



# THE CIPHER

September 2019

**The Executive Committee of  
Grand Rapids AGO  
2019-2020**

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*Webmaster, Cipher Editor*

**From Our Dean**

Hello Everyone!

As we begin the 2019-2020 season for AGO in Grand Rapids, I also begin in a new role as your Dean. I enter into this role not as one who is famous or have a prestigious title or degree. I am a church organist wading through and preparing music for weekly services, directing choirs and ensembles, and planning services. But I do have the heart for the organ and the AGO and that is what we all should have regardless of what we do as organ enthusiasts, students, or professionals.

This summer we hosted a very successful Great Lakes Regional AGO Convention in Grand Rapids. Many thanks to the planning committee who tirelessly did the preparations and tackled the tough issues surrounding the convention. There were members of the Holland and Muskegon Chapters as well as Grand Rapids. A special thank you to Peter Kurdziel for being chair of the convention. There is a wonderfully written summary of the convention by Caron Farmer of the Muskegon Chapter which you may read in this issue of the *Cipher*. The summary is on the convention website and was published in a recent TAO. Please express your gratitude to those who were on the planning committee for their efforts in a successful convention. We have been resting in our efforts and now it is time to begin our 2019-2020 Season.

I encourage you to check out the season which is listed in this month's Cipher Newsletter. Our season begins September 23 at Calvin Christian Reformed Church with Huw Lewis on creative hymn playing. This would be a great program to invite students, other church organists and anyone who would like to know more. This was the program scheduled in January 2019 but was canceled due to weather.

We continue the tradition of dinner before the program. The cost is \$15 per member and free for young organists under 30. We also encourage you to invite any guests to the dinner. This is a wonderful way to fellowship and know other organists and musicians in the ar-

ea.

Your executive board is tirelessly working to make this season memorable and balanced. We do not want you to miss out of the programs we will have. But we need one thing: we need **YOU** to come to the programs, dinners, receptions, and concerts. Bring friends, colleagues, students, family to our programs. This encourages community, networking, educational opportunities, and a growing appreciation for the organ.

We are making efforts to invite young organists to the AGO and would appreciate it if you would partner with us in this endeavor. If you have any interest in assisting in our young organist programs, we welcome your time, skills, and talents. I encourage you to contact me with your interest.

Finally, I have had conversations this summer with some of our members, but I want to hear from all of you! I am up for a coffee most anytime and almost anywhere. You can contact me by phone, email, or text and we can find a time to meet!

Kevin Soodsma, Dean



### Friday, September 13

7:30 p.m.

#### LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church

107 LaGrave Avenue S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503



On Friday, September 13, 7:30 p.m., Dr. Peter Kurdziel will present an organ recital at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church as part of the church's "Inspirations" art exhibit featuring artwork in various mediums by congregational members.

Peter, a past dean of the Grand Rapids AGO chapter and currently Director of Music and organist at the Basilica of Saint Adalbert, will play organ music by J. S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Max Reger, and Healey Willan.

The recital is free and open to the public and will be followed by a reception in the church's Multipurpose Room where the art exhibit will be displayed for viewing.

## MUSIC AT MID-DAY

A Free Concert Series in the City

Concerts (12:15pm - 12:45pm) are free to all.

An optional \$6 lunch (11:15am - 1:15pm) is available before or after the performance. Soup, salad bar, bread, beverage, and cookies are served.

Announcing Fall 2019

October 22 - Steven B. Smith, organ

October 29 - Paul Austin Trio

November 5 - Dr. Chris Dekker, organ

November 12 - Michael Bloss, organ

November 19 - Steve VanRavenswaay, cello

November 26 - Rhonda Edgington, organ

December 3 - Penny Kindraka, handbells

December 10 - Caledonia Choralaires

**First (Park) Congregational Church**

**10 East Park Place N.E.**

**Grand Rapids**

## Monthly programs for 2019 – 2020

Here is the lineup of AGO meetings for this season, 2018-2019. Our meetings take place at various venues throughout the area and are typically the third Monday evening of the month although there are certainly exceptions. We generally begin with a punch bowl and social time at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m.

**The cost for dinner is \$15 and to encourage attendance by younger members the board has underwritten the cost of meals for all AGO members and guests under the age of 30. The cost of these meals will come from a dedicated fund that has been recently established for this purpose.**

The program portion of the meeting follows at 8:00 p.m. and all programs are open to the public. On occasion free-will offerings will be accepted at the conclusion of some evening programs.

Dinner reservations are requested by the Wednesday prior to the meeting and members will be called by the Executive Council. You may also make your reservation by emailing [agodinner@grago.org](mailto:agodinner@grago.org) or calling our Treasurer, Errol Shewman at 307-7241.

