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August Newsletter '23



On June 25, the annual Chapter Officers' Installation Dinner was enhanced by a hymn sing at First Congregational Church of San Jose. Performers are pictured above (left to right): Michael Cala, Elisabeth Pintar, Susan Snook-Luther, Vlada Volkova-Moran, Cathryn Wilkinson and Eric Holderman

Conventions: Portland '23 and San Francisco '24

Summer provides an opportunity for musicians — especially those who work for churches or with students — to take stock of successes, note areas where further learning is needed, and to make plans for the new year. Fortunately, the AGO provides conventions each summer that give us a chance to exchange ideas with colleagues, learn from excellent workshops, hear a variety of wonderful instruments, and be inspired by fantastic performances. I look forward to these carefully planned 4-5 days of music and friendship. Invariably, I return home overflowing with insights gained, and energized for more music-making.

This summer's Region West convention in Portland, Oregon was no exception. Although I had time to attend only the last day, it was well worth the flight to Portland. The convention's theme was "Let's Dance!", and within just 14 hours I experienced a fascinating lecture on dance-inspired 20th- and 21st-century music led by Dr. Pamela Decker of the University of Arizona; an excellent master class on dance idioms in the organ works of J. S. Bach taught by George Ritchie, retired professor of the University of Nebraska; an exquisite recital on a locally built 2-manual tracker organ played by Susanna Valleau of Seattle, and a full-length concert featuring varied works from the past 150 years played by Dr. Decker, who was commissioned by the convention to write an organ piece to be performed with dancers. The glorious day culminated in a delicious catered dinner and a chance to meet the artists and to greet friends old and new. I'm so glad I didn't miss out!

Next summer, from **June 30 – July 4, 2024** we have the rare opportunity to enjoy a national AGO convention in our own backyard! The "San Francisco" convention, while centered in the great city by the bay, will also include events in Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Berkeley and Oakland. Plan now to attend, and perhaps to volunteer your time either before or during the convention. As a member of one of the planning committees, I assure you it will be worth your while to connect with our amazing teams under the visionary leadership of convention chair, Matthew Burt. In addition, you can support the convention now with a monetary gift in any amount. Click [HERE](#) for more information about targeted giving. Let's do this!

~ Margaret Kvamme, newsletter editor

In memoriam



Christine Merjanian, a longtime member of the AGO San Jose chapter, passed away on May 20, 2023, from complications of pancreatic cancer, three years after her initial diagnosis. She was 64 years old. Christine served as organist at three bay area Presbyterian churches over the course of 25 years. She served the San Jose AGO Chapter as auditor and attended nearly every event.

She is survived by her family of music lovers: husband Stepan, amateur violinist and longtime member of several local community orchestras; and her three children who all served as church organists or choir accompanists at various times: son Alishan, recipient of the Frasier Scholarship, now a music teacher and father of Christine's treasured granddaughter Alina; son Oshagan, professional cellist and music teacher; and daughter Chinar, winner of the Quimby Regional competition, who is now doing ministry work in Armenia.

Christine was born in Beirut, Lebanon on December 31, 1958. She was the first baby born to the newlywed George and Esther Manoukian. Beirut had a tightly knit Armenian Evangelical community, and Stepan Merjanian, a young teenager and her future husband, knew of Christine's parents and had heard about her birth. In Beirut, Christine's mother became her first piano teacher.

After the 1976 civil war in Lebanon, the Manoukian family moved to Sunnyvale, where Christine completed secondary education at Fremont High School.

Next she moved to Southern California, attending Biola University as a piano major while minoring in harpsichord and organ. In the Los Angeles area she met Stepan, an engineering graduate of UCLA who also played violin. Stepan jumped at the opportunity, suggesting they play some duets!! They were married on her birthday, in 1983.

In the Los Angeles area, Christine served as organist first at San Marino Congregational Church, then at the United Armenian Congregational Church. A job opportunity for Stepan in 1992 meant a move to San Jose, which delighted Christine who was now back with her family in the Bay Area. Her first position as a church organist here was at Irvington Presbyterian Church in Fremont, followed by First Presbyterian Church in Santa Clara, and finally at Westminster Presbyterian Church in San Jose.

