



Antiphon

*News from the Annapolis Chapter
of the
American Guild of Organists*

January 2023



Dear Colleagues,

In My Two-Year-Old Eats Octopus, Nancy Tringali Piho writes of taking her two-and-a-half-year-old son to a restaurant in Miami:

“We began our meal by ordering a ceviche appetizer to share. The large platter contained calamari, octopus, and shrimp ‘cooked’ in the traditional lemon and lime juices, along with baked plantains and a smattering of local diced sweet onions. It looked absolutely delicious.”

“As he had been taught (or perhaps trained) to do after so many previous experiences in restaurants, Willie asked the waiter to bring him a small teaspoon. The waiter smiled as he complied, asking, ‘Is he really going to eat that?’

“ ‘Mmmmm! Octopus!’ Willie squealed at the first bite. ‘More octopus!’

“His enthusiasm and delight were contagious, attracting attention and comments from diners at several nearby tables.

“ ‘I can’t believe that child is eating ceviche,’ one grandmotherly-looking woman said. ‘He loves it!’ her companion noted, adding, ‘The kids I know would never try something like that.’

Piho continues her delightful book with a number of suggestions for expanding the palates of children. Regarding her own son, she notes, “The more exposure he has had to different cuisines, the more he has come to understand how to taste ‘real’ foods and how their flavors contrast with foods that are run-of-the-mill, overly processed, or ‘flavor-enhanced’ with chemical sugars or inexpensive deep-frying. As a result, we have seen him develop a happy appreciation for the joy that food can bring to one’s life.”

As I listened to the interviews of Piho that surrounded the release of her treatise, I was struck by the descriptions of all-too-common parental attitudes and behavior concerning their children’s eating habits. Many parents simply look for the ‘easy way out’. They acquiesce to a child’s whining and ultimately end up serving steady diets of fast food, deep-fried and overly processed courses, accompanied by the empty calories of many carbonated beverages and other packaged sweets.

Interestingly, the parental behavior toward food is similar to attitudes of some in the church toward music. Far too many leaders acquiesce to the whining about the congregational song that is employed during Advent. They find the “easy way out” and ensure that the hymnody of December is focused not on the penitential preparation, but immediately rushes to Christmas. In another portion of the liturgical year, I encountered a priest who required that all hymnody be chosen from a short list of some 20 hymns, regardless of any connection to lections or the overall service theme. Other worship leaders are rushing to employ overly processed instrumental music, devoid of “substance”.

We can see the effects of this fast food culture on the health of the population of these United States. Current projections are that the obesity rate exceeds 40% in some states and continues to climb. That increase is a harbinger of the many accompanying medical problems that will face those whose diet has taken the “easy way out”.

Likewise, those churches whose music programs take the “easy way out”, staying within narrow diets of overly processed or easily digestible music, may also see their health problems soon grow. Such diets do not provide long-standing sustenance. “Fast food” diets in music and liturgy threaten to erode the spiritual and mental health of the population.

Some in leadership capacity may wish to give in to whines of “I didn’t know that hymn” or “I don’t like that kind of music”. Just as young children will bawl incessantly when they do not get the fast food they’ve seen in advertising, so will some parishioners complain when we offer the best hymnody, organ literature, or choral anthems that span the centuries. As when dealing with the children who may not want to eat their Brussels sprouts, we must not be deterred, but keep offering the balanced diet.

For the health of our nation and our churches, we must do our part to avoid the pitfalls of acquiescence. We must continue to expose our congregations to the best of musical offerings providing the richness of centuries of musical legacy. Just as Ms. Piho can say, “My two-year-old eats octopus”, we should strive for the day when each of us can assert, “My congregation loves Messiaen”, “My pastor adores Reger”, “My youth choir had a blast singing Schoenberg”, “The children in Sunday School delight in singing Bach chorales”, or “Our junior high ensemble jammed on Gesualdo”.

Happy New Year!

