



# BOSTON PIPINGS

news and notes for members of Boston Chapter AGO

## ***March 2021 Pippings - The Newsletter of the Boston Chapter AGO***

[Click here to go to the Calendar on our website.](#)

### **Meet the Executive Committee**

Greetings!

Welcome to a new feature of our newsletter. We are asking members of our Executive Committee and of our Chapter to introduce themselves in our newsletter. This month we feature Claire DeCusati, Election Coordinator.

My musical journey started in the early 1960's – with a Kodak TV commercial. A child was playing a chord organ with the family gathered 'round, singing. Now, this was in no way a portrait of my family, but there was just something about playing music caught my attention. I asked my parents for an organ, and to my amazement I received a spinet organ. I started lessons around age 10, directly on the organ. Piano training would come later. I enjoyed lessons at the local music store (remember them?). My parents realized quickly that I needed a more qualified organ instructor. Nancy Massar became my teacher; I studied with her through high school and she became a friend and mentor for life.



When it was time for college, family quickly told me “music was a creative way to starve”. Besides, I had received a full tuition scholarship at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL), which pretty much determined the school I would attend. It had no music program. I obtained a Bachelor's degree in Business and an MBA from UMSL, and started work upon graduation at IBM. I had a 30 year career with IBM for which I am grateful. I have travelled many places with that company, and still have wonderful friends from that part of my life. My IBM career also allowed for many musical adventures, including getting kicked out of Stephansdom in Vienna, for being too close to the chancel organ. But I digress.

I started my first paid organ position in Freshman year of college at an Episcopal Church in Ferguson, Missouri on an electronic organ. Wherever I moved with IBM, I always found another church position. In the early 1990s, when I was still young and energetic, I enrolled in Westminster Choir College's Certificate Program in Sacred Music. This program truly changed my life. I finally felt I belonged somewhere – where students and instructors were interested in the same subjects as I was. I had excellent instruction in organ, music theory, conducting, handbells, and voice. Classes were held on Monday nights. So, I worked at my IBM office in Bethesda, MD from 6AM until 10AM then caught the 11:30AM Amtrak train to Princeton. After classes, I took a cab back to Trenton, NJ and

a train back to Maryland, arriving home at 2 AM on Tuesday. I was back to work in my office at 8:30 AM on Tuesday. I did this weekly for one year, after which I received my Certificate.

I have had a series of church positions over the years, from organist to Minister of Music. I have worked in churches large and small, some with great musical instruments, and some not so much. I love working in the church: working with people who love music and showing the connection between music and theology. Music is “The faith we sing”. Although I have no current permanent church position, I enjoy substituting so other organists can take a Sunday off. My life’s work in music continues, and I am grateful for it.

Thank you for allowing me to share my musical journey with you.

Yours sincerely,

*Claire DeCusati*  
*Election Coordinator*



Special Project Advisory Committee

## Special Projects Advisory Committee (SPAC) News - *Deadline is Today!*

The next deadline for project submissions is **March 15, 2021**. To read more about SPAC, or to view submission guidelines, please [click here](#).

A poster for the Boston Bach Birthday 336 event. The poster features a large, stylized clock face on the left side, with Roman numerals and a sunburst design. The text on the poster includes the event title "BOSTON BACH BIRTHDAY 336", the date "Saturday, March 20, 2021", and the location "The First Lutheran Church of Boston". It lists several recitals with their times and performers: 9:00am Jonathan Wessler (organ), 10:45am Louise Munding (organ), 12:00pm The Timko Family (violin), 1:00pm Erica Johnson (organ), 2:10pm Noam Elkies (piano), 3:00pm Jeremy Bruns (organ), 4:10pm Wesley Hall (organ), and 5:30pm Music for a Lenten Organ Vespers. The poster also includes a note about watching the recitals live on Facebook and a link to sign up for in-person attendance.

## The Boston Bach Birthday is back!

*BAGO partners with First Lutheran Church Boston*

In honor of JSB's 336th birthday, First Lutheran Church of Boston will hold its annual celebration of Bach and his music on Saturday, March 20, 2021. Owing to the circumstances surrounding the pandemic, in-person attendance will be limited, and all the music will be livestreamed for those who can't make it in person. Also, the customary German lunch unfortunately will be impossible to provide this year.