Her primary occupation was homeschooling her children and bringing them up in the Christian faith and with a solid musical education. She also touched many children and families as a piano teacher. But for her, it was not business; each student became part of our family. In the words of San Jose AGO Board member Kay Lee, Christine will be remembered as "a devoted wife and mother, a woman of strong faith, a fantastic musician, and esteemed member of our Board."

Christine's memorial service will be held on **August 12, 11am, at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church**. One of her final requests was that Margaret Kvamme would be the organist. Margaret will be performing special music in Christine's honor starting at 10:30am. There will be a light finger food lunch reception following the service. Please email stepanmerjanian@gmail.com if you plan to attend, so we can prepare an appropriate amount of food for our guests.

Additionally, AGO members are invited to sing in a choir for the memorial service. Repertoire will be the final "Amen" chorus from Handel's *Messiah*, sung at the end of the service (likely you may sit in the pews for the rest of the service).

The core of the choir will be 12 – 14 members of New Choir, conducted by Eileen Chang. AGO members are welcome to participate.

There is a rehearsal on Tuesday evening, **August 8, 8 pm at Daesung Presbyterian Church**, 425 Tasman Dr., Sunnyvale. Attendance at this rehearsal is encouraged.

Warm-up for the service will be at **9:30 am on Saturday, August 12** at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, 728 W. Fremont Ave, Sunnyvale.

Dress is any appropriate church service clothing.

Please bring a black folder and your Messiah score, or contact Margaret Kvamme for a printable score to be emailed.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of students registered, the August 19 **Pipe Organ Adventure** in Palo Alto has been cancelled for this year. Look for another offering in September, 2024, as well as our own San Jose Chapter's annual Pedals, Pipes and Pizza in the winter months. Start thinking now about students you can invite!

Jobs Available

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, Carmel Valley, seeks an **Organist/Choir Director** to establish and maintain a robust and inspiring music program that incorporates corporate worship and invites broad participation by the choir and congregation. 15–20 hrs. per week; Salary range: \$34,000-38,000; Benefits/Pension negotiable. Volunteer choir (currently numbering 9) with 3 paid section leaders. Traditional Anglican music and other forms of sacred music. Instruments: Dobson II/23 stops (2015), Kawai grand piano. Leadership and taking on a pastoral role for our entire music ministry are key to this position. The candidate will embrace collaboration with the Organ Concert Committee and be an active member of the staff who participates in the life of the parish. Looking for a person who will nurture a culture of invitation to participate in our music program. Weekly 90-minute choir rehearsal on Saturday mornings at 9am. Sunday call time for choir warm-up and rehearsal is 8:30am. Our Choral Eucharist is at 10:00 a.m. Also required: organ or piano prelude for the 8 am Sunday service, as well as playing at the 8am service on major holidays (Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter); prelude and postlude, as well as all hymnody and anthems for the 10 am Sunday service. Attend weekly Staff Meetings, liturgical planning meetings, and assist with timely preparation of bulletins and newsletters by providing information and proofreading. Maintain music library, ensure compliance with copyright laws including for digital broadcasts, oversight of maintenance for instruments, participate in all appropriate mid-week, holiday, or special church services, as well as offer musical support for once-monthly Family Church as needed. Examples include Evensong, Healing Prayer Service, Sunday Night Hymn Sing, School Christmas Pageant, etc. A full job description is available from: The Rev. Laurel Coote. Email: revlaurelc@gmail.com. Learn more about St. Dunstan's at stdcv.org, or by following us on our Facebook or Instagram pages. We are an equal opportunity employer. Please submit cover

letter and resume (including links to samples of music conducted or performed) to: The Rev. Laurel Coote. Email: revlaurelc@gmail.com

St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, Foster City, seeks a **Music Director** to work 15-20 hours per week. Negotiable, competitive hourly compensation commensurate with experience. Additional compensation available for extra services, including memorials and weddings. The candidate should have experience with choral direction and leadership in congregational music, spirituals, and contemporary and classical choral repertoire, excellent keyboard skills; fluency with both organ and piano, possess a collaborative style in engaging with church leadership, have an understanding and affinity for the liturgical style of the Episcopal/Anglican tradition with flexibility to engage with a wide variety of music styles and tastes. Weekly Thursday evening (2-hour) and Sunday morning (30-minute) rehearsals with the choir during the annual choir season (September through early June). Collaborate with Rector, staff, and choir in repertoire and hymn selections and seasonal planning, oversee organization and maintenance of the parish choral library, collaborate with occasional volunteer and guest instrumentalists, coordinate music for Children's Chapel, collaborate with community to recruit more choir members

