

Spring 2021

The American Guild of Organists San Francisco Chapter Quarterly Newsletter

Dean's Message

by Susanne Rommel

With the beginning of spring in the month of March, I continue to sincerely hope that all of you are staying safe and healthy! The physical barriers we are constrained by due to the pandemic have not changed the way we are a thriving community of musicians who share our knowledge and inspire passion for the organ! While our mission has not changed, this season has been and continues to be all about change with so many lives being impacted by the Covid pandemic. We are about to reach 2.5 million Covid deaths in the world, 500 thousand in the US, and 50 thousand in California. By the time you read this, we might have already reached these numbers. My prayers are with all the families and friends who have lost loved ones due to the pandemic.

Since I last wrote to you at the end of November, so many changes continued to happen. A second Covid wave with tremendous impact to our ICU-capacities occurred and was most likely triggered by increased travels and socializing during Thanksgiving and the Holiday season. We in California, found ourselves under limited Stay-at-Home order lasting until the end of January. On December 11th, the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for a vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 allowed the first vaccine to be distributed in the U.S.; what a milestone in the fight against Covid! The storming of the United States Capitol Hill, the inauguration of our President Joe Biden, and the major disaster in Texas, are other events in 2021, of such significance. I am looking hopefully to an end to the crisis in Texas within the next few days, to an end of social unrest soon and of course to an end of the pandemic later in 2021. Until we reach herd immunity, or until social gatherings can be held and accompanied by sufficient safety measures, we will continue our virtual concerts, virtual events and virtual meetings in our chapter. Our board members are continually evaluating conditions and time lines, when we will be able to get back to socializing as a thriving community of musicians – stay tuned!

There are a few changes we encountered going virtual which might have actually been for the better. For example,

Covid Relief Fund

from William Vaughan

National has set up a Covid relief fund for those who are not able to pay their dues.

Please contact Elizabeth George at 212-870-2310 or Elizabeth.george@agohq.org for more information.

SFAGO 2020-21 Program - Updated

- **All Members Recital** – March 7th, 5pm, virtual
- **Dr. Zachary Zwahlen in Concert** – March 21st, 4pm. See Bio (p2) and Dean's Column.
- **Chris Tietze in Concert** – April 25th, 4pm., virtual. Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Cathedral Organ, St Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco
- **Organ Crawl in San Francisco** – May 31st, 1pm, virtual

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Review: Ten Gregorian Sketches

from Justin Kielty

Ten Gregorian Sketches for Organ, Set 4 and Set 5, by James Aylward. 2018, \$18 each set. Order direct from the composer: 69 Benton Avenue, San Francisco, California 94112, 415/333-5702.

It has been my distinct pleasure to provide three reviews to date on the organ works of James Aylward (Gregorian Sketches, Sets 1–3, and Ten Free Arrangements) for this periodical. Throughout my observations and comments regarding his works, four outstanding characteristics and compositional procedures consistently manifest themselves especially in these five sets.

First, Aylward's personal and professional connections with Gregorian chant continue to be a source of musical inspiration for him. His lived experience of this music in the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church infuses his choices to shape and reshape his chant materials with rhythmic interest and nuance.

Second, the composer's skills from improviser to written score are on full display in these latter volumes. Although he generally moves to no more than two or three tonal areas per composition, each statement of the chant demands our interest anticipated or preceded by free material.

Third, what has always astonished this reviewer is this free material that seems to be an organic outgrowth from chant

itself. At times, this music is just a pure joy to play and hear, while at other times so heartfelt such that I wished the composer would pen more works on these themes.

Fourth, Aylward provides the organist with his registration suggestions, a feature in all five volumes that displays his great imagination and gift for color. His registrations are designed for larger instruments with plenty of color choices, but as I stated in other reviews, these can be adapted for smaller instruments when aware of his initial intentions.

