



The American Guild of  
**ORGANISTS**

*European Chapter*



NEWSLETTER

Second Quarter

2022

## The Dean's Corner

Dear European Chapter Members,

This Newsletter is the first which has been edited by Barry Jordan. Further on in this Newsletter, you can read how former Newsletter Editor Bernard presented two bound volumes containing all the Chapter Newsletters from the past 23 years. This compendium serves as a chronicle of chapter activities for this entire period.

Thank you for the fantastic work you've done for more than 20 years, Bernard! And Barry, many thanks for having accepted to take over this responsibility!

As I'm writing these lines, we have the AGO European Chapter Spring Meeting in Aachen just behind us. It was one in "real life", which we had all looked forward to for a long time. Most of us hadn't seen each other since before the pandemic, so it was heart-warming to see one other again and to spend a few days together after all this time !

You can read the report elsewhere in this Newsletter.

A Spring Meeting is so enriching because participants get the chance to exchange their views and experiences on the approach of music in church, concert life, education or as a leisure activity. The opportunity to hear and play a thoughtful selection of instruments, brought to life through various music choices and approaches, has a very inspiring effect on all of us.

Even more valuable are the interpersonal contacts, the conversations along the way or at the dinner table in an atmosphere of friendship and closeness. Especially after such a long break, we could experience how the AGO European Chapter can connect us.

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## 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.

Thank you, Axel and Ricarda, for preparing such a splendid Spring Meeting. You made it a magnificent and unforgettable experience for all participants!

The Chapter Board will soon start preparations for the next Chapter Meeting.

Meanwhile, enjoy reading this Newsletter!

Johan Hermans  
*Dean*

## Editorial

A warm word of welcome to everybody from your new editor! As you will know, if you read your Newsletter as assiduously as you should, Bernard Sanders laid down the heavy burden of the double office of secretary and newsletter editor at the end of the first quarter after having done duty conscientiously for 20 years or so. Since I already look after the web page, it seemed logical that I take over the newsletter, whereas Alissa Duryee will take care over the secretarial duties. Thank you, Bernie, for all your years of work for the Chapter and its members.

This issue is pretty much filled with the report on the Spring Meeting held last week in Aachen. It was shorter, and also somewhat smaller, than usual, but the days we had were wonderful. For me, the Hilgers organ in Vaals was the absolute highlight – such beauty in so few stops! Also impressive was the Stahlhuth organ in the Sacred Heart (Herz Jesu) church; visually unimpressive (especially at close quarters), but imaginative and exciting. Quite a discovery, indeed, and a valuable reminder that great material isn't always the guarantee of a great organ. All in all, a fantastic half a week; many thanks to Axel Wilberg and Ricarda Kossack, who put it all together, and congratulations on an almost entirely problem-free course of events!

Additionally, we have some news of further successes for Bernard Sanders, whose career as a composer reaches ever new heights, and a welcome to some prominent new members, as well as the usual listing of recitals by our members – those we know of, anyway.

Enjoy the read!

Barry Jordan

## The Spring Meeting Photo Album

The photo album will take a little while to complete. As usual, this will be placed on our Facebook page. The link to the album is <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.4920173528020130&type=3> . (There are a few photos on it already, but these are just to “stake the claim”.) Anybody can see these pictures, whether on FB or not!

By the way: to see all the photos from previous years, go to <https://www.facebook.com/agoeeurope/photos>. At the top of the page you will see a panel labelled “Albums”, but there are only a few icons to be seen. At the right you should find a button “See All”. That is the “open Sesame”!

## Report on the Spring Meeting 2022

*You can't miss it!\*\*\**

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, after a two-year pandemic-related hiatus, members of the European Chapter of the AGO finally convened again to enjoy a Spring Meeting. In the lobby of the Mercure am Dom hotel in the city of Aachen, Germany, each of us took a Covid self-test before setting off to connect with friends old and new - while visiting the instruments in and around this city.



