

Lehigh Valley Chapter

American Guild of Organists

March 2018

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Executive Committee

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Gloria Snyder (2018)
Susan Hartney (2019)
Robert Richelderfer (2019)
Janice Butz (2020)
Luke DiGiacinto (2020)

www.lvago.org

Dean's Mixtures

I think when awful things happen like the shooting in Parkland, Florida, the reaction many of us have is to wonder what we can do to help make the world a calmer place. And I think it is probably also normal for us musicians to feel helpless. But I believe, more than ever, that the answer is for us to continue to make music! I think that in the process, we need to make sure we are in a calm place, but I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me explain!



Back in the 1980s I wrote my master's thesis for Westminster Choir College on how music affects our bodies and our emotions. (I know, strange subject for a performance major, right?) My intent was to examine the psychological ways music affects us emotionally in order to maximize the emotional communication in my performances. But at the same time, I have always felt it is more than just a saying that music heals. I felt there might be scientific reasons to believe this is so, and I wanted to know how to approach performance in a way to maximize the benefits to my listeners' emotions AND their bodies.

Back then, there were some intriguing new studies done on a concept called "entrainment." What that word means is that using a stimulus such

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March Meeting

Marathon Recital

Music of J. S. Bach and related composers

Sunday, March 11, 2018 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm
St. John's Lutheran Church, 5th and Walnut, Allentown

Dean's Mixtures

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as flashing lights or pulsing sounds, the brain could be influenced very quickly to go from a stressed beta state (predominant brainwaves of about 14hz–35hz, depending on whom you talk to) to a predominantly alpha state (about 8hz–14hz) or even lower. When the brain slows down, the body relaxes and stress dissipates and all kinds of healing things happen—it's like meditating and “going to your happy place.” My hypothesis back then was that if pulsing sounds could cause this to happen, then the tempo of music might have an effect.

In the years since then, there have been studies that suggest this is, indeed, true. It would be wonderful to have a chart of metronome marks, saying xx bpm will create xx brain waves. I have seen a study suggesting 60 bpm will cause the brain to entrain into the alpha state, but music is a much more complex stimulus than simple pulsing sounds, so other things likely come into play.

I maintain that the state of mind of the performer will be reflected in the tempos he/she chooses, along with other aspects of performance. And I think through entrainment, our state of mind is telegraphed to everyone listening.

A simple way to state my belief about music is that if we, as performers (and I mean church musicians, too) use whatever spiritual means we have, personally, to put ourselves in a calm frame of mind (spiritual is even better!) we will influence those within earshot to enter a similar state of mind. I also find that the very act of playing music can slow me down, as long as I don't let the music just reflect my own inner chaos and use it to CHANGE my state (especially by resisting letting the tempo creep faster and faster ...).

So when people come to church upset over the news, upset by the bad drivers they encountered, out of sorts, troubled by the world, we CAN help them let those things go for awhile. But it means we have to take our spiritual approach seriously. If we are stressed out about the 16th notes on page 4, or stressed about people judging us, or other little stresses related to the act of making music, we are going to telegraph THAT, too—and those are not necessarily the most healthy states of mind! So when

things like the Parkland shooting happen, we need to process it as best we can, get past the petty worries related to actually playing the music, and then use it to put US in a less stressed state of mind—and make sure we are in a good place when we play for others. I think we are very close to showing, scientifically, that we CAN help heal the world.

If you find this topic of interest and want to read about it, a good way to start is simply to Google “Music tempo and the brain.” You might find the music of Jeffrey Thompson of interest, as he has published lots of recordings that use the science of entrainment to induce specific states of mind. It's a very involved subject, but this is a good place to start, if you are interested.

Breathe. Relax. Tune in to your spiritual comfort. Play your music and share healing with others.

