brauhaus. After experiencing delicious local food, accompanied by a seemingly unstoppable flow of Kölsch, we returned to our hotel where we connected virtually with Ludo Vandersmissen and Giorgio Parolini, zooming in from Belgium and Italy respectively.

The annual meeting consists of a several systematic reports: first on membership, and then on finances. Happily, our chapter is on sound footing in both departments, although we continue to encourage renewals and new memberships of course. The Board also decides annually on making a donation to one or

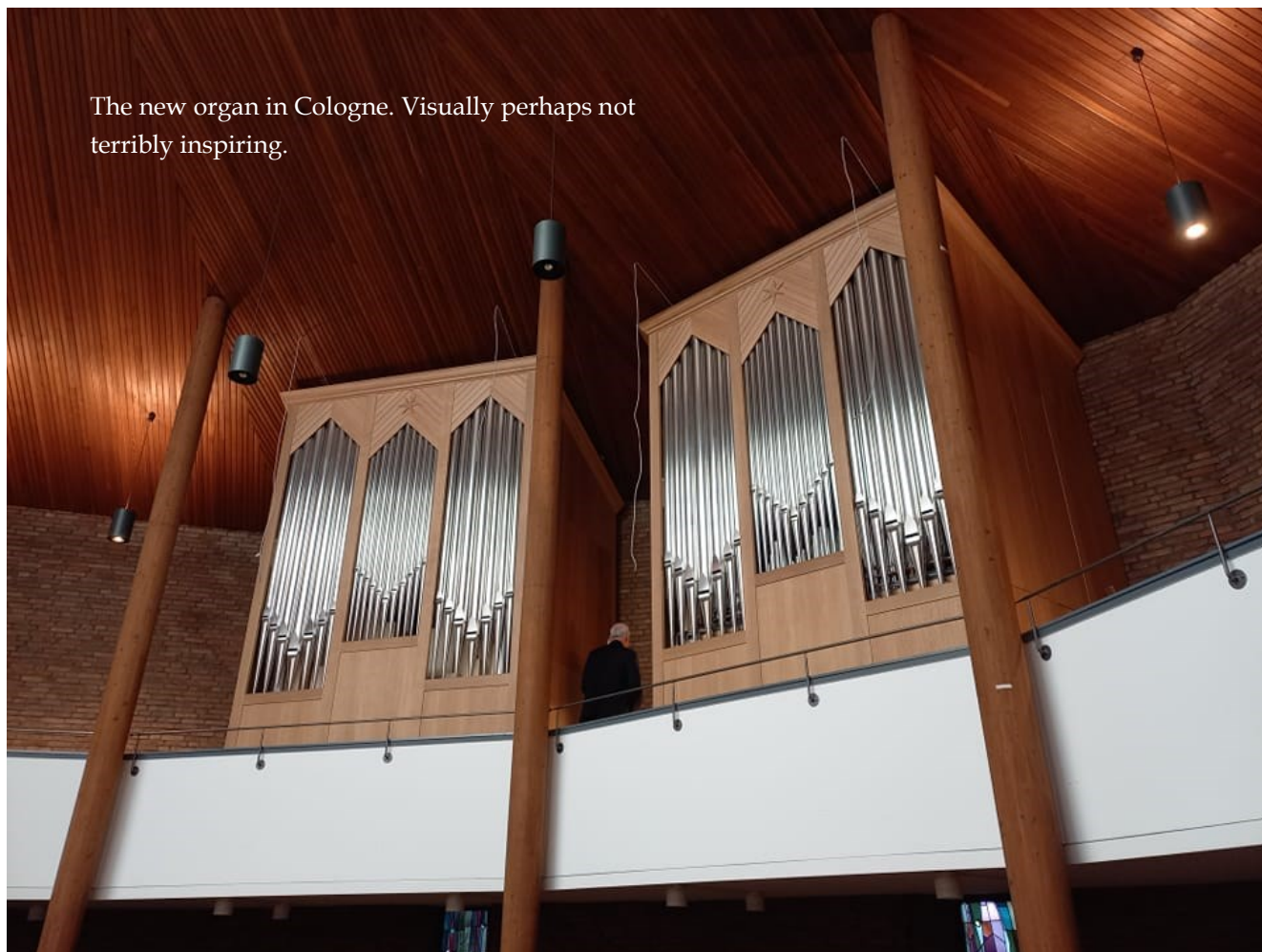
more of the AGO's funds. This year we voted on a donation of 250 dollars to the AGO Annual Fund, as well as a donation of 150 dollars to its New Organist's Fund (which, among other things, encourages young people by supporting Pipe Organ Encounters).

