



The Coupler



SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2021

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**Deadline for the
November / December
(Christmas) 2021
Newsletter is October
15, 2021**



NOTES FROM THE DEAN



I was hoping to have lots to report for this newsletter, but it seems we are still under the cloud of the pandemic, just a different cloud than before. Events that were starting to be scheduled have been postponed until it is deemed safe to gather again indoors.

I am still looking for people willing to serve on the Program Committee. Please let me or Pauleta know if you would like to serve. We will start to plan for some on line events and figure out how we might meet again safely in person.

I hope that many of you were able to attend **Jim Rasmussen's** funeral last Saturday. It was a beautiful service, with music and hymns arranged by Jim, and with lovely, heartfelt tributes from clergy, family, and friends. As always happens at these services, I came away learning a lot about Jim, and wishing that I had known him better, and for a longer time. Please keep him and his family in your thoughts.

For my online listening suggestion for this month, I would like to introduce you to Carson Cooman's organ videos. Carson is a Cambridge, MA organist and composer. His own organ music is always inspired and well thought out, runs the gamut from easy to challenging, and is appropriate for church and recital. Carson is dedicated to promoting contemporary music, and he only programs music from living composers. He posts new videos every day or two, and includes biographical info on all the composers as well as publishing info. He has recorded many of our own member, Fred Frahm's organ works, and has recently posted an illuminating interview with him. Here is a link to one of his recent videos, a short Gagliarda (2016) by Italian composer, Grazia Salvatori. Enjoy!

<https://youtu.be/vXy8EvjjAJg> | <https://youtu.be/vXy8EvjjAJg>

Best to you all,
Nancy Granert, Dean

USEFUL CHAPTER EMAILS

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THE YEAR OF THE YOUNG ORGANIST

July 1 2021 to June 30 2022

In an effort to grow the community of younger musicians in the pipe organ field, the American Guild of Organists has declared this year the “Year of the Young Organist”. Through the sharing of performances by young musicians and the publication of resources, they hope to bring more visibility to the new generation of musicians. Additionally, **1 year of free Guild membership** is now available for all current, lapsed, and new members under the age of 30. See details: <https://www.yearoftheyoungorganist.com/>

OBITUARY – JAMES L. RASMUSSEN

James Lyman Rasmussen, 74, passed away in his home on August 9, 2021. Jim was born on March 30, 1947, in Richland, Washington, as the second of seven children. From age 19 to 21, he served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland. He received his BA, MBA, and JD from Brigham Young University, and he practiced as an attorney in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He loved classical music and played many instruments. His organ playing was appreciated in many churches, and he enjoyed arranging music for his family to perform. He also loved books, languages, travel, gardening, and the outdoors. He was a loyal friend, with a talent for maintaining meaningful relationships across many years and long distances.

He married his beloved wife, Gail, in 1974 in Provo, Utah. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his two children, their spouses, and six grandchildren.

A viewing will be held on August 14, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. at 12701 Indian School Road in Albuquerque. Followed by funeral service at 11:00 a.m. To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of James Lyman Rasmussen, please visit our [floral store](#).

PLEASE CHECK . . .

Please check the website [Directory](#) for corrections, especially if you have changed jobs or addresses/telephone number recently, and also, the [Substitute Roster](#) page, and then email corrections to the [Editor](#), so that we can maintain good information for each other, and help churches find substitute organists as needed. Thank you.

WHAT WILL YOUR CHOIR'S CHRISTMAS LOOK LIKE THIS YEAR?

There are still many unknowns about what shape or form Christmas 2021 will take for choirs, which may be making your decision-making process more difficult than usual! So why not choose repertoire that needs minimal rehearsal time and your choir will love to sing? Renew the sparkle of Christmas with our brand new and recently published carols by some of the world's finest composers. Plus read on to find out how to enter our [Christmas music prize draw](https://pages.oup.com/mus/1364694970005276385/choral-0521). More details: <https://pages.oup.com/mus/1364694970005276385/choral-0521>

WHY NOT A CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY?