In-person attendees should sign up in advance for the recitals they wish to attend by clicking [here](#)

To watch the recitals live, click [here](#)

For more information, including the day's recital program, click [here](#)

This year the BBB returns to its roots as an all-day series of organ recitals featuring local talent. At 9am Jonathan Wessler will play the “Great Eighteen” organ chorales of Bach, followed by Louise Munding at 10:45am, who has constructed a fascinating program on the four seasons centered on Bach’s Four Duetti, BWV 802–805. At 1pm Erica Johnson will play works of Bach and his son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, followed by more organ works of JS 3pm (Jeremy Bruns) and 4:10pm (Wesley Hall).

In addition to the organ-related festivities, the Timko Family, members of First Lutheran, will play music Bach and Petzold on the violin. Also, Noam Elkies will play a piano transcription of Bach’s first Brandenburg concerto (in honor of the 300th anniversary of the Brandenburg concerti in March of this year), as well as his own “Two-Bit Invention”, composed in honor of his first haircut since March 2020 (!).

Customarily, the BBB ends with a festival Vespers; however, in lieu of a proper Vespers service with festival choral music, this year Jonathan Wessler will play the music one might hear at a mid-seventeenth-century north German Orgelvesper (Organ Vespers) at

5:30pm, with the necessary chants sung by tenor William Farrell.

Deo volente, the Boston Bach Birthday will be back in 2022, in its full incarnation, on Saturday, March 19. Mark your calendars now!

## Sign up to perform at the Chapter's Virtual *Orgelbüchlein* Recital!

We are excited to invite you to participate in our All-Chapter program for the spring, a virtual recital of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* — as performed by BAGO members! The *Orgelbüchlein*, with its many, shorter chorale settings, is an ideal vehicle for the mosaic of performers and instruments our chapter comprises. So, how will it work?



**First**, we're asking performers to sign up to record up one to four settings from the *Orgelbüchlein* by accessing the sign up form on Google docs [here](#).

**Second**, you'll have until the end of April to make your recording(s) and submit them via upload to the Google Drive folder [here](#).

Within the folder, you'll also find a sheet containing some tips to ensure a successful recording — though this may have become rather routine for many during a long season of pandemic!

All submissions be completed by **April 30** so that we have time to assemble the recital for its May premier.

**No matter your familiarity with this collection of miniature masterworks, there is a movement with your name on it.** To those who may have traversed the core repertory, now might be an ideal time to explore some lesser known settings. And if you're new to "virtual" music production, now is an excellent time to dip a toe into the digital waters.

We encourage you to join this effort and add your distinctive "voice" to our collaboration. There is no better way to highlight our amazing chapter and its fabulous members!



## Women in Music Festival (WIMFest) 2021

Undaunted, our sixth annual WIMFest will be held this spring. The Boston Chapter will purchase copies of "*Multitude of Voyces' Anthology of Sacred Music by Women Composers*" Vol. I SATB. To receive a copy, you will need to be among the first twenty-five members who sign up and attend the festival. The copies will be given to members who sign up and then attend the festival. The location of the festival is under discussion, as is the date, but it will happen before the program year is over.

Please look for further details (date, time, and location).

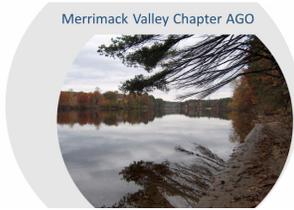
If you would like to preview the contents of the Anthology, please [click here](#)

## Save the Date!

The Chapter's Annual Meeting will be held this year on **Monday, June 7, 2021 beginning at 6:30PM via ZOOM**. Please mark the date on your calendars.

Last year we had a very engaging annual meeting using this virtual platform. We hope Members will join us again for this year in review.

Bring a beverage and join us. Meeting information will follow in future issues of Pippings.



## AGO Merrimack Valley Chapter (MVAGO) Invitation to the Virtual Mini-Convention February 27, 2021

On Saturday February 27th, the Merrimack Valley Chapter of the AGO presented its annual Mini-Convention online. The MVAGO was honored to welcome two eminent speakers: **Ian Watson**, who described his experience as conductor of the Handel and Haydn Society's "**A Messiah For Our Time**," and **Katelyn Emerson**, who spoke on "**Healthy, Efficient Practice: How Do We Learn?**"

These presentations are each about one hour long, and *feedback from the participants was excellent.*

If you would like to view these presentations on demand, please [click here](#).