By comparison to the first three volumes of Gregorian Sketches, these latest editions reveal a richer harmonic language and greater use of chromaticism. The composer includes in each volume the chant source from the Liber Usualis that gives insight to his titles for each of these twenty-two pieces. Some of these chants will be unfamiliar to many organists today, deriving from Vesper and Tenebrae antiphons, but there are others still used such as Pange Lingua Gloriosa, Jesu Dulcis Memoria, Salve Regina, Alma Redemptoris, Lux Aeterna, and a brilliant toccata on Deo Gratias of Mass II.

I encourage my colleagues to investigate one or more of these volumes for their services and recitals. In each of the five volumes, Aylward reveals to us how timeless is the music of Gregorian chant, and he provides music that inspires, bridges centuries, and is music of great spiritual value.

—David Troiano St. Clair Shores, MI ▼

The Spring issue covers March, April and May.

The next scheduled newsletter is the Summer issue in June.

See notices throughout for deadline dates – bottom of front page, Calendar heading and Classifieds heading.

San Francisco Chapter Newsletter is published monthly, August thru May, with a Summer issue for June/July, by the San Francisco Chapter, American Guild of Organists. Opinions stated herein are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect official policies of this Chapter.

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Sub Dean: James Smith
Sub Dean Elect: Christopher Keady
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Registrar: Christoph Tietze, 415.924.1377
Chapter Website: www.sfago.org

All members have access to the online directory and can find email addresses there if they wish to contact fellow members.

Newsletter Departments: *Send your entries to the appropriate editor; all submissions are subject to editing, e.g., for length; all submissions are due by the 20th of the month preceding publication. No exceptions allowed.*

Events Calendar Listings: Brian Swager, 415.551.7866 — See Calendar page for email contact
Job Placement & For Sale Listings: David Howitt, 510-437-0254 — See Placements page for email contact
Obituary Listings: William Vaughan
Newsletter Articles & Paid Ads: George Morten, 209.565.6660, george.morten744@gmail.com

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2020-2021
Last updated 08/25/2020

Bio: Dr Zachary Zwahlen

from Bill Vaughan

Dr Zachary Zwahlen currently serves as the Assistant University Organist at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN. In addition to playing for numerous worship services, he also collaborates with Sewanee's music faculty on various projects and performances, and is an active accompanist in the music department.



Dr Zwahlen earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Organ Performance and Literature at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, where he studied with David Higgs and Nathan Laube. During his studies at Eastman, Zachary received the Gerald Barnes Award for Excellence in Pipe Organ (2014), the Dr. James B. Cochran Organ Prize (2017), and in 2016 he was a finalist in the AGO National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance. He holds additional degrees in organ performance (MM, BM, Brigham Young University) and piano performance (BM, BYU; AA Community College of Southern Nevada). ▼

Steve's Organ Lit Corner

by Steve Repasky

A few unexpected settings to learn for next January:

1. *Variations on Auld Lang Syne*, op. 30 by Eugene Thayer. The theme, three easily handled variations, and a fugue on this popular New Year's song, found on IMSLP.
2. *In Dulci Jubilo*, setting by Norman Dello Joio
Found in: Augsburg Organ Library: Christmas, ISBN 9780800659356
3. And another flashy American setting of *In Dulci Jubilo* by Leo Sowerby.
No. 2 in the Advent to Whitsuntide collection found on IMSLP under Leo Sowerby - Collections. ▼