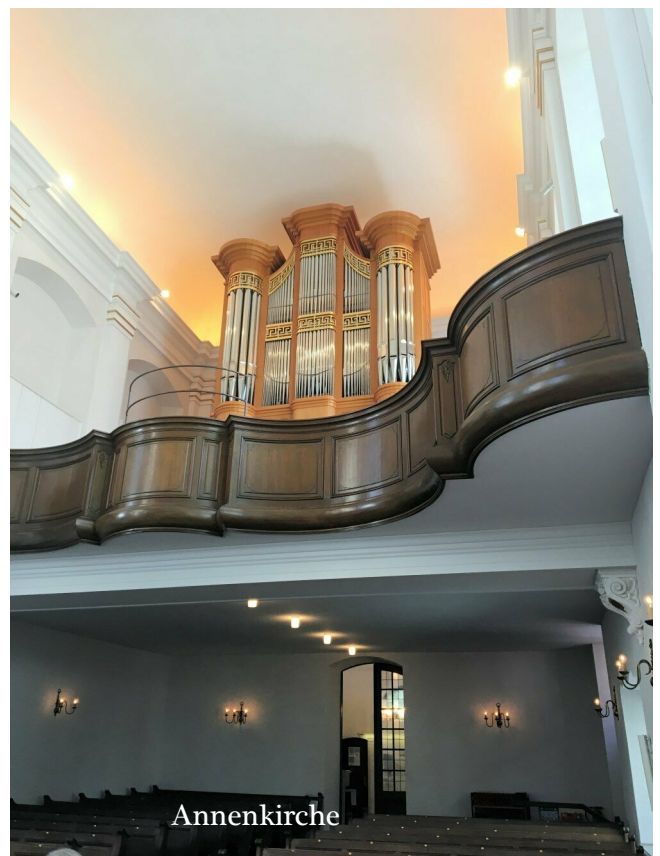
Just waiting for the guy with the key

Our first stop, on a small, shady side street in the city center, was the Annakirche. Axel Wilberg, chapter member and co-organizer of our itinerary (with Ricarda Kossack) greeted us and gave us an overview of our itinerary. Organist Klaus-C van den Kerckhoff spoke to us about the building, which had previously been a medieval women's monastery. All but its walls were destroyed during World War II, after which it was rebuilt, with the interior and position of the organ completely reorganized.

It now houses a three manual organ by Weimbs (built in 1994), a builder from Hellenthal in the Eiffel district, not far from Aachen. There is an active musical life around this instrument, as three professional organists and several amateurs share the responsibilities involving the services, as well as roughly 24 concerts per year. The public is encouraged to sit in the loft, which can hold up to 40 seats. *Orgelcafés* are also organized, where the audience has a convivial sort of café experience, while listening to a brief presentation followed by 45 minutes of music.

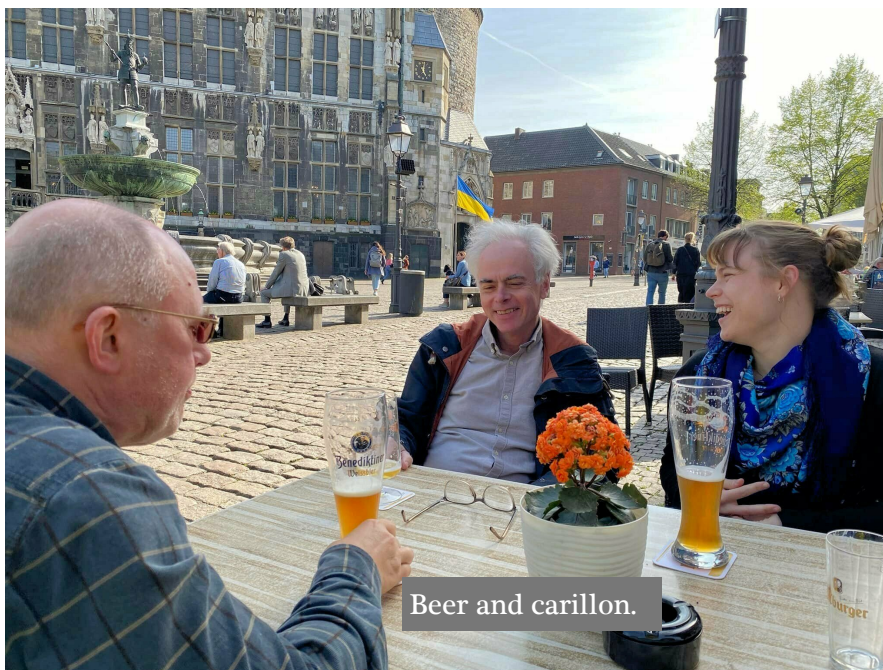
Our host then played a demonstration including works of Reger, J. S. Bach, and Widor. AGO members then had the opportunity to take turns discovering the organ. With only 22 participants instead of the usual 40 or so, there was an initial ambience of shyness as the loft filled with polite echos of "After you" and "no, you first"... But the ice was quickly broken and the fun began.