## Beware of Fraudulent Email

Members of AGO are being targeted. Once again (as we have done so repeatedly on the past) we advise you to circumspect all email addresses and the content of email which are soliciting information from you. **CAVEAT EMPTOR.**



This is a sample of text which you may have recently received in your personal email box:

"Hello,  
I want to know if you can perform (piano) for an hour at my wedding ceremony with my beautiful fiancée at a private home in [city/town appears here] on April 10th, 2021. The ceremony will start by 5pm and the event will be attended by limited friends and family. Social distancing will be adhered to and all guests will be putting on face masks. You will be required to perform 7 minutes prelude, 2 minutes processional, 3 minutes Recessional and 10 minutes postlude all during the 1 hour of the ceremony. Please let me know if you are available and how much do you charge?"

You may then be asked to provide Venmo or Paypal information.

*If you receive this email, please delete immediately. Do not share any personal information, especially on an unsolicited email.*



## AGO Membership - Membership Aid still available

If you have suffered financial hardships and loss of income as a result of the pandemic, AGO has received donations to assist those who cannot afford to renew their memberships. If you do need assistance, or know someone who does, contact Lynn Vermeer so that she may send the name to AGO HQ. Your request will be held in confidence.

Have you moved lately? Has your address, phone, or email changed? If so you are probably busy with many tasks, and keeping your information current with AGO Headquarters may be lower on your to-do list.

Let us help! You can update ONCARD directly using your login id and password (the account number found on your TAO label). Or you can contact me using contact section of our website. [Click here](#) and address your comments to the Membership Secretary from the drop down box.

Please visit the AGO COVID-19 resource page by [clicking here](#) .

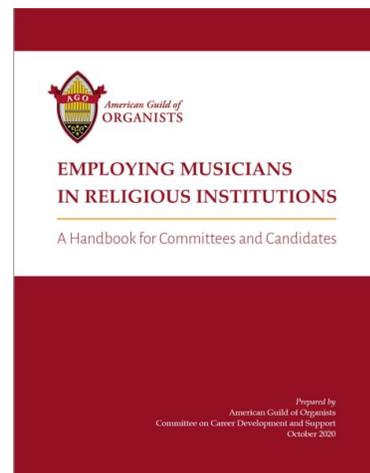
Most importantly, during this particularly challenging time, continuing to be part of our chapter offers you the opportunity to stay connected with a community who is here to engage, uplift and support you.

*Lynn Vermeer  
Registrar*

## New Guide Available from AGO HQ

The new guide, ***EMPLOYING MUSICIANS IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS: A Handbook for Committees and Candidates***, is available for download from AGO HQ [here](#).

Vincent Carr, Councillor for Education, moderated a panel discussion regarding Know Your Value: Introducing the AGO's New Employment Guide for Musicians on February 1st. If you would like to hear the recording of this webinar, [click here](#).



## Chapter Job Placement Listing Service

Do you know of a church, synagogue, or other institution looking for an organist? Please mention our Chapter's Job Placement Listing service to them! We will list the details of the position for up to 6 months (or until the job is filled). The placement details are then available to Chapter Members

only in the Members Area of our website. For more information, contact [Christine Hogan](#), placement coordinator, or visit our [placement page](#)

## Would you like to submit an article to Piping's? (*"all the news that fits, we print"*)

Articles of general interest to our Chapter members are always welcome. To submit an article, please [click here](#)



## Child Safety Committee Created

The Executive Committee has approved the creation of a Committee on Child Safety at

the February 8th EC meeting. The duties and responsibilities of this Committee are outlined in our Operating Procedures here.

**The Chapter is looking for 2 people to serve on this Committee**. Candidates must be willing to undergo Massachusetts CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) and SORI (Sex Offender Registry Information) Screening (at Chapter expense), sign a confidentiality agreement, and be approved by the Executive Committee.

If you are interested in serving our Chapter in this manner, please contact [Louise Munding](#)

### Know your Chapter's History Quiz:

Which Dean(s) have served multiple terms?

- George A. Burdette, founding Dean
- E. Power Biggs
- Victoria Wagner
- No one. The Operating Procedures don't allow it.



[Click here for the answer!](#)



### Food for thought

"It is the nature of music, unlike painting and most of literature, that its final creation is not its original creation. Music needs to be sounded, needs to be sung. It needs to be heard. In this sense the composer literally must leave his/her work to be finished by others. Namely us. Can you imagine Michelangelo asking us to come in and help finish the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel?" - Robert Shaw



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Click the image to link to AGO HQ website

Boston Chapter, American Guild of Organists | [bostonago@verizon.net](mailto:bostonago@verizon.net)

See what's happening on our Facebook Page:

