



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

November Newsletter

Director's Note

There are two items on my agenda for this month:

1) Getting all of you thinking about music for Women Composer Sunday! Two friends of the Task Force are sharing their IMSLP sites, which will provide some free choices for you to consider. It's good to think about this before the New Year, when you will come off of your post-Christmas fog already worrying about Lent and Holy Week! [We will also try to include IMSLP links to free organ music by women in every newsletter till WCS]

2) Calling your attention to the great Tri-Chapter collaboration that took place in Washington, D.C., in mid-October. Read below!

All the best,

Nancy Cooper

Newsletter Follow-up

Last month, we listed music by women that was played/sung for Queen Elizabeth II's funeral and committal ceremony; Dame Ethel Smyth's chorale prelude on "O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid" was included. The chorale preludes of Dame Smyth (1858-1944) are available on IMSLP [International Music Score Library Project], so if you don't know them or play them, here is your easy access to free scores:

[SHORT CHORALE PRELUDES BY ETHYL SMYTH](#)

For those of you who are piano teachers, have a look at this!

[A SEAT AT THE PIANO](#)

New on IMSLP!

Greetings to you all - my name is Ben Cornelius-Bates and I hope to share something exciting with you all. As a composer, I have always felt it important to write music that is accessible both in terms of playability and pricing. For that reason, I have posted quite a few (free!) works on IMSLP. More recently, I started a project making arrangements of historical women composers (and a few composers of color). There is certainly enough music written by historical women composers out there but not much of it is written for the organ. My hope is to create a variety of arrangements that vary in length and difficulty that can be played for a liturgy or concert. Go to the site "imslp.com" and search for my name. At my composer page, there is a tab "As Arranger" where you will find some of these pieces - I hope to be adding many more arrangements soon and regularly!

Dr. Benjamin Cornelius-Bates

Assistant Professor of Musicianship, Duquesne University

Director of Music and Organist at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

[BENJAMIN CORNELIUS-BATES IMSLP](#)

Thoughts on Composing, Publishing, IMSLP, and Repertoire Accessibility

BY CHRISTA RAKICH

Composing for me began as a self-help guide to improvisation. As a church musician, each week I selected one hymn from the following Sunday's list, and made that my focus for improvisation that week. I wrote out the tune and an overall plan for variations. If something sounded really good, I'd write that down. If something was a struggle, I'd write that down too, as a way of figuring out just what the problem was.



At first, I copied Johann Pachelbel, and I have many sets of variations that follow the same pattern. That was the point of the exercise: to inculcate easy, accessible techniques and make them so habitual I could reproduce them without thinking. As time went on, I found there were lots of historical sources to steal from! Bach said Vivaldi taught him "musikalish denken." For me, Pachelbel was the model.

When my “hymn of the week” recurred in the liturgical scheme of things, I’d start with my previous sketch and just keep going. I’ve shared this technique with my students as a way to help them cultivate their own stashes of improvisatory patterns they can apply to any liturgical requirement for instant music.

So now, retired from regular church work, I find myself with a computer full of half-written pieces. The idea to finish them and put them out on IMSLP came as a solution to forgetting to email them to friends who asked for them. I'd never thought of publishing them, as they really were conceived as personal exercises. It would be like publishing yoga routines, I thought. (But wait, people DO publish yoga routines!) When my wife urges me to publish them, I brush her off with “They’re not very original.” She replies with “Only a woman would say that.” Maybe that’s true, but in the end, the path of least hassle is just to upload them.

That said, I’m happy to add that Oxford University Press has asked me to write two pieces to be published in their next volume of Hymn Settings for Organists.

This begs the question, though. Is formally published music better than self-published music? Certainly not inherently so. Do scores reach more potential players if they are published? I don’t know, but I suspect that balance is shifting in the age of digital sharing. Who profits more from printed scores, composers or publishers? I don’t know this either; the money side of music publishing seems rather opaque. (Anyone who downloads scores of mine and would like to pay for them can make a donation to the Oberlin Conservatory Organ Department.)

