

# The Trompette

*The Newsletter of the Westchester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists*

SEPTEMBER, 2010

VOLUME 10, #1

## *From the Dean's Bench*

Hi Everyone!

Greetings! First, a look back at the Summer passed . . .

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Several of us were privileged to hear the artistry of Lana Kollath at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Shrub Oak, June 18th. The recital, played on piano entirely from memory, was a beautiful example of the freedom of expression possible when one has the amazing technique, power of concentration and range of interpretation that she has. This was very well attended by her enthusiastic parish -- a wonderful example of what a blessing it can be to work for a church with a supportive pastor!

This recital helped prepare me for the performances we heard at the AGO National Convention, which sub-dean Judy Abel described so well in the last *Trompette*. David Higgs (chair of the organ department at Eastman) also played from memory, with complete *joie de vivre*, but I was equally impressed by his awesome abilities as by his poise at the microphone in between selections. It would be so much more understandable if he were a klutz and forgot to turn the mike off, or something! Almost two months have passed since that concert, and my most memorable moment is still *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* by William Bolcom. The second biggest impression on me was the classically-improvised service performed by Matthew Glandorf at The Mount St. Sepulchre Franciscan Monastery. It's not as though we felt we were hearing a reincarnation of J. S. Bach, but perhaps one of Bach's contemporaries when he played a four-part fugue. It really started me thinking. Before music was written down, we church musicians were always making it up! -- like jazz musicians do today, and of course still do in the gospel music tradition. I'm sure there are many of you out there improvising -- who maybe never stopped experimenting with your own chords on the piano, playing for fun as well as practicing your lessons. For so many years my mind has been focused on the impossible goal of playing notes perfectly on a page, -- not my notes, -- someone else's. We will always have the great composers, but maybe music is not only learning about their genius. Maybe we lose some of the heart of music when we forget how to 'play.'

Now, a look ahead to Fall! Please see the calendar of programs, mark yours and stick it on the *fridge*. (You know what I mean.) You will not want to miss anything! At our first meeting, September 26<sup>th</sup> at Hitchcock Presbyterian in Scarsdale, guest speaker Karla Diamond will teach us all about *The Alexander Technique for Organists*.

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See the enclosed flyer, and you can also read more about her at her website: [awareness-in-action.com](http://awareness-in-action.com). The October 10<sup>th</sup> West Point Organ Crawl follows soon after. If you would like to carpool to West Point, contact me and I will try to set it up.

Our first AGO program of the 2010-2011 Season is less than two months away! On September 26th at 4:00 pm at Hitchcock Presbyterian Church (where John King will be our host), Karla Diamond will introduce principals of the Alexander Technique as applied to organ playing, singing, and other musical activities. Over 100 years ago, F. M. Alexander was an elocutionist who lost his voice when he tried to perform. He carefully observed himself in a mirror and discovered that his unnecessary contortions were the culprit. How can we stop 'bad habits' and how learn 'good habits'? His solution is not as difficult as you might think. Today, there are several active schools teaching his principles to dancers, musicians and other artists, which are relevant to everyone. Several members of the AGO Board have been enthusiastic students of Karla Diamond. Join us in learning more about the Alexander Technique and how it can help our performance and that of our students. Invite your choir members and friends, and please post the attached flyer. Thank you very much, and see you in September!

## *Alice Avouris*

The following is a message from Joyce Gardner regarding our November Event:

### PEDALS, PIPES AND PIZZA

If we want the pipe organ to survive and thrive, we need to introduce it to children and youth while they still have the curiosity and enthusiasm. How many of us can remember the thrill we experienced playing the organ for the very first time? Help us impart that awe and thrill to our younger musical friends by encouraging them to attend this session on Saturday November 6th from 10am—1:00pm at Valhalla Methodist Church, 200 Columbus Avenue, Valhalla, NY. We will briefly explain and demonstrate the organ, exhibit pictures of organ consoles and let them handle several actual pipes, then give them the opportunity to try out the organ. If they have a piano piece prepared they can play that, but if not, they can still try out the keys and the pedals and see how an organ works. They can also have a quick peek into the organ chamber. We will end the session by treating them to pizza. The committee for this endeavor consists of Judy Abel, Joyce Gardner, and Joe Nigro. If you have an organ pipe we might borrow for the day, or any other ideas, please share them with us. Let's begin right now to mention the date and urge our music students to attend. (Don't forget we are competing with sports and many other activities.) Please help us to make this event a big success.