—Thomas Dressler, Dean

Bach Marathon

The annual **Bach Marathon Birthday Celebration** concert will take place on Sunday, March 11, beginning at 3:00 pm at St. John's Lutheran Church, 32 S. Fifth St., Allentown. This marks the 22nd annual celebration of Bach's birthday in the month of March by the LVAGO. So far the performers include:

3:00 - Luke DiGiacinto

3:30 - Erin Petrella

3:45 - Bryan Holten

4:00 - John McEnerney

4:30 - Lou Carol Fix

5:00 - Eric Gombert

6:00 - Tom Dressler and

Covenant Brass and FPCA choir with Tom Dressler



Admission is free, although a freewill offering basket will be set out to accept donations to benefit future programs of the LVAGO. We also need donations of food items from members of the LVAGO for the reception held from 4:00–7:00pm. Thank you for helping to contribute to the success of this popular organ event in the Lehigh Valley. Please contact Lou Carol Fix, coordinator, for more information: LCFix@moravian.edu.

—Lou Carol Fix

Up Coming Programs

March 11, 3 pm–7 pm at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Allentown, is our annual Marathon recital.

April 21 we will have an organ crawl in the Lehigh Valley to hear and play some local treasures.

May 27, 4 pm First Presbyterian Church of Allentown will be our annual banquet and recital, featuring Clara Gerdes, the winner of the regional competition.

February Meeting Report



We had a wonderful program on Saturday, February 3, for our **Pedals, Pipes and Pizza** program at Nazareth Moravian Church. We had 5 very interested students of varied ages and backgrounds. The program was from 9:30 to 1. Upon arrival the students and parents were greeted, and sent into a conference room where there was a video playing, “Pulling out all the stops.” We then traveled up to the balcony where the students were immediately greeted by the beauty and grandeur of the opening chords of Toccata and Fugue in d minor by J S Bach, of which I was performing. Dean Tom Dressler presented on the early history of the organ, basic differences between the organ and the piano, and proper organ touch. Lou Carol Fix took the students through the families of sounds on the organ. She played a short piece to demonstrate each one. I demonstrated the Mixtures and Mutations, Pistons, swell and crescendo boxes, and pedal board. Tom Dressler took the students into the organ chambers to show them the different ways organ pipes are made. Then it was the student’s turn to play. They played

some of their piano repertoire on the organ and all seemed awed and amazed. One student wanted to try out the Bach Toccata for herself. I put my score on the music rack for her to see. We ended the morning with Pizza and discussion. Each student took home a sheet of organ music, a picture of an organ, the book “Young Persons guide to the Organ, a T-Shirt, and a small bag of candy. Each parent received information about the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. We hope we’ve inspired these young students to consider the organ as an instrument of interest.

—Luke DiGiacinto

Condolences

We would like to extend our condolences to member Theresa (Tree) Shaton on the death of her mother, Anna Marie Shaton. Mrs. Shaton was the organist at Our Lady of Pompeii Church, Bethlehem, for over fifty years.

POE 2020

Our executive board has talked quite a lot about having another POE in the Lehigh Valley during the summer of 2020, an exciting idea! In order to do this, we need to submit an application by February of 2019 (next year) that has everything outlined and in place. In order to do this, we need to form a committee NOW to start working on it. Please consider being a part of this committee and helping us make this exciting event happen! Contact Tom Dressler (tom@thomasdressler.com) or Jane Errera (JaneErrera@aol.com) to let us know you’d be interested in helping.

—Tom Dressler

March/April Concerts

March 4 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Gavin Black, harpsichord**; Director, Princeton Early Keyboard Center, Princeton; First Presbyterian Church (Chapel), Allentown; Admission free

March 4 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Byan Holten, organ**; Works by J.S. Bach, Vierne, Heinrich Reimann, *Finale* : Organ Symphony by Saint-Säens; Longwood Gardens Conservatory; Free with admission to the Gardens: \$23/adult, \$20/senior or college student, \$12/youth

March 4 (Sunday) 4:00 pm; **The Princeton Singers, In a Celestial Garden**; Sacred music including Allegri, Pärt and Byrd's *Mass for Five Voices*; St. Anne's Catholic Church, Bethlehem; Freewill offering

March 10 (Saturday) 7:00 pm; **Albright College Albright Angels and Mane Men**; a cappella ensembles under the direction of Adlai Binger; Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading; Freewill offering

