

A Letter From the Dean

Dear Members,

Happy December. I know it's a much different holiday season than we all expected, but I hope you are finding small things to enjoy despite so much change and loss. We had fun making ice lanterns to light up our sidewalks on cold nights last weekend!

If you didn't hear (and thanks to Linda Fulton for bringing it to my attention) our long-time member and friend Mike Van Doornik died on Tuesday. There is a small blurb in the paper today (Thursday) at the bottom of the obituaries pages (and the obituary is on the Dykstra Funeral Home website, ed.). I'd like to propose that our next newsletter include tributes or memories of Mike. I'm sure we have many. Send those to Paul and I, and we'll share them in the next newsletter, and can remember together his gracious and welcoming spirit.

Do you remember that it was only last Christmas (somehow, it seems so long ago...) that AGO members went caroling to both David Rossien's house, and Mike's place at Freedom Village? Sadly, we were not able to implement the plan to bring pianists into Freedom Village Inn to play for Mike and others on his piano, before COVID put an end to all such visits. I know Jane and Elizabeth and I marveled that Mike was singing along with the carols we sang, including adding harmony, even though the stroke robbed him of much of the ability to speak.

If you haven't taken time yet, I encourage you to check out the First Reformed annual Advent Recital played by Rick Van Oss, this year online, and available on the church's website.

<https://www.frcholland.org/>

As usual, Rick has a variety of familiar and new repertoire based on hymns we all love, scripture related to the music, and handbell players from the congregation, as well as visuals and multiple camera angles. If you scroll down the front page to the bottom, you will see it in the collection of videos posted, titled 2020 Advent Organ Recital.

Hope Church's Advent organ recital this year included poetry and instrumentalists, and can be found on their Facebook site - <https://www.facebook.com/pg/hopechurchholland/videos> scroll down to the video labeled "Hope Church Advent 2020" with candles on the table.

I will also take this opportunity to draw your attention to some online offerings available from AGO resources.

The AGOYO group has been posting monthly programs – my organ students at Calvin and I watched the organ tour of Longwood Gardens, and it was really fascinating and well done. Highly recommended! The panel on organists of color also looks very interesting. The entire program can be found here.

<https://www.agohq.org/agoyo/agoyo-fridays-at-noon-online-events/>

The AGO New York City Chapter presented a series of virtual musical tours of some of NYC's most impressive organs. The five tours featured the organs of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, St. Thomas Church

Fifth Avenue, Grace Church, The Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, Saint James Church, the Church of the Resurrection, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church and The Riverside Church.

Second Hand Splendor: The Organ Clearing House at 60 was also presented. Links to the entire series can be found here: <https://www.agohq.org/online-programming-for-chapters/> located under the Membership menu on AGO's home page.

Sign up for January's Webinar Monday, January 11th, 4:00 pm EDT How We Worship: The Ever-Changing Environment Join organists David Enlow, Leslie Wolf Robb, Matthew Burt, Meaghan King and Alex Oldroyd, in a panel discussion that addresses the unique challenges they face based on state and denomination restrictions in their houses of worship. To attend this webinar, please register here. https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yvMWmtYsQ4WIMAOqQsvCHg

I also happened to listen recently to the podcast On Being, which was an interview with cellist Yo Yo Ma, and found it so inspiring. You can listen, or read the transcript on the website.

<https://onbeing.org/programs/yo-yo-ma-music-happens-between-the-notes-jul2018/>

Here's a quote from it, and a reminder to all of us. It's not about proving anything, it's about sharing.

“While I'm on stage, you are all my guests, because that's sort of the unsaid agreement. While you're my guest, if something bad happens on stage, I often think of Julia Child, “Oh, the chicken's fallen on the floor! Yes. Oh, well pick it up and put it right back.” And you know what? Everybody's with you. So whatever you practice for on the engineering side that fails is all right, because we have a greater purpose. The greater purpose is that we're communing together and we want this moment to be really special for all of us. Because otherwise, why bother to have come at all? It's not about proving anything. It's about sharing something.”

Member Karen Howells has fractured her knee in a fall (while helping out at the Community Action House!), and is stuck at home, so if you know Karen (and if you don't, you should!) take the opportunity to drop her a note and wish her a quick recovery.

Also, I will remind us all, if our AGO dues are up for renewal, to make sure to do so in a timely manner. I for one am always forgetting and getting it done too late, but I'm sure you all are better than me.

Best wishes to you all this Christmas Season, and into the new year -

Rhonda

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