-- Joyce Gardner

# An Introduction to the Alexander Technique for Organists

with Karla Diamond, AmSAT

**“You translate everything, whether physical, mental or spiritual,  
into muscular tension”**

*F.M. Alexander*

The Alexander Technique has been studied by millions of musicians and taught in music schools for decades. Find out why musicians find the Alexander Technique so helpful to their daily practice and performance. It's not just about posture – it's about Music.

Music comes through us and through our instrument and any excess tension or stress is communicated as well. This is why musicians are so wonderful to work with as they can not only feel a difference when they move with less tension they can hear the difference as well.

Karla Diamond is a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique with over 20 years of teaching experience. She has taught workshops in Sweden, Germany, Australia, United Kingdom and throughout the US.

**Sunday Sept 26<sup>th</sup> 4pm  
Hitchcock Presbyterian Church  
6 Greenacres Avenue  
Scarsdale, NY 10583**

For more information contact:  
Alice Avouris, Dean  
Westchester Chapter of the AGO

# 2010 – 2011 Season

**Sunday, September 26, 2010, 4:00 pm**

*The Alexander Technique for Organists*

Hitchcock Presbyterian, Scarsdale,

Host: John King

Presenter: Karla Diamond

**Sunday, October 10, 2010, 3:00 pm**

*West Point Organ Crawl*

Host: Craig Williams

To carpool, call Alice Avouris,

**Saturday, November 6, 2010, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm**

*Pedals, Pipes and Pizza: a Young People's Introduction to the Organ*

Valhalla Methodist Church

Host: Joyce Gardner,

Presenters: Joyce Gardner, Joe Nigro

**Sunday, January 9, 2011 (snow date: Jan. 16) 4:00 pm**

*Twelfth Night Party*

At the home of Phaedon and Alice Avouris, Yorktown Heights

**Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

*Members' Recital*

1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church, Chappaqua

Host: Keith Robellard

**Sunday, March 20, 2011, 4:00 pm**

*Creating and Maintaining a Successful Children's Choir*

Katonah Presbyterian Church

Presenter and Host: Eileen Laurence

**Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011**

*Lecture: Organist and harpsichordist Gavin Black,*

*Director of the Princeton Early Keyboard Center*

Venue and Host: to be determined

**June ?**

*A Visit to The Wanamaker Organ, Philadelphia*

Host: Kevin Walsh

# *Interview with an Organist . . .*

Recent AGO board member Lowell Knauer has been organist at St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church in Ossining since 1985. He received his degree in organ performance with a minor in harpsichord from Penn State University, where he studied under June Miller. In a brief 'virtual' (internet) interview Lowell was kind enough to share something of himself with me over a nice frozen coffee drink. At least, that's what I'm drinking; I don't know about Lowell

*Alice Avouris:* Lowell, when did you begin playing the organ?

*Lowell Knauer:* I started playing the piano in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and had to wait until 7<sup>th</sup> grade to take organ lessons because my legs couldn't reach the pedals until then!

*Alice:* That's a problem; isn't it? Someone should invent a ¼ sized 'Suzuki' organ! Based on your experience, do you have any favorite words of advice for beginning organists?

*Lowell:* Don't look at the pedals trying to find the notes . . .

*Alice:* You mean, that could become a crutch, and postpone educating the feet to where the pedals lie. Thanks -- I need to be reminded of that! Do you play other instruments, and what is your favorite?

*Lowell:* Personally, I like playing the organ the most. During high school, I was in the marching band and drum and bugle corps, playing soprano cornet. I really enjoyed the marching competitions. Organists generally don't have the opportunity to do that!

*Alice:* That's for sure!

*Lowell:* At my small high school in Pennsylvania, out of the 400 students in grades 9 to 12, 180 were in the band – almost half the school!

*Alice:* That is music played by a community; the social aspect reinforces the music, and *vice versa*. Like congregational hymn-singing, except that at your school marching band was obviously the cool thing to do! Wish we had that enthusiasm in all of our churches!

Okay, now I want to ask a difficult question: What was your most embarrassing moment playing the organ? We'll keep it to ourselves (fingers crossed).