Next on the schedule was a real treat: member Ariane Toffel gave a performance on the carillon of the city hall, while the rest of the group listened from the sunny terrace of a café just on the other side of the square, enjoying a glass of wine or German beer. The town hall, a large neogothic structure, stands precisely on the footprint of Charlemagne's former



Annenkirche

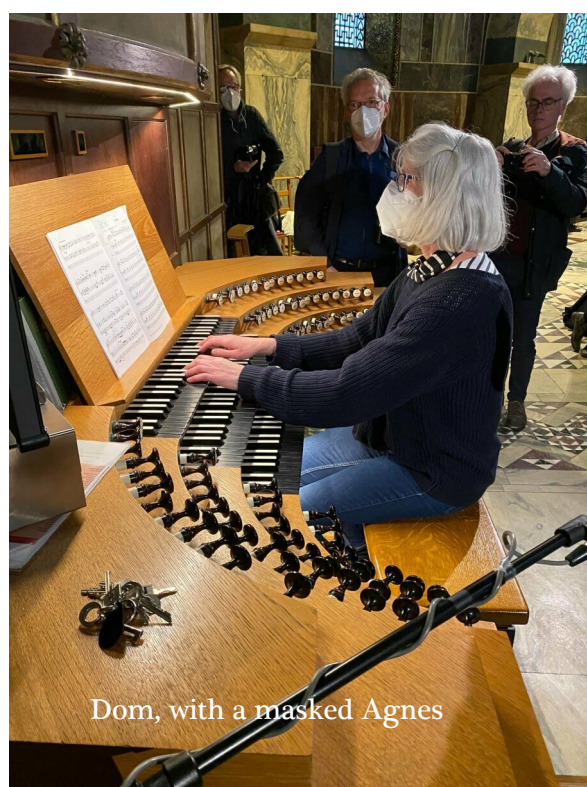
castle. It was rebuilt several times, most recently after World War II, when the choice was made to restore the neogothic design which had originally been built in the 19th century. In one of its high towers is a carillon. We listened to a nearly hour-long program featuring the music of Louis Armstrong, Joseph Kosma, Oscar Peterson, Claude François, and others, primarily in transcription by Ariane herself. The song “Fever” (John Davenport/Eddie Cooley) was particularly memorable, partly because of how well it sounded on the instrument, and partly because it was truly an unexpected context for this music.



That evening the group was admitted to the Aachen Dom, after its usual closing time. Organist Michael Hoppe spoke to us about this building, which dates back to the ninth century and whose principal and oldest part is a chapel with an octagonal structure resulting in a circular interior, symbolizing eternity. The ground level of the chapel was intended for the public, while the first story houses Charlemagne’s throne (as well as the organ) and a second story is the dedicated space of Jesus.

The organ is an instrument in three parts which share a console, built by Johannes Klais and renovated in several stages. We were treated to an impressive demonstration including music by Wilhelm Middelschulte, after which we were invited to take turns at this powerful instrument. Afterwards, we adjourned to our rooms (some by way of a local tavern) to prepare for the next day’s early departure.

On Tuesday morning, carpools were organized to bring all the members to the Dutch town of Vaals, just a 15-minute ride over the border. Though we did not know it yet, we were in fact taking a route historically used by Protestants living in Aachen during periods when worship was banned in that city. Churchgoers would walk several miles every Sunday to the small town of Vaals, just across the border with the Netherlands, which boast-





De Kopermolen, Vaals

ed four protestant churches – two of which were on our agenda.