### Monday, September 23, 2019

6:30 p.m. Punch Bowl

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Dinner

### Calvin Christian Reformed Church

700 Ethel Street S.E.

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

### Hymn Workshop featuring Dr. Huw Lewis



Huw Lewis received formal training at the Royal College of Music in London and at Cambridge University and was awarded teaching and performing diplomas from the Royal Academy and the Royal College of Music as well as both diplomas of the Royal College of Organists. He received scholarships and fellowships at Cambridge University and the University of Michigan. In 1972, he came to the United States to study at the University of Michigan, earning Master's and Doctoral degrees in organ performance as a student of Robert Clark, Robert Glasgow, and Marilyn Mason. His extensive performing career has taken him across the United States, and to Britain, Europe, and Russia. He has performed at numerous national and regional conventions of many professional organizations, in-

cluding the Hymn Society of America, the Organ Historical Society, and the American Guild of Organists. Dr. Lewis was a featured soloist at the 1987 International Congress of Organists and served on the panel of jurors of the 2003 Dallas International Organ Competition and the 2016 Sursamerica American Organ Competition at Ball State University, Indiana. His playing has been broadcast over the radio and television in Europe, Britain, and the U.S. Huw Lewis has appeared as a soloist many times with orchestra and has participated in the world premieres of concertos by Alfred Fedak and Michael Daugherty. His performance of the Fedak concerto with the Grand Rapids Symphony in May 2016 helped to inaugurate the new Casavant organ at the Jack H. Miller Center for Musical Arts at Hope College. Dr. Lewis is Professor of Organ and College Organist at Hope College, Holland, Michigan and Director of Music at St. John's Episcopal Church, Detroit. Huw Lewis is represented in North America exclusively by Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists, LLC.

**Monday, October 21, 2019**

7:00 p.m. Concert

**Mayflower Congregational Church**

2345 Robinson Road S.E.

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

**Organ Concert by Wolfgang Rubsam**



The German-born American organist, pianist and pedagogue, Wolfgang RübSam, first studied organ with Erich Ackermann in Fulda from 1963 to 1967. He then took up studies in church music at the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt am Main, which enabled him to join the organ class of [Helmut Walcha](#). A period of study at the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, where his organ teacher was Robert T. Anderson, culminated in 1971 in the degree of Master of Music. On his return to Germany he joined the master-classes of [Helmut Walcha](#) for a year and completed his organ examinations in Frankfurt. The years from 1971 to 1974 were spent in Paris as a pupil of [Marie-Claire Alain](#). In the course of his studies, he was successful in a number of competitions. In 1970 he won first prize in the National Organ Competition at Fort Wayne in Indiana. In 1972 he won two third prizes in international competitions at Nuremberg and Avilain Spain. In 1973 he won the Grand Prix d'Interpretation at Chartres.

In 1974, Wolfgang RübSam was appointed as professor of Church Music and Organ at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. In addition, he also served as University Organist at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago from 1981 until 1997. Since 1997, he has been professor of organ at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken, Germany From 1998 until 2003; he was also artist in residence and university organist at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Wolfgang Rübsam has made extensive tours as organ virtuoso, and he performs frequently in major international festivals and concert halls, including the [Los Angeles Bach Festival](#); Wiener Festwochen, Vienna; Lahti International Organ Festival, Finland; Royal Festival Hall, London; Alice Tully Hall, New York, and others. He conducts master-classes in Europe and the USA, both in interpretation of early and romantic organ repertoire, and interpretation of the keyboard music of J.S. Bach. He has served on the juries for international competitions, such as the Grand Prix de Chartres and the Lahti International Organ Competition in Finland.

Wolfgang Rübsam is internationally known through his highly acclaimed recordings of organ works from the Baroque and Romantic periods. He has published more than 130 recordings, including two recordings of the complete organ works by Johann Sebastian Bach, the complete organ works of [Dietrich Buxtehude](#), [Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy](#), [César Franck](#), Louis Vierne, and Jehan Alain, as well as recordings of [Franz Liszt](#), [Johann Pachelbel](#), and [Max Reger](#). Currently, he is completing a recording of the 20 organ sonatas of [Josef Rheinberger](#). In addition, he has recorded a major part of the keyboard works of J.S. Bach on modern Bösendorfer pianos.

### **Monday, November 18, 2019**

6:30 p.m. Punch Bowl

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Recital

### **Westminster Presbyterian Church**

47 Jefferson Avenue S.E.

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

### **Organ recital featuring**

### **Quimby Young Organist Competition winner Noah Klein**



From Northfield, Minnesota, Noah Klein began studying the piano at age 6 and the organ at age 11. He began accompanying church services at age 15. Following high school graduation, Noah attended school and lived with a host family for one year in South Korea as part of the Rotary Youth Exchange program. He currently is a Premier Young Artist Scholar at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music where he studies organ performance with Dr. Janette Fishell. Noah serves as the music intern at Tabernacle Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis.