Angela Kraft Cross featured at Washington National Cathedral

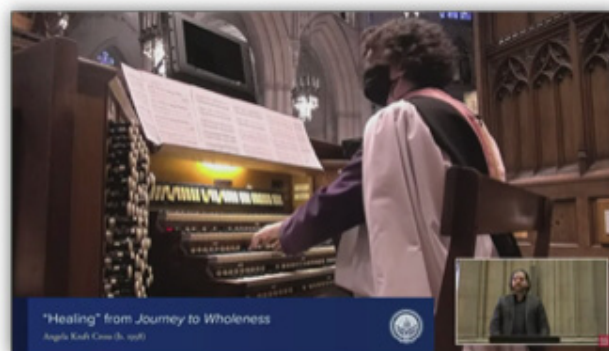
from William Vaughan



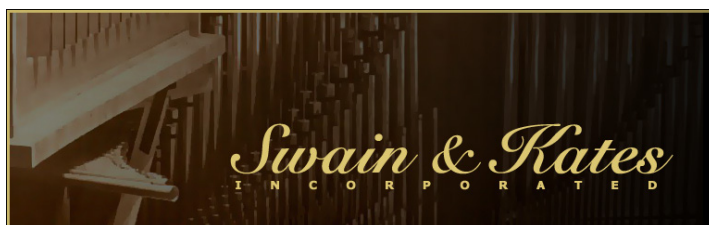
The Postlude for the National Prayer Service at Washington National Cathedral on Thursday, January 21, was "Healing" from Journey to Wholeness written by Angela Kraft Cross, a member of SFAGO. Angela found out about this happening the morning of the Prayer Service. Congratulations Angela!

You can hear Angela's piece by clicking on this link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=4867&v=wexVgkaFkVw&feature=youtu.be>



Thomas M. Sheehan at the Aeolian-Skinner organ at Washington National Cathedral



Dean's Message, from front page

Jonathan Scott got us perfectly into the Holiday Season with his Rochdale Christmas Organ Concert on the 1913 Binns Organ. With the increasing online presence of extraordinary organists like the Scott Brothers Duo, many more can enjoy performances online than what would have been ever possible in person. An example of the extent of this change: Jonathan and Tom Scott have totaled, with their online performance videos, over 30 million views, and their regular online concerts since we found ourselves staying at home in March 2020 have reached a worldwide audience of well over 1 million people. What an opportunity to reach over 1 million in the audience with just one performance! Another change that might have been for the better: Do you remember the pouring rain in the Bay Area, both on January 24th and February 15th this year? Without the pandemic these days would have been the dates of our originally planned wonderful events: The Grace Cathedral Weicheng Zhao recital including reception, and our organ crawl including walking outside to four places on Cathedral Hill and Nob Hill in San Francisco. With the virtual replacement events, the Robert Huw Morgan recital in January and our first Black History Month celebration in February, I was very glad to find myself cozily at home watching the events on my computer, instead of driving and walking through pouring rain. I am sure that not many of us would have joined these events in person with such weather conditions on both days. And on another positive note: Our Black History Month event had been noticed by headquarter AGO ahead of the event. With their additional advertisement, many AGO members from all around the U.S. were joining us on February 15th. That would not have been possible without us moving to virtual sharing.

To highlight our upcoming virtual events: First time ever, we will hold a virtual members recital on March 7th. We will be publishing the event on our Members Page on our website, www.sfago.org.

Thanks to all our members, who will be joining virtually and who submitted their recordings. Our young organist scholarship recipients of the mid-year 2020 cycle will perform for us during this member's recital as well. This event itself will



SFAGO Organ Crawl, February 2020

be more evidence of a thriving community of musicians sharing their passion for the organ!



Dr. Zachary Zwahlen

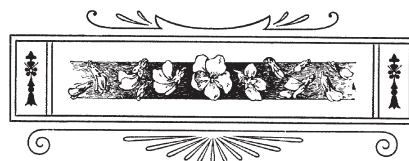
And within this month, on March 21st, we will have Dr. Zachary Zwahlen in concert. Zachary serves as the Assistant University Organist at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. The program will be recorded on the Casavant organ at All Saints' Chapel at The University of the South, and will include works by Bach, Saint-Saëns, Widor, Vierne, Duruflé, and

others. As a reminder, all our events are captured on our website's calendar, please check out <https://www.sfago.org/20202021-season>.

As you can imagine, the planning for the next season 2021–2022 has been quite difficult, as there is a lot of uncertainty of whether we will be able to join back together in person events or whether we will need to continue with our virtual events. I want to share with you, that we are planning as flexibly as we can, to ensure that we move back to in-person events as soon as safe, while planning also for the scenario that the virtual presence will continue into the next season.