The St. Ambrose Choir is a dedicated, volunteer group of 5 members with a repertoire ranging from traditional Anglican hymnody to classical choral music to spirituals. St. Ambrose has a long history of church music and a warmly welcoming congregation. To apply, send resume and references to: The Rev. Fr. Jason B. Lucas-Green frjason@stambrosefostercity.org

The Episcopal Church in Almaden (ECA) in San Jose is seeking a **Music Director:**

Organist/Pianist. Ideal candidate qualities and background: familiarity with Episcopal/liturgical worship; flexibility and willingness to learn and lead new styles; ability to work collaboratively with Rector and other music leaders and musicians; range of experience with musical styles and genres; experience introducing congregations to new musical styles; experience with choral conducting; talented organist and pianist; ability to recruit and nurture choir members

Key points: Experienced adult choir; modern 3-manual digital Phoenix organ from England; one Sunday morning service at 10:45 a.m.; choir rehearsal Sunday morning starting no earlier than 9:30 (except during summer); work with bell choir, folk choir and casual choir; intimate, in-the-round worship space; church facility shared with UCC congregation (which has its own Music Director). Part-time position (15 hours/wk. average) with competitive salary and negotiable benefits. For more detailed job description and additional organ specifications, please see: www.churchinalmaden.org/news/churchinalmaden/job-details/music-director-search2. Email resume to: Todd Axtell, Music Director Search Committee: toddger@aol.com

Concerts and Special Events

(Listed by venue, note embedded Livestream links for some venues).

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, San Jose

Friday, August 25, 12:10 pm Lecture/recital by Stephen Boniface with projected visuals explaining the history of the organ and Q & A. Free.

Christ Episcopal Church, Portola Valley

Sunday, August 13 at 4-5:15pm Ethan Haman performs French Classical period through contemporary works, plus a fully improvised organ symphony based on themes gathered from the audience. Free.

St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Cathedral, San Francisco, 1111 Gough St. @ Cleary

(Parking under/beside the cathedral). These concerts are live-streamed and available here (simply click on the url): <https://YouTube.com/cathedralofstmaryoftheassumption>

All are on Sundays and begin at 4:00 pm.

July 30: **Joy-Leilani Garbutt**, organ. French women composers

August 6: **Don Pearson**, organ. Works by Alain, Purvis, Handel, King, Yon, and Bach

August 13: **Jeanette Wilkin Tietze**, piano

August 20: **Mario To**, guitar, with Xiyang Wang, piano

August 27: **Freiburg Cathedral Girls Choir**, dir. Martina van Lengerich

September 3: **Dr. Michal Szostak** (Poland), organ

September 10: **Angela Kraft Cross**, organ

September 17: **Corina Santos**, violin, with **Chia-Lin Yang**, piano

September 24: **August Lee**, cello

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 110 California St. at Taylor (pay parking underneath the

cathedral, entrance is on Taylor Street between California and Sacramento streets. A \$10 donation is requested. These concerts are live-streamed and available here (simply click on the url):

<https://gracecathedral.org/watch-grace-cathedral/>

First Sundays of the month, 4:00 pm:

August 6: **Mitchell Miller**

Cathedral of Christ the Light, Oakland, 2121 Harrison St. (pay parking underneath the cathedral).

Sunday, 3:00 pm organ recitals:

July 30: **Christopher Keady**, organ

August 6: **Steven Ball**, organ

August 20: **Rudy de Vos**, organ

Also at Cathedral of Christ the Light:

Saturday concert (3 pm)

August 26:: **Freiburg Cathedral Girls Choir**, dir. Martina van Lengerich

And, every Saturday at 4:00 pm, there are free organ recitals (for Bay Area residents) at the **Palace of Legion of Honor, San Francisco, in the Presidio**. Usually, these are played by **Jonathan Dimmock**. More info here: <https://www.famsf.org/events/organ-concert>

Your SJ AGO Board 2023 - 2024

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The next newsletter will be published in September. The deadline for submitting concert listings, articles, photos, job listings and notices of instruments for sale, etc. is **August 30**. Click on the red button below for a set-up email where you can conveniently type and attach items.

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c/o Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos

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