Erik Routley (1917-1982)



As churches face new circumstances in unusual times, the wisdom of Erik Routley offers some possible solutions. Thanks to Nancy Graham, currently working on his definitive biography, for locating this piece. (Church Music Institute article)

Honesty in our worship music demands a maxim which most of us find not difficult to accept, namely, that what we do should be done as well as possible. Yet another, which is not as easy, is to face our church as to what it now is, not as it used to be or as we wish it were.

What is the choir supposed to be doing in our churches? It is primarily there, I think we say, to lead the singing. Now the displeasing, but unmistakable, fact is that many of our churches cannot support a choir that will lead the singing. Here and there you will find a well-trained choir of thirty or forty voices that can produce the strong and homogeneous body of sound necessary if the congregational singing is to be 'led'. But how much more often does the choir consist of five sopranos, three of whom weren't at practice, two altos, a tenor who should not be singing tenor, and two basses one of whom is not to be trusted with an interval greater than a third? These faithful folk are sometimes under the pulpit, sometimes in a chancel, or sometimes far above and behind the minister's head. In any case, they are often twenty-five feet, and sometimes farther, from the nearest member of the congregation. They may know the music, but at that distance, and with uncertain resources, how can they help their neighbors sing?

Suppose that somebody comes along who says, "Go and sit down there with your families and friends and help them to sing." I am suggesting just that to our struggling churches. Substitute the choir for a church music society, or whatever you want to call it. The members of such an organization pledge to help with the music, not just stay in the loft. Let all who can read music and hold a part come along on a regular evening for an hour and let forty minutes of that time be given to the weekly hymns and psalms that the musicians may ponder them, and where necessary, learn them. Let the minister be there to explain why the hymns have been chosen and discern their difficult lines. Then on Sunday, these singers take their place with their families and friends, singing confidently and happily, neither fettered by ignorance nor puffed up by professionalism – the strong helping the weak. The choir was jam, but this music society

could be the yeast. Thus improved, this singing will deepen the consciousness that they are taking an active and indispensable part in that great drama which is our worship.

Back to the rehearsal. The remaining twenty minutes can be spent on some close work on music which they will perform by themselves on some high day -- carols at Christmas and Easter, a simple cantata, or a series of anthems to make up a recital. This will give the musicians something to work for while removing much of the spiritual wear and tear and the temptations to vanity and publicity. It will also abolish at a stroke, the blasphemer who resigns if they are not given their fair share of solos.

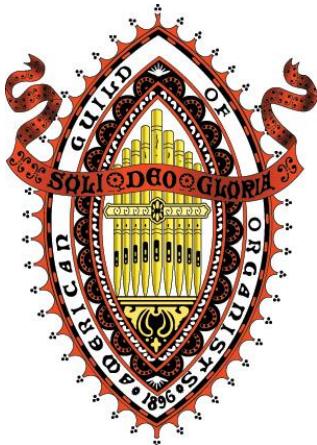
Beyond all this, the little community will have the great advantage over the large and well-equipped church. The dichotomy of choir and congregation, the artificial separation of worshippers, will not be the rule, but the exception, and the singing body of the little church becoming the envy of the great church which preserves the choral tradition.

Citation: Ministers Bulletin, March 1951. Published by the Life and Works Department of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

THE 15 MOST FAMOUS TUNES IN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Find the 15 all-time favorite classical pieces of music: <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/famous-classical-music-tunes/>





HAVE YOU USED THE CHAPTER WEBSITE LATELY?

The whole year's calendar is on the Calendar page (use Agenda tab). Please notify the webmaster (editor@agoabq.org) of events you would like to have advertised. Also, paid "Positions Vacant" or requests for volunteer musicians and singers can be advertised free of charge. Our website gets about 400 views per month. **NOTE:** our Facebook page has 194 followers and can be used for posting notices about events, vacancies, etc. If you "Like" our page, you will receive new postings in your own News Feed.

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The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter due to be published for November and December, will be **October 15, 2021**. Please email news, articles, or photos, upcoming events or reports, plus any other website items to the Editor, Evelyn Henson, at editor@agoabq.org

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