

Delaware AGO Chapter Officers

Bill Robinson, *dean*

David Schelat, *subdean*

Don McFarland, *secretary*

Mike Bareham, *treasurer/registrar*

Members-at-large

Melissa Heieie

Joanne Hench

Steven Patchel, *newsletter*

Jane van Valkenburg

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*Delaware AGO
Member Spotlight*

Gabe Benton



Letter from our Dean

Thinking back over the past three years, I note that my time as dean was divided almost exactly in half between in-person meetings and virtual events. As we begin to emerge from the darkness of the coronavirus pandemic, I want to thank our members for their eagerness to maintain a vital chapter when many chapters essentially suspended operations. I particularly want to thank the other officers and board members. It was a team that worked together extremely well for the benefit of our organization. The chapter will be in good hands as some new officers take over.

I want to encourage your attention to two important AGO initiatives. With another summer of no national or regional convention, the AGO will build upon the success of last summer's OrganFest by offering OrganFest 2021. Preliminary information about the virtual event promises that the array of offerings will be even richer than last year's. You can learn more at <https://www.agohq.org/organfest-2021/>.

All of the coming 2021-2022 season has been designated the Year of the Young Organist. As you have probably read in TAO, organists under the age of 30 will pay no membership dues for the coming season. As someone decidedly on the other end of the age spectrum, I note that in our chapter of almost 60 members, we have a total of two in the category of Young Organist. Anything we can do to attract and support young members will be vital to the future of our organization.

I wish you a pleasant and safe summer, and I look forward to seeing you in person soon.

— Bill Robinson

From our Sub-dean

What a year it has been for the Delaware Chapter, AGO, as well as all of our churches, and the whole world. While we certainly would not want to repeat it, all of us have learned a lot. Our AGO chapter has continued to flourish and provide interesting and engaging meetings via Zoom during this time of new technologies!

In fact, many of these meetings garnered greater participation than in “normal” seasons. While none of your board members are certain why this happened, there are a few possibilities.

- Holding meetings via Zoom is more convenient than in-person meetings.
- Our daily lives were less scheduled than normal, so we could attend these meetings without conflicts.
- We were starved for things to do and people to see, and this was a convenient outlet.
- The topics were more interesting than previous years.

Any and all of these scenarios could be in play. Perhaps you could let your board members know why this may have occurred!

With the information gathered from the pandemic year in mind, your program committee for next season – Barb Bayers, Gabriel Benton, Michael Davidson, Steve Patchel, and myself – are hard at work planning our next season, and will likely create some programming that is available both in person and online.

Finally, thanks to those who came to our final meeting of the season, a fun lunch on Sunday, June 6 at Chelsea Tavern in Wilmington. We honored outgoing board members Melissa Heieie and Joanne Hench, as well as presenting a past-dean pin to outgoing dean Bill Robinson. These folks have led us with wisdom and grace during the past three years, and we thank them heartily! We also were able to get to know newish members Dalaie Choi and Gabe Benton, both of whom have just been elected to serve the chapter as board member and sub-dean, respectively. A lovely time was had by all, and we look forward to our next meeting in September!

—David Schelat

DELAWARE AGO 2021-22 Fall Events

Sunday

September 12 @ 4:00 pm

(Rain date Sat. Sept. 18)

Potluck Picnic Social

hosted by Tony Thurman

With new officer installation

by regional councilor

Wayne Wold

Saturday

October 9 @ 10:00 am

How to Sing for Life

with Suzanne DePlantis

Saturday


November 6 @ 10:00 am

Workshop for

Newer Organists and Pianists

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Bear DE

Notable Summer Events Online




SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY'S

CHURCH MUSIC INSTITUTE


An all-online conference for 2021!

Sessions June 20-24 | 7:30PM – 9PM (EDT)

Visit www.su.edu/cmi to learn more and register.