We were greeted by Christine Moraal, organist and musicologist, in the Cultureel Centrum de Kopermolen, a formerly the Lutherse Kerk, now repurposed as a cultural center. The building was another round structure, with a second story housing the organ as well as a painting exhibition, with balcony seating all around the church. We learned that during the pandemic, a leak in the air conditioning had gone unchecked, causing water infiltrations that could have menaced the building's structure (as well as our visit), but solutions had recently been found to repair the damage, and luckily the leak occurred far from the organ.

The organ is from 1765, by Johann Baptist Hilgers. It is a single manual instrument, with a pull-down pedalboard in the French tradition. The Centrum, which also houses a grand piano,

holds a concert series around this instrument. Dean Johann Hermans performed a demonstration with works of Moretti, Pachelbel, and Stanley. Members then climbed into the small, cage like structure which surrounds the console, taking turns to play.

We then took a brief walk to another of Vaals's protestant churches, the Hervormde Kerk, which also holds a one-manual organ, of a very different character. Christine Moraal told us about the instrument's history, beginning with an initiative in 1765. The chosen builder was Teschemacher, who had a reputation for building small organs and house organs. Despite the modest proportions of these instruments, he was influenced by a lyrical, romantic aesthetic. Consequently, this instrument can be suited to Romantic repertoire, provided it can fit on a one-manual instrument with pull-down pedal. She demonstrated its versatility with a set of variations by Haydn .

After a return to Aachen by car and a quick lunch, we reconvened at St. Adalbert's Church, which boasts two instruments: a powerful three manual Rieger from 1965, and a smaller two manual by Wilbrand (1972). Members Bernard Sanders and Axel



Vaals, Herv. Kerk

Wilberg provided a comprehensive demonstration, beginning with Bernard playing Pepping, Böhm, Langlais, and Sanders on the Rieger. Axel performed Frescobaldi on the smaller organ, incidentally by the same builder as his home practice instrument. Despite their very different sounds and conceptions the organs sounded well together as Bernard and Axel then performed an arrangement of an echo fantasy by Gherardus Scronx (17thC) for both organs.



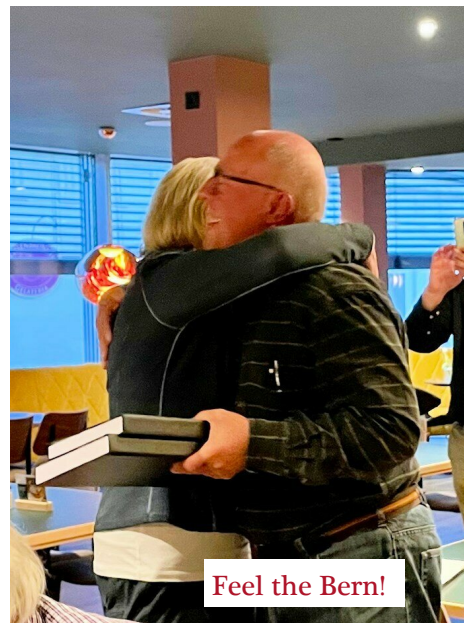
Our ensuing hands-on discovery also took the form of an echo fantasy as members volleyed pieces from one organ to the next, until it was time to convene for a tour of historical Aachen on foot. This tour was much too rich in information to report in detail. Suffice it to say that we were able to learn one of the “magic ingredients” in Aachen’s thermal water (arsenic), the origin of the name Aachen (along with “Aix”, from its French name, it’s related to “aqua” = water), how to read the seal of Charlemagne, and finally, an improbably creepy story about why there is a stud behind the right doorknob of the doors into the Dom (the devil’s thumb got stuck in there, of course!)

In a departure from our usual tradition, the opening and closing dinners were fused into one midweek dinner, which took place right after this tour, at the Elisenbrunnen restaurant. Bernard Sanders made an emotional tribute to Judy Riefel-Lindel’s years as Dean and mentor to so many, presenting her with a bound version of the newsletters of our chapter since their first appearance in digital form in 1998.

