



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

February Newsletter

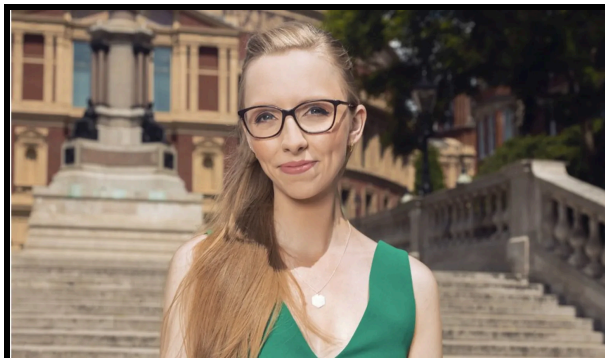
The Next Generation

This article was published in the Washington Post and features the AGO's Councillor for Young Organists, Emily Amos. Read what her and others have to say about the future of the organ and the next generation of organists. Read on below!

THE NUMBER OF CHURCH ORGANISTS IS DECLINING. BUT A NEW GENERATION IS EMERGING.



Good News about Anna Lapwood



Anna Lapwood has been extremely active since we last included her in one of the newsletters. She has once again made headlines as she has been appointed MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire). Check out the article below!

CAMBRIDGE ORGANIST ANNA LAPWOOD APPOINTED MBE

Remembering Alice Parker

Alice Parker, a choral composer, conductor, and teacher who celebrated beauty and unity, died at 98. She created more than 500 choral arrangements, hymns and other pieces and was one of the most widely performed contemporary composers. Born in 1925, she began composing early, and wrote her first orchestral score while still in high school. She graduated from Smith College with a major in music performance and composition, then receiving her master's degree from the Juilliard School, where she studied choral conducting with Robert Shaw.



Her life-work was choral and vocal music, combining composing, conducting and teaching in a creative balance. Her arrangements with Robert Shaw of folk songs, hymns and spirituals form an enduring repertoire for choruses all around the world. She composed in many forms, from operas to cantatas, sacred anthems to secular dances, song cycles to string quartets. In 1985, she founded Melodious Accord, Inc., a non-profit group which presents choral concerts, sponsors



workshops, symposia, and her many professional appearances. She made thirteen acclaimed recordings and published books on melodic styles, choral improvisation and 'Good Singing in Church'. In 2010, as a part of the Melodious Accord 25th Anniversary celebration, The Alice Parker Melodious Accord Hymnal was introduced. Five videos have appeared, showing her work with hymns and folk songs. She was recognized by Chorus America, the American Guild of Organists, the American Choral Directors Association, The Hymn Society and Choral Arts New England for her lifetime contributions to choral music. She was the recipient of six honorary doctorates and the Smith College Medal.

[ALICE PARKER OBITUARY](#)

[ALICE PARKER MUSIC](#)

Composer of the Month

Roberta Bitgood

Roberta Bitgood (1908–2007) was born in New London, Connecticut. Her interest in music was evident from an early age, and she began studying violin at age 5. At 12, she was enrolled at the Williams Memorial Institute, a private secondary school for girls in New London, where she served as concertmaster and assistant conductor for her school orchestra. She frequently performed, too, as a violin soloist at local church and civic events. By 15, she was having organ lessons at her church and began working there as the assistant organist, eventually leading the junior choir. She went on to attend Connecticut College for Women, studying mathematics and music theory with a focus on both violin and organ performance.



She continued organ study after graduation in 1928, having won a scholarship to attend the Guilman Organ School in New York City, where she became a student of William C. Carl and served as his assistant at First Presbyterian Church. While working with Dr. Carl, she completed the AGO Associate and Fellowship exams, scoring the highest mark in the country that year on the latter. She graduated

with the Guilman School's top honor (a Tiffany-designed gold medal) before pursuing a master's degree in music education (Columbia Teachers College) and both a master's and finally a doctoral degree in sacred music (Union Theological Seminary). In 1945, Bitgood was the first woman and twelfth individual in the United States to receive a doctorate in sacred music. Check out the February 2024 TAO for a copy of her piece, "Children's Prayer from Sweden."

[ROBERTA BITGOOD COMMONS](#)

Mark Your Calendars!

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! The National Convention of the American Guild of Organists is held biennially in even-numbered years and reflects the diverse aspects of the Guild and its official work across the country. Held as a function of the national organization in partnership with a selected chapter, it represents a coalition between the national leadership and the host chapter's leadership. This joint venture combines the talents and creative strengths of each, and represents the larger vision of the whole membership and its needs. This year's upcoming convention will be in San Francisco from June 30-July 4, 2024. When you register, be sure to check for the workshop being given by the Task Force for Gender Equity and the Society for Women Organists. We hope to see you there!

[AGO 2024 SAN FRANCISCO](#)



The next Woman Composer Sunday will be March 10, 2024. Look for some upcoming articles in TAO highlighting women composers and their music. Here is last year's suggested repertoire list compiled by SWO:

[WOMEN COMPOSER SUNDAY REPERTOIRE LIST](#)

If you haven't heard about SWO (Society of Women Organists), membership is free and the organization is dedicated to celebrating women organists in all areas of music-making.

[SOCIETY OF WOMEN ORGANISTS](#)



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

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