Dr. Wayne L. Wold, Director



SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY
Shenandoah Conservatory



Organs of Oberlin (l-r): Fairchild Chapel's Brombaugh Op. 25, Finney Chapel's C.B. Fisk, Warner Concert Hall's Flentrop and Harrold organs.

OBERLIN SUMMER ORGAN ACADEMY

<https://www.oberlin.edu/summer-programs/organ-academy>

Sweelinck Studies: June 14-19, 2021

Summer Institute: June 20-25, 2021

Presented by the American Guild of Organists



AGO ORGANFEST 2021

beauty endures

JUNE 27-JULY 2, 8PM EASTERN
AGOHQ.ORG

*** Reminder to Renew Your Membership! ***

www.agohq.org/oncard-login/

WHO is the The American Guild of Organists?

Some of us are organists and some of us are organ buffs.

Some of us are concert organists and some of us are beginners.

Some of us are choral conductors.

Some of us have advanced degrees in organ and some of us are self-taught.

Some of us play pipe organs and some of us play electronic organs.

Some of us are active musicians and some of us are retired.

Reasons to be a Member of The American Guild of Organists

Connect with other organists/directors

- Social and Educational events
- Email, newsletter, website communications
- Concerts/recital announcements

Stay informed about news in the organ and choral professions

- *The American Organist* magazine subscription
- DE Chapter Newsletter, Website, Facebook
- AGOHq.org articles, news, events, videos

Enhance your skills as an organist and choral conductor

- Educational presentations at national and regional events
- Articles, links, videos on agohq.org
- AGO Certification courses
- Access to job listings, organ builders, technicians, teachers

Nurture new organists of all ages

- Teaching resources
- Scholarships/Competitions
- Pipe organ encounters

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

by Steven Patchel



Gabe Benton

*Choir School of Delaware
Grace United Methodist Church
Newark Symphony Orchestra*

Where are you originally from?

I'm originally from Dover, PA in York county.

What are your earliest musical memories?

My very earliest musical memories would probably be hearing my dad play the guitar, the music at church, and messing around with a toy piano. I remember being fascinated by the organ at church from a young age, although it was some kind of electric organ with light-up drawknobs.

What were your studies and degrees in music?

I ended up with three music performance degrees: a Bachelor's in harpsichord/historical performance from Oberlin, a master's degree in the same from Juilliard, and then another master's in organ performance from Yale.

How is it to play organ, piano, harpsichord?

Like most of us, I started out playing the piano. I took organ lessons beginning in high school, but initially that felt like a secondary thing for me, and I started off college as a piano

performance major. At that time I was obsessed with early music to the point that it overshadowed most everything else, so it felt like a natural progression to switch my focus to historical keyboards. But after a particularly meaningful church job, I started to see the organ and church music as a more important aspect of my musical life, and I ended up getting an organ degree as well. I really enjoy the wide array of types of repertoire and different kinds of performances you can be involved with as a multi-keyboardist.

What brought you to Wilmington?

I suppose the short answer is "work." For about half a year I was commuting here from Baltimore for my position at Grace UMC, and when I joined the Choir School as well, I expedited my move here. I love living here. Wilmington itself has so much to offer for a city of its size, but it's also great for the proximity to major metropolitan areas as well as outdoor activities and beaches.

How has the pandemic year been for you?

It hasn't been a fun time for anyone, but I feel very fortunate... other than the lost gigs and missed social interactions, I made it through mostly unscathed. It is an incredible relief that we seem to be in the home stretch though!

Any hobbies/interests outside of your musical activities?

I love being in, on and around water—in the past couple years I've gotten really into sailing and kayaking. I ride my bike a lot too, if that counts as a hobby. To be honest, most things that I do are music-related though.



House Organ

by Denton, Coltier
and Daniels
Available in Olean, NY

Contact Candy Lynch
candylynch@woh.rr.com

Substitute List

KEY: (S) Sunday, (C) choir, (HB) Handbells, (SS) Special Services, (W) Weddings, (F) Funerals

Richard L. Allen, DMA—SS, W, F (c) 410-937-1790
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