Johan made announcements and acknowledgements, Axel and Ricarda were showered with gifts from the homelands of all the participants, and we all enjoyed a delicious dinner featuring local Sauerbraten and heavily seasoned with Printen, a local gingerbread specialty. Applause all around, and off to bed until Thursday morning.

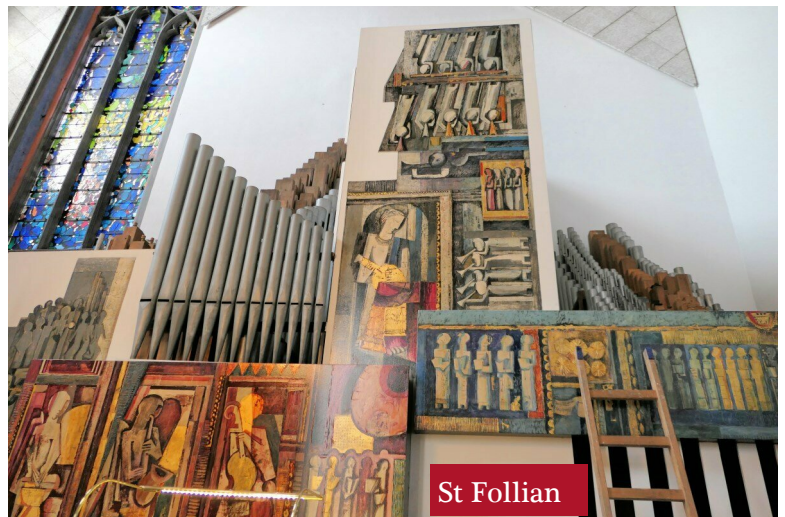


The opening/closing dinner.



Feel the Bern!

Our first stop Thursday morning was in St. Foillan (counterintuitively pronounced “St. Follian”), a church just at the foot of the Aachen Dom. Traditionally, this has been the spot of the Parish church of Aachen, and the existing structure is the result of some rebuilding following World War II. Its current organ was originally built (by Klais, 1913) for the church in Kornelimünster. In 1963 it was transferred to St. Nikolaus church, with a new, contemporary case designed by Franz Pauli, with paintings illustrating Psalm 150. In 2010 a fire damaged the church and the organ was removed and rebuilt, with its Pauli case, by Weimbs in St. Foillan in 2012. Barry Jordan provided a demonstration including works by Rheinberger and Bernard Sanders before members took their turns at the bench.



St Foillan

Next, we resumed our carpool plan to travel to St. Martinus in the Richterich district of Aachen, once a village but now a suburb on the city’s outskirts. Indeed, we were taken in by the bucolic atmosphere of this small town: on our quest to find parking, we witnessed a family taking a walk across the fields with a baby stroller, a dog, and a horse in tow. Leading up to the church was a grassy cemetery and brick labyrinth. Kantor Angelo Scholly, organist at this church for 25 years, greeted us at the door.

He explained that the disposition of seating, altars, etc. within the church has been made flexible in recent years, to accommodate the pandemic (replacing pews with individual seating) but also different needs: various seating configurations and orientations for baptisms, services, and concerts. He spoke about the organ, built by Maas in 1836, and tonally restored but provided with a new action and winding system by Weimbs in 1988. The pedal stops which had been added at an earlier point were retained. It is a one manual instrument with pedals. He obliged with a demonstration including Johan Bernard Bach, Mendelssohn, and Carson Cooman, displaying some virtuosic registration, before inviting us to take turns at the



bench. While members expressed satisfaction with many aspects of this instrument, the unusual dimensions of the “custom” pedal board was not one of them.