I want to end this article with a special note: We are very glad to announce the December 2020 recipients of our Young Organist Scholarship: Jessica Le, student of John Hirten, Xiang-Xiang Reynolds and Edward Lee, students of Angela Kraft Cross each received the SFAGO Award – Congratulations!

Wishing you all hope and contentment during these continued difficult times, sending love and peace,
Susanne Rommel ▼



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The SFAGO wishes to thank the following people for their support of the Recital Series.

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Merrill Collins
Patricia Harre

Thank you very much for your donations! There is still plenty of time to send in a tax-deductible gift.

These lists were compiled from AGO National remit forms. January 1 thru November 30, 2020

Bay Area Concert Calendar

Collected by Brian Swager

Spring ²⁰²¹

Events, dates, times, and locations are subject to change without notice. Compiled from flyers, press releases, and listings submitted by members and organizations. SFAGO is not responsible for errors, although every effort is made to be accurate. **Submission deadline for the June issue is May 20.** Send event listings to sfagocal@gmail.com. Please include admission charge, as events are free of charge unless otherwise indicated. For the most up-to-date calendar, visit www.sfago.org, click on "Resources" and select "Calendar"

As of publication time, St Mary's Cathedral, Mission Dolores, and St Mark's, Berkeley are venues that are holding livestreamed recitals. We recommend that readers consult the church websites for upcoming performances

St Mary's Cathedral, <https://www.youtube.com/archdioceseofsanfrancisco>

Mission Dolores Basilica, www.missiondolores.org and <https://www.facebook.com/missiondoloresf>

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, www.stmarksberkeley.org

St Mary's Cathedral Sunday Afternoon Musical Meditations

For the time being, all performances are livestreamed on the Cathedral YouTube channel (see above for link)

SUNDAYS OF MARCH

7th, 4:00 pm: Anita Graef (Chicago), Cello, with Emily Seaberry, Flute and Piano, and Julian Graef, Violin. Works by Villoldo, Faure, Gliere, and Danzi.

14th, 4:00 pm: David Hatt, Organ. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the artist's first recital.

21st, 4:00 pm: Hans Uwe Hielscher (Germany), Organ.

28th, 4:00 pm: Amelia Romano, Harp, with Matt Ebisuzaki, Trumpet.

SUNDAYS OF APRIL

4th, 4:00 pm: Gail Archer (New York), Organ.

11th, 4:00 pm: Norm Paskowsky, Organ.

18th, 4:00 pm: St. Mary's Cathedral Choir.

25th, 4:00 pm: Christoph Tietze, Organ Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Cathedral Organ

SUNDAYS OF MAY

2nd, 4:00 pm: The Pianissimo (Piano Trio of the Musical Arts Association)

9th, 4:00 pm: Quantum Quartet (Piano Quartet), with Jeanette Wilkin Tietze, Piano; Wendy Loder, Violin; Meg Eldridge, Viola; and Joel Cohen, Cello.

16th, 4:00 pm: St. Brigid School Honor Choir (Cathedral Choir School). Spring Concert.

23rd, 4:00 pm: Folias Duo, featuring Carmen Maret, Flute, and Andrew Bergeron, Guitar.

30th, 4:00 pm: Duane Soubirous, Organ.

St Mark's Episcopal Church (see above for link)

Remaining concerts this season
(Second Sunday of the month)

March 13, 4:00 pm. Jerome Lenk

April 11, 4:00 pm David Lim

May 9, 4:00 pm Jeremy Bruns

June 13, 4:00 pm Susan Jane Matthews



Classified Ads

Collected by David Howitt

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FREE EAST BAY - INLAND

LP organ records (about 40) are free! Please **text** Fay Hui Chu at 925-948-8690. If you *phone* that number, it will not go through, so please **text** her. Fay lives in Walnut Creek.