David Beatty, Co-Dean

NEXT CHAPTER WORKSHOP

Saturday January 7, 9:30 - 12:00: *Broadening the Repertoire: A Sampler of Organ Works from Lesser- Known Composers A-Z*, presented by David Beatty. Nicola Patterson will host us at Severna Park United Methodist Church, Severna Park. We will enjoy refreshments during a break; please contact Betsy Lord if you would like to bring something. Free for Annapolis and Southern Maryland AGO members; \$20 registration fee for others. \$10 for students with ID. David Beatty shares a preview of the workshop:

While typical organ study focuses on works of “canonic” composers such as J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn, Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Franck, Widor, Vierne, and Messiaen, there is a rich legacy of organ compositions outside that canon.



During several of my graduate school years, aside from my service at the university chapel, I also served as organist at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. The seminary community gathered for a short worship service four days each week for which I provided opening and closing voluntaries as well as leadership of congregational singing. The need for four preludes and postludes at the seminary each week, as well as the more substantial voluntaries customary at the university chapel led to development of a broad repertoire. The seminary organ was a nine stop, two manual, tracker instrument without combination action. During the AGO workshop, I will be sharing several of the works that I employed during that time. Such works needed to be capable of “assembly” within about 30 minutes of pre-service rehearsal. As such, I’ve found them to be quite useful portions of my repertoire.

Another portion of the repertoire I will be sharing come from the pen of composers considered part of historically under-represented (in gender or ethnicity) groups.

The workshop will introduce works that organists of all skill levels can find useful or worthy of their rehearsal time. Some works are essentially “sight readable”, while others may require preparation over the week before performance. Certain works have been featured on recordings or concerts by artists such as Cherry Rhodes, Alan Morrison, Christopher Herrick or the late John Scott.

With “something for everyone”, this workshop is intended to broaden awareness of the repertoire at the start of this new year. See you there!

FUTURE CHAPTER EVENTS

Saturday, February 25, 10:00 - noon: *Resources and Strategies for Children’s Music*, St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church, Annapolis. Clinicians Michael Smith and Jim Douglas. The workshop will cover resources (and how to adapt them for local circumstances), practical tips on starting and maintaining a children’s choir, and a discussion of ways to reach singers of all ages and keep them motivated and growing. Free for Annapolis and Southern AGO members; \$20 registration fee for others. \$10 for students with ID.

Monday, April 24, 6:30 - 8:30 PM: *Annapolis AGO Member Night* at the United States Naval Academy. Organist and Director of Chapel Music Monte Maxwell will talk about the organ, and members will be able to play a favorite piece while Monte pulls the stops. Members of the Annapolis and Southern Maryland Chapters are invited to bring music and shoes and have fun playing and/or listening.

A NEW ORGAN

St. Margaret’s Church in Annapolis recently celebrated the installation of a new organ. Director of Music Jim Douglas invited area organists to participate in a hymn sing during the dedication weekend. Here is a video of our chapter member Grace EunHye Oh playing “Now Thank We All Our God:”

<https://youtu.be/O3d3VtbGurI>. Here is a link to a hymn from the Sunday morning service:

<https://youtu.be/0dpGcqfeUYQ>

Jim spoke about the importance of good music in the church, and we share an edited version of the remarks he made at the November 13th hymnsing here.

A warm welcome to you all as we celebrate this milestone in the liturgical and musical life of St. Margaret's Church....Throughout the Christian tradition, the importance of music and singing cannot be understated. Why do we sing? Why are we able to sing (whether we think so or not!)? I think we're supposed to sing because the Bible tells us to, and because God gifted us with our voices. What better way to give thanks for our voices than to use them to sing?!

The act of singing, and the act of playing instruments, are found throughout Scripture, often highlighting major moments in the story of God's relationship with his people. Just to name a few instances:

- Moses and Miriam singing to the Lord as the Israelites flee through the Red Sea out of slavery into Egypt
- Mary singing the Magnificat after discovering she would become the mother of God's son
- The angels singing to the shepherds at Jesus' birth
- Paul writing to the Corinthians that the resurrection will be heralded by the sounding of a trumpet
- The Book of Psalms or Psalter was originally called the Tehillim, or "praise songs" in Hebrew
- Countless psalm verses like Psalm 96:1 "O sing unto the Lord a new song..." in Latin "Cantate Domino"

In the context of liturgy (the work of the people) and worship, (the "worth-ship" of God), singing can be deeply formative. Psalm 150 provides the perfect juxtaposition of worship and music and singing:

Praise the Lord....