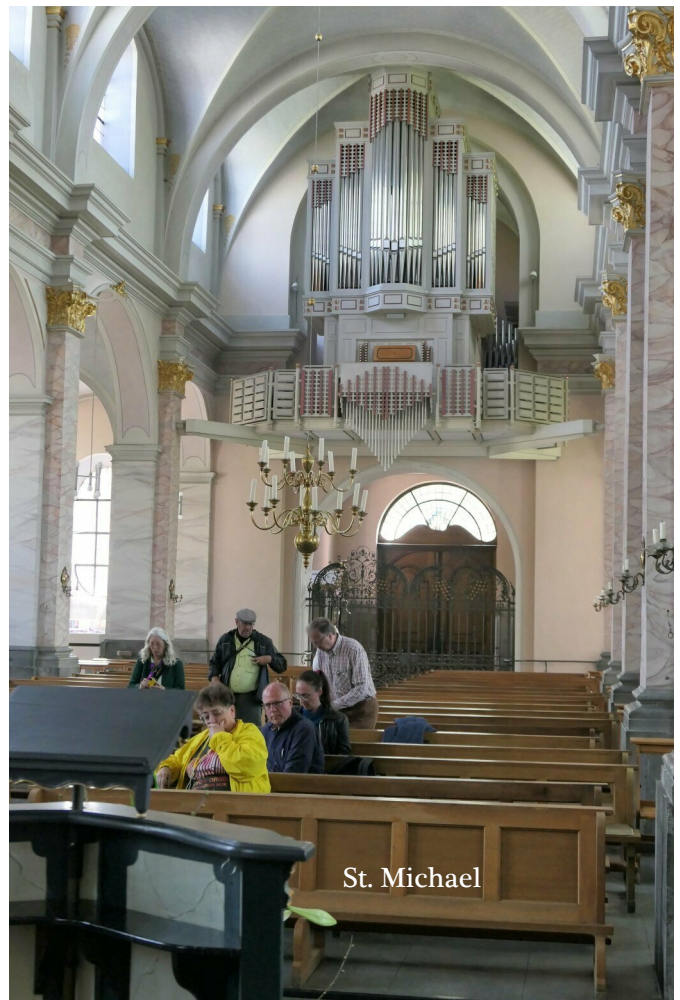
Upon leaving this church, our group began to disperse somewhat, with some members returning to obligations in their respective home countries or elsewhere. The remainder of us drove back to Aachen center, enjoyed lunch and ice cream cones, and then gathered in two groups (the Walkers and the Drivers) to travel to the Burtscheid neighborhood of Aachen. We first went to the Herz-Jesu-Kirche, a church in neo-romanesque style dating from the turn of the 20th century. It has an uncommon shape, with a very short nave, since it was never really completed, but the apse contains the 2nd largest mosaic in Aachen, after that of the Cathedral.



The organ, by G. Stahlhuth (Pelzer) has been altered since its completion in 1939; in particular, the Rückpositiv was totally recast in a more pronouncedly neo-baroque manner, with new pipework and even a new case, which consorts rather oddly with the caseless façade of the rest of the instrument. It is scheduled to be rebuilt again soon, with renewed wiring, and new casework. This was the last instrument produced by its builder, just before his entire workshop, along with most of its archives and many of the staff, perished in World War II. Though it seems neo-Baroque in conception, it has a Romantic voicing, making it versatile. This versatility was reflected during the demonstration by Kantor Andreas Hoffman, as well as during the informal playing that followed.

We then packed up and walked to St. Michael, 15 minutes away, where a spacious white and gold interior flooded with the sounds of a Mustel harmonium being played awaited us. The amount of sound generated by this instrument in the building was a revelation indeed. Andreas Hoffman offered this brief prelude before introducing the 1999, French-inspired Weimbs organ. This impressed us partly by its exceptional loudness - and by the visible tubular bells hanging from the front of the gallery. He performed a demonstration of Dupré and Franck, registering both pieces himself entirely by hand despite the lack of a combination system; and those of us who were still there took our final turns to play a bit as well.

We convened for an informal final meal together at the Magellan tavern that evening, enjoying local (and less-local) beers and local (and less-local) foods, as well as company and conversation that had been sorely missed for the two previous years. We had thoughts for those of our members who were not with us, whatever their reasons, and hope next year that all those willing and able will be able to do so - wherever we meet!. Conversations continued as we dispersed to return to our rooms.



