

A Letter From the Dean

Dear Members and Friends,

Here we are in November 2020, and it's hard to know what to say in such a complicated time and place as ours right now. What I have come to realize is that music's role in a time like this, especially in a time like this, could not be more important. I read a poem recently that I've been sharing with so many others. It's not specifically about music, but it does highlight the role Art plays in our lives – nurturing hope, and conversations, and was just written recently. (thanks to Steve Jenkins for tipping me off to this one, by recent winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in Literature, Louise Glück).

Song

By Louise Glück

Leo Cruz makes the most beautiful white bowls;
I think I must get some to you
but how is the question
in these times

He is teaching me
the names of the desert grasses;
I have a book
since to see the grasses is impossible

Leo thinks the things man makes
are more beautiful
than what exists in nature

and I say no.
And Leo says
wait and see.

We make plans
to walk the trails together.
When, I ask him,
when? Never again:
that is what we do not say.

He is teaching me
to live in imagination:

a cold wind
blows as I cross the desert;
I can see his house in the distance;
smoke is coming from the chimney

That is the kiln, I think;
only Leo makes porcelain in the desert

Ah, he says, you are dreaming again

And I say then I'm glad I dream
the fire is still alive

from October 19, 2020 Issue - The New Yorker

So many of us feel like we carry on conversations with those Artists (musicians, authors, composers, etc) who we've never met, but whose work speaks to us. The narrator in this poem introduces a potter – and it's not clear if she knows him personally, or just likes to imagine these conversations with him in her head. But he's inspired her – towards a love of porcelain, to learn more about the desert, to consider ideas she hadn't considered before, and to “live in imagination”. I think that last quote is a wonderful depiction of what Art can do for us. Not necessarily as an escape from the real world (though sometimes, a little escape can feel urgent), but so we can live into hope.

Will we be able to gather in public in large groups again, especially with our oldest and most vulnerable friends and family and community members also present? Will live concerts, singing outside your home with others, sharing food with strangers and friends around large tables, hand shakes and hugging, civility, respect, and kindness in our politics and public lives – will these things ever return? Sometimes, looking at the world around us, it's hard to imagine. But spend some time with a Bach fugue, or Brahms (as I did this morning), or gazing at a favorite painting or pottery, listening to a string quartet, read poetry – then maybe you can start to “dream the fire is still alive.”

Your AGO is planning an online November event – to help us all as we are thinking about the coming Advent and Christmas season at our churches, and wondering how exactly to make that season feel festive this year, with so much that we can't do. Gordon Bruns and I will host a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, November 17 at 7pm. This will be a moderated conversation/ round-table, as we hear from various members of the chapter about what they will be doing, and trade ideas and questions together.

More details will come shortly, but we hope you can join us for this event.
Here is the link for the meeting – I'll send it again later as well.

Topic: Holland Area AGO Meeting
Time: Nov 16, 2020 07:00 PM America/Detroit

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8836>

Meeting ID: 883 6214 3581
Passcode: 002172
One tap mobile
+16468769923,,88362143581#,,,

Membership Directory

I am getting ready to publish our 2020-2021 chapter directory. I'm asking all Holland chapter members to please log on to the AGO ONCARD website at agohq.org and check that your information there is up to date. Your listings in their database is what I use to build our directory.

Once you are logged on click 'Update Personal Information' in the gray menu area and then verify and change your 'Contact Information', if necessary. Then click the green 'View/Edit Address Information' button and make any necessary changes in that section. Use 'Address 2' and 'Address 3' if you want, such as to list your employer(s), and I will include that information also. If you do make any changes be sure to click the gray 'Post Changes' button at the very bottom, and then scroll back to the top and click the red 'Logout'.

Please do this before Monday November 16 and I will email the new directory to our members then.

Paul Dalman

Chapter Officers for 2020-2021

Dean - Rhonda Edgington
Sub-Dean - Linda Fulton
Secretary - Karen Howells
Treasurer - Gordon Bruns
Board Member - Rick Van Oss
Student Board Member - Alex Cross
Newsletter Editor - Paul Dalman

Website – hollandareaago.org