At this time of year, with the days getting shorter and the trees threatening to shed their leaves, the topic of the upcoming Spring Meeting is one to which we happily turn. Visions of Thuringia in springtime danced through our heads as we discussed Barry Jordan's preliminary itinerary for 2023. More on that in another article! But importantly, we resolved to return to our more anticipated, pre-pandemic custom of projecting farther than just the spring to come. In other words, there are plans in the works for a Fall Meeting in 2023, and Spring Meeting in 2024. Though many details need to be pinned down, all members found it stimulating to discuss the medium-to-long term after our experiences of the past few years.

Indeed we found it so stimulating that the meeting lasted very late into the night. So late, in fact, that it was no longer possible to raise a glass together at the hotel's bar. Thankfully we were able to share a nightcap at a bar just next door, expertly served by an engaging bartender with four nationalities (the same number as were represented in our party of four!)

The following morning, over breakfast on the hotel's rooftop lounge, we continued the previous night's exchanges, and had a virtual discussion with Barry Jordan. Though our forces were scattered across several countries and our exchanges occurred in several time slots, we were able to take leave knowing we had laid the groundwork for the upcoming year. As a top priority in 2023, we look forward to reconnecting with our membership - through our in person meetings, through the newsletter, and through spontaneous exchanges. We hope to see you, hear from you, and/or read about you soon!

Alissa Duryee



The new organ in Cologne. Visually perhaps not terribly inspiring.

Spring Meeting 2023

As we reported in the last Newsletter, 3/22, next year's Spring Meeting will be held in Germany once more, this time in the East, in the State of Thuringia, home turf of Johann Sebastian Bach and, along with East Frisia, perhaps the area of Germany offering the highest concentration of truly spectacular organs of all epochs up to 1939. Nearly all stations of the Bach biography until his move to Köthen lie within its borders, from his birthplace in Eisenach to the place of his ducal service in Weimar, including Ohrdruf, where he was sent to live with his oldest brother Johann Christoph after the death of their father (he was 11); Arnstadt, where he obtained his first appointment, Mühlhausen and Weimar. Erfurt, the exceptionally pleasant state capital which will be our base for the week, was also home to a branch of the Bach family; Johann Bach was the Organist of the Predigerkirche for nearly 40 years and together with his brother Christoph he was in control of the musicians guild in the city; Johann Sebastian's father Ambrosius was a member of the town band from 1667 until he moved to Eisenach.

Important information

Dates:

as mentioned above, this will be a full Spring Meeting as we used to know it. We will begin with the opening dinner on **Monday, 10th April** at 7.00 pm. The meeting continues until the evening of **Friday, 14th April** with the closing dinner that evening, departure on Saturday after breakfast.

Accommodation etc:

The Corona pandemic has changed many things in the world, including the hotel landscape. Erfurt has quite a number and variety of hotels, but only two of them were prepared to offer us a contingent of rooms on a "book it yourself" basis, as we have always done, and neither of them offered a price which was lower than the rates available on the internet. Both also offered contracts which penalised us if we did not actually use all the assigned rooms. We have therefore decided to ask everybody to go online and choose a hotel in an appropriate price category. Our "centre" will nevertheless be the Hotel Radisson Blu.

You can still get quite a good rate for this on the web, but a word of caution:

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

There appears to be a problem with the Radisson's own booking engine. If you are using a portal which leads back to the in-house system, you will be quoted an absurd rate of around € 1500. There is no need to pay that amount! Via booking.com the rate is about € 500, depending on whether you choose to have breakfast and whether you opt for cancellability.

Obviously it would be useful and pleasant to have people more or less centrally accommodated. There are a number of options in central Erfurt; the IBIS, Dorint, and many others. You could also try the historic "Augustinerkloster", though this is usually filled with church events. If you need any advice, please ask me! The bus will leave from a central point, however, and not make a city tour to pick up people.

Registration and costs:

CHAPTER MEMBERS: Registration will be informal, as usual. Once you have definitely decided to join the meeting, find yourself a place to stay and then write a mail to us to say that you have done so. We would ask you to finalise your decision by the last day of February, as we obviously need numbers for restaurant bookings, buses etc. Please use the Email address **springmeeting@agoeurope.eu** for this.

NON-MEMBERS may join us for the meeting on payment of a supplement equivalent to the dues of a

Chapter friend, provided that we have spare places. An application must be approved by the Board and must be lodged with us between 15th February and 10th March 2023. Approval will be given by the 15th March. Only then should hotel arrangements be made.

Unfortunately it is too early to make a serious estimate of the costs involved; they depend on the number of communal meals, the prices for the buses and for the demonstrations etc. There will of course be a Chapter subsidy, as always. This information should be available towards the end of this year.

Provisional itinerary - subject to change!