The following morning, in the time before my train, I felt there was an important part of Aachen that I had not experienced: the Carolus thermal baths. No members were able to linger and come along so I promised myself to report my experience in conclusion. Though smaller in size than certain thermal spas I've visited in other countries, this was a gem of a place to unwind from the week. Hot, steamy basins next to cold, bracing ones provided for an energizing experience. An outdoor whirlpool made it possible to enjoy the spring air while drifting gently in circles. After a few hours I ventured upstairs to the sauna area, where I soon became aware that this was a "textile-free zone". At this point, I felt that after a week of discovering and comparing organs, I was not in the mood to encounter any more ... "organs" - and so I returned to my locker, to my suitcase, and to my train, with the intention of writing this report. I'm already looking forward to next year!

*Alissa Duryee*

\*\*\* "You can't miss it" – thus spoke our fearless leader of the year Axel Wilberg (a number of times) while explaining to the sheeple how to reach the various destinations – because, for the first time in a number of years, most churches were reached on foot or by private cars, not in a coach. In fact, he perhaps overestimated the collective intelligence, and it turned out not to be impossible at all. And so the phrase became the unofficial motto of the meeting.



## Introducing some new members



The first of our new members probably needs no introduction, because he is **Nathan Laube**, certainly one of the most prominent organists of our time. I will be doing an interview with him for our next Newsletter. He has played absolutely everywhere and won all the prizes, so for the meantime it suffices to say that, after some years teaching at Eastman in Rochester NY, he was appointed Professor of Organ in Stuttgart as from the winter semester of 2020/21 as successor to the legendary Ludger Lohmann, who was one of his teachers.



**Jörg-Hannes Hahn** is, as it happens, also a professor in Stuttgart. He is also a practising church musician whose imaginative program "Music on the 13th" - concerts are always held on the 13th of the month, whichever day of the week it may be - in Bad Cannstadt has long been an object of admiration for his colleagues, myself included. His biography states that "his love is for early music and German romanticism, his interest is contemporary music", and he has a long list of premieres and performances of contemporary works to his credit, both as an organist and as a conductor.



**Francesco Botti** hails from Brescia; he was born in 2000, so probably wins the "Youngest Member" competition without much ado. He studied, amongst others, with our Sub-Dean Giorgio Parolini and has an impressive list of competition successes and master-classes on record.

Do take the time to visit the "Biography" page of his website at <https://www.bottifrancesco.com/biography>

## News from Bernard Sanders

Bernard Sanders has just completed a new composition for Bass Clarinet and Organ. "Soliloquy and Impromptu" was commissioned by Jutta Hafner of Balgheim, Germany. It can also be performed effectively with Cello and Organ.

Sanders' "Four Advent Motets" for four trombones, based on the gregorian Introits for the Sundays in Advent, have been accepted for publication by Musikverlag Martin Schmid, a publisher specializing in music for brass instruments, in Calw, Germany.

The publication of Sanders' collection of Preludes on chorales for the Christmas Season "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" was delayed for over two years due to Covid. It is now scheduled for release in Fall 2022 by the Sacred Music Press, a division of Lorenz Publishing.

## The long Goodbye: Our past Dean honoured.

**Aachen, Germany.** A very special tribute to Judy Riefel-Lindel took place at the midweek dinner during the Spring Meeting 2022 of the European AGO Chapter. Commemorating her many years of serving the Chapter as Dean, former Chapter Secretary and Newsletter Editor Bernard Sanders presented her with two bound volumes containing all of the Chapter Newsletters from the past 23 years. This compendium contains 9 issues edited by Kurt-Ludwig Forg between March 1998 and May 2000 and 86 issues edited by Bernard Sanders between October 2000 and January 2022. It contains 842 pages and, for all practical purposes, serves as a chronicle of chapter activities for this entire period of time. Since the Chapter was founded in 1979, this encompasses more than half of the chapter history. Copies were also given to her successor Johan Hermans (current Dean), Alissa Duryee (Secretary), Barry Jordan (Newsletter Editor), and Ludo Vandersmissen (Treasurer). A further copy will be sent to AGO Headquarters in New York for the archives.