*Lowell:* I was playing a wedding at a church in Pennsylvania and before the wedding started, I spent a few minutes getting familiar with the organ. There was a black button under the console that I thought was a button to ring the chimes, so I pressed it a few times I didn't hear anything (no chimes, no bells) so I thought it must be disconnected. About five minutes later there were police sirens in the church parking lot and the police came inside the church. It turns out that black button directly summons the police and the church had it installed at the organ a few years earlier because there were a number of families that got into fist fights in the church during funerals! Whew!

*Alice:* Thanks for the warning! Thanks for the interview, Lowell, and welcome aboard!

# Reads & Mixtures

**PLEASE WELCOME OUR CHAPTER'S NEWEST MEMBERS!**

**Eric Kramer**

Collegium Westchester: 914/282.8611  
Director of Music: First Presbyterian Church, Ossining  
Director of Music: Collegium Westchester  
Assistant Conductor: Bronx Opera

**Catherine Nesbit**

Director of Music/Organist, Yorktown United Methodist  
Private Teacher—Voice, Piano  
Choral Conductor

**NEEDED:** Organ Recitalists for Sunday Afternoon Concerts at the Osborn, Rye NY. Weekly organ recitals on the two-manual Austin organ in the Osborn's Chapel. Sunday afternoons from 2:00--2:30pm. As there is no budget, concerts would be a "gift" from the visiting organists to the residents of the Osborn. The organ is tuned on a regular basis and kept in excellent condition. The residents are lovely people and they enjoy music immensely. If you are interested in participating, please contact: Jayson R. Engquist at [orgjre@verizon.net](mailto:orgjre@verizon.net) or 914/ 777.1660. The concerts will begin in October, 2010.

**Subject: AGO Grievance Procedure - Notice Informing Membership of Case in Progress**

We have been notified by the Fairfield West (CT) chapter that the following notice is being e-mailed to their membership and will be published in their September newsletter. Although the grievants primary chapter is Fairfield West, the church is in Westchester County and we want to make sure all members are aware of this as well.

**Notice Informing Membership of Case in Progress**

**On July 24, 2010 an AGO Member filed a formal complaint against All Saints Church in Harrison, NY for wrongful termination of employment. The Guild is investigating the matter according to the AGO's Procedures for Dealing with Complaints about Termination. No determination has been made at this time. Although Guild Members may provide substitute or interim services, no Member may seek or accept regular or permanent employment with All Saints Church while these Procedures are pending. See the AGOs Web Site for the current status of this case.**

Kevin Walsh  
Registrar, Westchester County AGO

# Taconic Opera

## ATTENTION PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN LOVE TO SING!

This is an open invitation for children with singing ability to join **Taconic Opera's children's chorus** for our **October 15, 16 & 17** performances of **Puccini's Tosca!** This will be a FULLY-STAGED PRODUCTION with full orchestra and sets/costumes, in Italian with English supertitles above the stage. All lead singers and orchestra members are experienced professionals. Performances will be at the Yorktown Stage in Yorktown, NY, on October 14th at 10:00am (free performance for schools), October 15th-16th at 8:00pm, and an October 17th matinee at 2:00pm. The biggest time commitment happens the entire week of Oct 11th in preparation for the performances.

There is **NO MEMBERSHIP FEE** for your child to join the company, but all singers are required to help put together their costumes. A copy of the children's choral sections of the opera will be provided.

Tosca is a less demanding opera on the chorus, so it is an excellent *starter opera* for children who have never done this type of performance before. Don't be frightened – it is easier to do than you might imagine, and it is an incredibly exciting, satisfying and FUN performance experience!!!

Music rehearsals will begin mid-August in Shrub Oak, NY, and the dates and times will be selected based on parent feedback.

Staging rehearsals will take place at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 801 Kitchawan Road (Route 134), Ossining, NY 10562

If you would like your child to have the opportunity to perform in an opera, here it is! Our adult chorus members and volunteers are a fun and friendly group who truly love this amazing art form and appreciate the contribution made by the children. COME JOIN US TODAY!!!!!!

If interested or you need additional information to decide, please contact Sonia Idelsohn, Taconic Opera Children's Chorus Coordinator, at [sonia@briones.net](mailto:sonia@briones.net) For more information about our company, including our philosophy and production photos, please visit our website: [www.taconicopera.org](http://www.taconicopera.org).