March 11 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Adam Bergstresser, organ**; Organist/Director of Music, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Doylestown; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown; Admission free

March 11 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Music Among Friends**; Lucille Kincaid, director; St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethlehem; Freewill offering

March 18 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Thomas Dressler, organ**; Coordinator of Traditional Music, First Presbyterian Church of Allentown; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown; Admission free

March 18 (Sunday) 4:00 pm; **Spring Organ and Brass Concert**; The Mainstreet Brass and Becky Lepore, organ; Music by Giovanni Gabrieli, Richard Strauss, J.S. Bach, Claudio Monteverdi, and Camille Saint-Saëns; Central Moravian Church; \$10 Donation

March 25 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Nathan Laube, organ**; Assistant Professor of Organ, Eastman School of Music, Rochester; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown; Admission free

April 7 (Saturday) 7:30 pm; **Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra**; Sonic Transformations, Michael Gurt, piano; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown; Tickets: 610-484-7811 or www.pasinfonia.org

April 8 (Sunday) 3:00 pm; **Lehigh U Soloists and Chamber Ensembles**; Music ranging from Classical to Jazz; St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethlehem; Freewill offering

April 15 (Sunday) 2:00pm; **DeCore Performing Strings**; Benefits "Feed My Starving Children"; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown;

April 27 (Friday) 7:30 pm; **The Westminster Concert Bell Choir**; Kathleen Ebling Shaw, director; Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem; \$10 Donation

April 28 (Saturday) 7:30 pm; **The Camerata Singers**; Handel's *Israel in Egypt*; First Presbyterian Church, Allentown; Tickets: 610-434-7811 or www.pacameratasingers.org

April 29 (Sunday) 4:00 pm; **Bryan Holten, organ**; St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Emmaus; Free

Organist Substitute List

Robin Bidwell	Saturday	302 593-0401
Ruthann Brandt	Mon-Sat	610 262-3304
Janice Butz	Mon-Fri	610 882-9388
Stephen Cable	Mon-Sat	484 866-6019
V. Mark Dennis	Mon-Sat	610 867-0385
Carol Dzurenda	Sun and Sat	215 538-7273
Ellen Erb	Saturday	610 837-7426
Sr. Doris Gonzalez	Thurs-Sat	610 317-0695
Gail Hanzl	Mon-Sat	610 264-5859
Brian Holten	Mon-Sat	585 633-8705
Michael Huffman	Mon-Sat	610 433-6563
Joe Kaczmarek	Sun-Fri	484 433-4336
Jacqueline Kuba	Mon-Sat	570 386-4480
Michael Kuhnert	Mon-Sat	215 536-4345
Dodd Lamberton	Sun-Sat	484 935-3505
Andrew Lutz-Long	Mon-Fri	610 704-7805
James Matz	Sun-Sat	610 367-8094
Linda Maule	Mon-Sat	610 258-5006
John McEnerney	Sun-Fri	215 794-7338
Richard McIntyre	Mon-Sat	908 283-4691
Randall Perry	Mon-Fri	570 325-9440
Erin Petrella	Mon-Sat	484 863-9052
Shirley Platt	Sun-Sat	610 838-5202
Michael Pletcher	Sun-Sat	610 820-7554
Maria Prochnau	Sun-Sat	610 694-0525
Bruce Rohrbach	T,W,F and Sat	610 683-9496
Karen Scott	May-Sep	610 737-1701
Michael Seroka	Mon-Fri	570 386-2378
Brian Snyder	Mon-Thu	484 838-0977
Donald Vaughn	Mon-Sat	610 966-0682
Matthew Wary	Mon-Fri	610 473-8777
Stephen Williams	Mon-Fri	610 737-5196
Stephen Ziminsky	Mon-Sat	610 417-2669
Freda Zimmerman	Sun-Sat	610 381-3089

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Placement Service: See the Placement page on www.lvago.org, for information and the Placement Service Information Sheet.

Newsletter Deadline: April Edition: Thursday, 3/22/18