## Upcoming recitals

May 6, 9:00 pm            Katelyn Emerson  
Bergamo (Italy), Sotto il Monte Giovanni XXIII: Charles Tournemire, Alexandre-Pierre-François Boëly, Percy Whitlock, Edward Bairstow, César Franck, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, and Louis Vierne

May 8th                    Rhonda Edgington  
Hope Church, Holland, MI, USA: "Tulip Time" concert. Music by Sweelinck, VanEyken, Ad Wammes, Piet Post, Marius Monnikendam, Bert Matter, Margaretha Christina de Jong

May 15, 4:00 pm        Katelyn Emerson  
Fréjus (France), Cathédrale: Georg Muffat, Johann Sebastian Bach Johann Adam Reinken, Aaron David Miller, Bernardo Pasquini, and Hugo Distler

May 15th                 Bernard Sanders  
Tuttlingen (Germany, Maria Königin: "Orgelgeschichten" with texts and music on the theme of Peace

May 22nd, 4:00 pm     Barry Jordan  
Fallersleben (Wolfsburg), St Michaelis: Sweelinck, Boyvin, C.P.E. Bach, J.S.Bach

June 4th, 7:00 pm      Giorgio Parolini  
 Elsterberg (Germany), St Laurentius: Bach/Liszt, Bach, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Bossi, Macchia

June 5, 2:30 pm Katelyn Emerson  
 Cape Elizabeth, Maine (USA), St. Alban's Episcopal Church

June 10, 7:00 pm      Katelyn Emerson  
 Chatham, Massachusetts (USA), St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

June 12th, 7:00 pm    Giorgio Parolini  
 Goldach (Switzerland), St. Mauritius: Bach/Liszt, Bach, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Bossi, Macchia

June 19th,              Barry Jordan  
 Nordhausen (Germany), Dom zum heiligen Kreuz: J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Franck, Rheinberger,

June 24, 7:00 pm      Katelyn Emerson  
 Albuquerque, New Mexico (USA), The Cathedral Church of St. John

June 26th, 7:30 pm    Barry Jordan  
 Magdeburg, Cathedral: Buxtehude, Franck, Klatzow, Dupré

July 1st, 7:30 pm      Barry Jordan  
 Niederndodeleben (Germany), St. Peter and Paul: literarische Orgelnacht

July 4, 9:00 and 10:30 am Katelyn Emerson  
 Tacoma, Washington (USA), AGO National Convention, Christ Episcopal Church: George Muffat, Johann Adam Reincken, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, David Dahl, Hugo Distler, Felix Mendelssohn, and Johann Sebastian Bach

July 8th, 6:30 pm      Barry Jordan  
 Hamburg (Germany), St. Petri: Buxtehude, Bach, Klatzow, Franck

July 17, 5:00 pm      Katelyn Emerson  
 Reykjavik (Iceland), Hallgrímskirkja

July 21st, 20:00        Giorgio Parolini  
 Kuopio (Finland), Cathedral: J.S. Bach/F. Liszt; L. Vierne; C. Franck; G. Macchia; O. Ravello

July 23rd, 12:00        Giorgio Parolini  
 Gjøvik (Norway): O. Ravello; M.E. Bossi; G. Macchia

July 24th,              Barry Jordan  
 Lübeck, Cathedral

July 24th, 7:00 pm      Giorgio Parolini  
 Lillehammer (Norway): J.S. Bach/F. Liszt; L. Vierne; C. Franck; G. Macchia; O. Ravello

July 24th                Christoph Hintermüller  
 Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption, San Francisco, USA

July 25, 8:00 pm      Katelyn Emerson  
 Dachau (Germany), Kirche St. Jakob

July 27th, 7:30 pm      Giorgio Parolini  
 Meiningen (Germany), Stadtkirche: J.S. Bach/F. Liszt; J. Brahms; O. Ravello; M.E. Bossi; G. Macchia

July 29th                    Christoph Hintermüller  
Atlantic City Boardwalk Hall, USA

July 29th, 6:00 pm        Giorgio Parolini  
Munich (Germany), St. Franziskus: J.S. Bach/F. Liszt; L. Vierne; C. Franck; G. Macchia; O. Ravanello

July 31st, 4:00 pm        Giorgio Parolini  
Basilika St. Aposteln, Cologne, Germany: Franck, Vierne, G. Macchia



Our cover picture shows Bernard Sanders at the organ of the Lutheran church (“De Kopermolen”) in Vaals, during the Spring Meeting.