# Empty Benches

Director of Music Ministry (First publication) -- A 250-member congregation seeks a permanent part-time Director of Music Ministry (approximately twenty hours/week) with proficiency in playing pipe organ, piano, and in choral conducting. Wide knowledge of sacred music including classical, Christian contemporary, gospel, and blended styles is required. There is one Sunday service and special services, plus one weekly evening rehearsal. Proficiency in recruiting, training and directing choirs of all ages is important. Also required is the ability to interact with the pastor, church staff and commissions in planning and presenting music for worship, as well as other congregational needs. Salary & vacation negotiated by Personnel Commission; additional income from weddings, funerals, etc. White Plains Presbyterian Church, White Plains, NY 10601. Phone: 914/761.8585. The position will be open at the beginning of Fall, 2010. Send cover letter, resume, and three references to: [wppcmdsearch@googlegroups.com](mailto:wppcmdsearch@googlegroups.com)  
The job description may be viewed at: <http://www.wppresby.org/jobpostings.php>

Music Director/Organist (First publication) – Music Director sought to lead a volunteer choir incorporating a variety of music styles (gospel, contemporary Christian, hymns, etc). We desire a skilled teacher who can introduce the choir and congregation to new and unfamiliar music. Rehearsals with the choir at least twice a month; offer the prelude, offertory, postlude and musical interludes during worship service; able to accompany the congregation and pastor during the worship service; take responsibility for coordinating guest vocalists and musicians. The Church has less than 100 members. The salary offered is \$11,000--\$16,000, commensurate with experience and ability. Applications accepted until position is filled. Send resume and salary requirements to: Music Search Committee; Trinity United Methodist Church, 130 S. Lexington Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606 or via fax: 914/761.2226 or via email: [trinityumc130@verizon.net](mailto:trinityumc130@verizon.net)

## Concert Calendar

### **Sunday, Sept. 19th at 3:00 pm**

*Einstein's Mozart* -- an afternoon of original poetry and the music of Mozart, performed by the Odyssey String Quartet with Kate Light, Narrator. St. Peter's Episcopal Church, corner Howard & Division Streets, Peekskill, NY (Free-will offering). 914/293.0360



## **FROM YOUR NEWSPAPER EDITORS...**

Thank you all for your cooperation in getting your material ***TO US*** by the **20<sup>th</sup> of each preceding month**. We want to be able to deliver the Newsletter to you on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, and it takes a week or more to finalize the copy and layout, get it to and from the printer, and address, stamp and mail all of the copies. *The Trompette* is sent out by email, and by regular mail to those Members without an email address. The electronic versions are sent out immediately after finalization, but processing the printed copies can take a week or more, plus the delivery of the regular postal mail can additionally take a week or more. If you have an email address, but are presently receiving your copy by postal mail, consider receiving it electronically instead, saving the Chapter postage expense. Send your email address to: Lois Simmonds  
Kindly do not send in items more than once. For the Concert Calendar, include event, date, time, location, cost (if any) and an information phone number. (Incomplete or unclear submissions cannot be printed.) Due to space constraints, articles and notices are edited.

**If you have provided a notice for the “Empty Benches” section, please be advised that postings will be carried for 3 calendar months unless we are advised that the position has either been filled or is still active. Newest listings appear first. Listings carried more than one month will be arranged alphabetically by organization and will indicate the month they were first run. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping *The Trompette* accurate and up.to.date.**

Send your concert notices, articles, and other materials to:

E.mail: (preferable): to T. Zachacz (Compose in MS Word, if possible)

Postal Mail: T. Zachacz, *The Trompette*,

The Dean and the Executive Board encourage our Members to send informative articles and any other items of interest for publication in the Newsletter.

**Thank you!**

*Lois Simmonds & Thomas Zachacz*

Editors,

***The Trompette***

*Here is the LATEST issue of the  
Westchester Chapter AGO Newsletter.....*

*Inside:*

*Welcome to our Newest Members; Concert Calendar;  
Interview with an Organist; a Message about our November  
Event; Some actual Empty Benches*

Westchester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists  
*The Trompette*  
Lois Simmonds &  
Thomas Zachacz, Editors