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,
praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

In college, I had the good fortune of taking a psalmody and hymnody course with renowned musicologist Robin Leaver, one of the world's great authorities on the music of J.S. Bach and Martin Luther. He had a unique definition for what a hymn is. Most of us here would probably define a hymn as a worship song, or a song that praises God. Dr. Leaver defined a hymn or hymns as theology encapsulated. Theology encapsulated. How true?!

Some longtime St. Margaret's parishioners may remember The Rev. Gerald Ash, former Associate Rector here at St. Margaret's Church. He passed away last year and sadly, I never had the chance to meet him. I was surprised to discover that he and I shared the same experience of growing up as a treble chorister in Manhattan, he decades earlier at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine under Alec Wyton and me at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue under Gerre Hancock. No doubt we would've enjoyed sharing similar stories of our treble days under those icons of church music. Dr. Wyton was famous for saying that all church musicians wear three hats, or serve in three roles, "first—as pastor, second—as teacher, and third and last—as performer". William Bradley Roberts, Professor of Church Music Emeritus at Virginia Theological Seminary and music director at St John's Lafayette Square back when our Rector the Rev. Peter Mayer served there, expands on Dr. Wyton's quote in his book "Music and Vital Congregations," saying that church musicians play a significant role in creating spiritual community among their parishioners. The question posed to us church musicians is, what could be more important than leading worship and inspiring others to do the same? Or building community through singing?

Other than our human voice, the best vehicle in which to facilitate these things is through the playing of the organ. As the organ committee conveyed at the outset of this project, a fine instrument in capable hands adds a splendor to worship and can powerfully lift us spiritually, sometimes when we don't even realize it. The organ uniquely possesses the capacity to support the corporate singing of any sized gathering while giving resonance to the breadth of human emotions, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation.

With our new sanctuary organ, we have an instrument that will further enhance our liturgies and other musical offerings, while ably serving as a vehicle to draw people to us as we continue to strive to musically lead, inspire, and transform through worship, education and performance.

So, to revisit my original question, “why are we gathered for a hymn sing and not another organ recital?” I pose two questions as an answer. First, what better way is there to build community in the overall context of sacred music? And second, does anything more transcendent exist besides a gathering of voices singing their praises to God (music to our theology encapsulated) accompanied by supportive and imaginative playing?!

Three musicians have graciously agreed to share in the leading of this hymn sing today. David Ogletree of M&O Organbuilders, T.J. Thomas, Minister of Music at St. Peter’s Church, Lewes, DE, and Grace Oh, Organist at First Presbyterian Church here in Annapolis.

NEWS FROM REGIONAL COUNCILLOR WAYNE WOLD

Wayne sends greetings and best wishes for a year “full of joy in all your music-making and a sense of fulfillment because of all the lives you touch with your talent and hard work.” We would like to encourage young organists to compete in the 2023 AGO/Quimby Regional Competitions for Young Organists; the application deadline is January 15. Three competitions will be hosted in our region; the closest will be in Alexandria VA. See <https://www.agohq.org/performance-competitions/> to apply.

Wayne shares that there are two volunteer opportunities at the regional level. A new Coordinator for Competitions is needed — someone to succeed Clarice Snyder. Also, the registrar for the Regional Convention, being held in White Plains NY had to step down, and a new Convention Registrar is needed. Contact Wayne Wold at midatlanticrc@agohq.org or phone him at 240-446-4030.

JOB POSTINGS

All Faith Episcopal Church, 3885 New Market Turner Rd., Mechanicsville, MD. seeks an organist to play for a warm and welcoming small congregation in a lovely historic and rural setting. There is one 11 a.m. Sunday service per week. Because there is no choir, the organ music is featured at each service. The service is relaxed and joyful using traditional music. The organ is a two-manual, twenty rank refurbished John Brown pipe organ. Please send a resume to allfaithchurch1692@gmail.com, attention Parish Office Administrator. Interviews will be conducted as resumes are received. For more information, see allfaithchurch.com.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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