Carlotta Ferrari is a composer with a huge output, nearly 1000 works, on IMSLP. I would be interested to know her thought process behind that decision. And Carson Cooman has an opus list of over 1000 works, many published by Leupold Editions, and many self-published. That prompts another question: what led him to go from one to the other? And Margarethe Christina de Jong, whose music I play, is published by several different companies. I don’t think she self-publishes at all. She seeks out a publisher for each piece she writes. Do you know about Zimbel Press? Their music is distributed by Subito. I’ve noticed several women in their composers’ list.

READERS! Explore Christa’s compositions at these sites:

[CHRISTINA RAKICH](#)

[CHRISTA RAKICH IMSLP](#)

Composer of the Month

Lili Boulanger

Marie-Juliette Olga "Lili" Boulanger (August 21, 1893 – March 15, 1918) was a French composer and the first female winner of the Prix de Rome composition prize. Her older sister was the noted composer and composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. Both sisters studied at the Paris Conservatoire. They grew up in a time of musical transition and Lili's music fits easily into what was becoming defined as a post-Romantic style. In addition to composing, Lili was a singer and played organ, violin, cello, and harp. After her early death, Nadia worked tirelessly to promote her sister's compositions.



Learn more about her by clicking on one of the links below!

[LILI BOULANGER IN HER OWN RIGHT](#)

[LILI BOULANGER: THE COMPOSING PRODIGY](#)



Check It Out

On October 14, the AGO chapters of Northern Virginia, the Potomac, and the District of Columbia combined to host PipeSpectacular 2022. It was a program of music of women composers, played by Joy-Leilani Garbutt (a former DC chapter member, now at St. Luke's, San Francisco), with additional musicians participating, from the D.C. area, at National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C. The program, in partnership with the Boulanger Initiative, not only featured music by women composers but included spoken program notes and explanations, as well as an exploration of resources to help attendees incorporate the compositions into their repertoire.



From left to right: Ronald Boehmer-Butts, Dean of the Northern Virginia Chapter, Brenda Weiser, Dean of the Potomac Chapter, Joy-Leilani Garbutt, Elizabeth George, AGO Chief Membership Office, Paul Byssainthe, Dean of the District of Columbia Chapter.
(Photo by Elizabeth George)

JOY-LEILANI GARBUTT PROGRAM



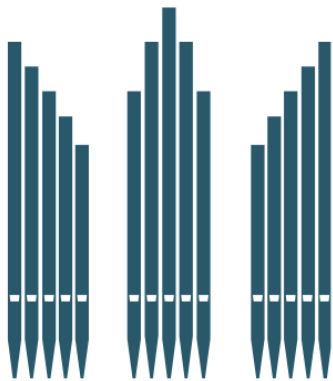
On October 18, the AGO Philadelphia Chapter had a Tuesday Noon Recital on the recently renovated Johannus-Austin hybrid at St. Asaph's in Bala Cynwyd. Featured was Mary "Mib" Campbell playing an all- women program: a first in their 49-year history of Tuesday Noons!

MARY "MIB" CAMPBELL PROGRAM

Plan Ahead

Gail Archer and her organization, MusForum, are sponsoring a conference in February 2023; read more about it here, and start planning now! It will be taking place at Arizona State; our friend (and American SWO member) Lindsey Johnson, is a student there, and our colleague and TF supporter Kimberly Marshall is the Professor of Organ there.

WOMEN IN THE WEST: ARIZONA MUSFORUM CONFERENCE



Mark your calendar! The next Woman Composer Sunday will be March 5, 2023. This is the spotify playlist that SWO compiled in advance of the 2022 WCS. Listen and enjoy!

WOMEN COMPOSERS FOR THE ORGAN

WOMAN
COMPOSER
SUNDAY

If you haven't heard about SWO (Society of Women Organists), here is an introductory video. Membership is free and the organization is dedicated to celebrating women organists in all areas of music-making. Here is their website:

<https://www.societyofwomenorganists.co.uk/>

INTRODUCING THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN ORGANISTS



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

Nancy Cooper, Director | Michelle Kardos, Newsletter Editor | Mary Newton | Lyn Loewi

Eileen Hunt, AGO President and ex officio member | Leslie Wolf Robb | Vicky Schaeffer