Monday: Opening dinner

Tuesday: Erfurt - all walking distance, public transport is available

St. Severi (Klais 1930, III/34)

Dom (Schuke 1993 III/63) – *only demonstration and visit to the church, no playing (it is right next to St Severi)*

St Crucis (Volckland, c. 1737, II/29)

Predigerkirche (Schuke 1977, III/60; case H. Compenius d.Ä 1572)

Augustinerkirche (Walcker 1938, III/61)

Wednesday:

Gräfenhain: Thielemann 1728 II/22

Waltershausen: Trost 1724 - 1755, III/47

Mechterstädt: Carl Christian Hoffmann, 1770. II/25

Eisenach: Georgenkirche (Bachs baptismal church) Visits to the Bach House museum and Wartburg castle.

Thursday:

Büßleben: Stertzing, 1702, II/28

Suhl, Kreuzkirche: Eilert Köhler, 1738 - 1740, II / 39

Arnstadt, Bachkirche: Rekonstruktion of the Wender Organ of 1703 by Otto Hoffmann (1999), II / 21;

Steinmeyer / Hoffmann, III / 55. Visits to the Bach sites, original console of Bach's organ in the museum.

Friday:

Triptis: Trampeli 1785 II/29

(*Southern Saxony-Anhalt*):

Naumburg, St Wenzel: Hildebrandt 1743, III/52

Weißenfels, St. Marien: Ladegast 1856 III/41

maybe visit the Schütz-Museum, Ladegast museum or the castle

Closing dinner



News in Brief

On Saturday 22.10.22 **Axel Wilberg** will present a lecture in St. Victor's Church in Nörvernich on the organ builder Kalscheuer, with a demonstration of the historic organ. He will play works by the rhenish composers Sattler, Piel and Monar .

Katelyn Emerson will once again have homes on both sides of the Atlantic from October of this year as she accepts an ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership Studentship from the University of Cambridge where she will pursue an MPhil/PhD in Music at the Centre for Music and Science.



Installation of Meredith Baker as Chapter Dean

Meredith Baker is (once again) Dean of the AGO Nassau Chapter. She was installed in her office on the 26th September by Regional Councillor Leslie Smith.

Dr. Jürgen Buchner's carillon composition "Einleitung, Variationen und Hymne über Happy Birthday", written on request for the 100th anniversary of the Royal Carillon School "Jef Denyn" in Mechelen was premiered by City Carillonneur Eddy Marien on May 7, 2022 at the carillon of Sint Rombouts Cathedral/Mechelen.

Rhonda Sider Edgington presented several concerts dedicated to the music of **Bernard Sanders**, honoring his 65th birthday. The first of these took place on September 9th in the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Appleton, Wisconsin. The next morning Rhonda and Bernard presented a workshop for the North-Eastern-Wisconsin AGO Chapter. After a lively discussion comparing the work of a church musician in Germany to that of one in the US, Bernard talked about his career as a composer and, with Rhonda playing examples, presented more of his music to the participants. A week later Rhonda presented a similar program at the Chapel of Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she teaches organ. She was joined by her colleague John Varineau on two works for Clarinet and Organ. The day before, Rhonda and Bernard had met with music students there and talked about living and working as a professional musician in general and in Germany in particular. A similar meeting with students at Hope College took place in Rhonda's home town of Holland, Michigan, where again a workshop was held for the local AGO Chapter. For the third and final concert in Hope Reformed Church in Holland (MI) more Organ Plus-fare was included. Jayne Gort joined Rhonda for the four-movement work "Dreamcatcher" for Flute and Organ and "Ornament of Grace" was performed with Ellen Rizner on the Violin. The latter won First Prize in the AGO Composition Contest in 2008 and was premiered at the National Convention in Minneapolis. The fine performances were well received and appreciated by the audiences.



Recitals by Chapter Members

Recitals become rarer in winter, especially in Europe, where so many churches are barely heated or not at all. However, we do have a few to offer!

October 1st, 6:00 pm Philip Hartmann
Ulm (Germany), Minster

November 19th, 6:00 pm Barry Jordan
Magdeburg, Cathedral: Messiaen "Les Corps Glorieux"

December 7th, 12:30 pm Alexia Tye
London, St Botolph's Aldgate

December 18th, 3:00 pm Alexia Tye,
Strasbourg, (F), Eglise St Pierre-le-Vieux: Advent recital

December 18, 4:00pm Katelyn Emerson
Jefferson City, Missouri, St. Peter Catholic Church

December 27th, 6:00 pm Barry Jordan
Magdeburg, Cathedral: Music for Christmas (including the Nutcracker Suite)

2023

January 1st, 5:00 pm Barry Jordan
Magdeburg, Cathedral: New Year's Concert

January 6th, 6:00 pm Barry Jordan
Magdeburg, Cathedral: Messiaen "La Nativité du Seigneur"

January 8, 4:00pm Katelyn Emerson
Minneapolis, Minnesota, Mount Olive Lutheran Church

January 14, 11.00 am Axel Wilberg
Cathedral Notre Dame, Luxemburg: Aguilera de Heredia, Correa de Arrauxo, Krahforst, Cooman

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>