**Monday, February 3, 2020**

6:30 p.m. Punch Bowl

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Program

**Calvin University Chapel**

1845 Knollcrest Circle S.E.

Grand Rapids, MI 49545

**Program to be announced****Monday, March 16, 2020**

6:30 p.m. Punch Bowl

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Program

**Location and program to be announced****Sunday, April 19, 2020****3:00 p.m. Organ Recital****Trinity Lutheran Church**

2700 Fulton Street East

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

**Renee Louprette Organ Recital**

Hailed by The New York Times as “splendid,” and “one of New York’s finest organists,” Renée Anne Louprette has established an international career as organ recitalist, conductor, and teacher. She is associated with a number of distinguished music programs in the New York City area, having served as Associate Director of Music at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Associate Director of Music and the Arts at Trinity Wall Street, Organist and Associate Director at the Unitarian Church of All Souls, and Director of Music at the Church of Notre Dame.

Upon receipt of a Master of Music degree in conducting from [Bard College](#) in May 2019, Ms. Louprette was appointed Assistant Professor of Music and College Organist at Bard. She continues as coordinator of the organ studio at [Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University](#), where she has been University Organist since 2013. She is a former member of the organ faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, The Hartt School of the University of Hartford, and the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair

State University.

Renée Anne Louprette has performed throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, including at Westminster Abbey and the Temple Church in London, St. Giles Cathedral Edinburgh and Dunblane Cathedral (Scotland), Galway Cathedral and Dún Laoghaire (Ireland). In 2018, she made her solo debuts at the Royal Festival Hall in London and the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. Additional European festival appearances include Magadino, Switzerland; In Tempore Organi, Italy; Ghent and Hasselt, Belgium; Copenhagen and Aarhus, Denmark; Bordeaux Cathedral and Toulouse Les Orgues, France. She appeared as organ soloist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in Brisbane, Australia, in a performance of Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony broadcast live on ABC Radio. She regularly performs at regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists and has been featured at two national conventions: the 2010 Convention in Washington, D.C., and the 2014 Convention in Boston where she presented the world premiere of Pamela Decker's Faneuil Hall. In July 2019, she presented a solo recital for the National Convention of the Organ Historical Society in Dallas, Texas.

Her recording of the "Great Eighteen Chorales" of J. S. Bach on the Metzler Organ in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, England, was named a classical music Critics' Choice 2014 by The New York Times. In February 2018, she released a recording of 20th-century French organ repertoire – "Une voix française – A French Voice" – on the Acis Productions label to critical acclaim. Her upcoming recordings include Bach's *Clavier-Übung III* on the Acis label, recorded on the Craighead-Saunders organ of Christ Church, Rochester, New York, and a collaborative recording of original compositions and arrangements of traditional Irish repertoire with Ivan Goff, recorded at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City.

Renée Anne Louprette holds a Master's degree in conducting from Bard College Conservatory where she studied conducting with James Bagwell and composition with Joan Tower, and a Bachelor of Music degree summa cum laude in piano performance and a Graduate Professional Diploma in organ performance from The Hartt School, University of Hartford. She was awarded a Premier Prix – mention très bien from the Conservatoire National de Région de Toulouse, France and a Diplôme Supérieur in organ performance from the Centre d'Études Supérieures de Musique et de Danse de Toulouse, studying with Michel Bouvard and Jan Willem Jansen and improvisation with Philippe Lefebvre. She completed additional studies in organ with Dame Gillian Weir, James David Christie, and Guy Bovet.

Renée Anne Louprette is represented in North America exclusively by [Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists, LLC](#).

**Monday, April 27, 2020**

6:00 p.m. Punch Bowl

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Competition

**First (Park) Congregational Church**

10 East Park Place N.E.

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition**

*The Annamae Rotman Young Organist Competition was founded in 2013 by Dr. Richard Rotman in honor of his mother and is an annual competition. We thank him for his generous support of young organists.*

- Eligibility – A competitor must be under 24 years of age as of August 1 of the competition year and be a resident of Kent County, MI or any county adjacent to Kent County and/or a resident student attending a junior high school, senior high school, college, or university in Kent County or any county adjacent to Kent County (Ottawa, Muskegon, Newaygo, Montcalm, Ionia, Barry, or Allegan Counties)
- Previous first place winners of this competition are eligible to compete in this competition again in two years.
- Venue – Grand Rapids area pipe organ of high quality and versatility, varied from year to year
- Repertoire – Two or more pieces of contrasting styles and representing different time periods and a hymn

**[SEE MORE INFORMATION AND APPLICATION ON THE GRAGO WEBSITE](#)**

**Monday, May 18, 2020**

6:30 p.m. Punch Bowl

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Program

**Second Congregational Church**

525 Cheshire Street N.E.

Grand Rapids, MI 49505

**An Evening with Composer John S. Dixon**

Born in London, England, John S. Dixon (b. 1957) was classically trained in piano and organ. During his school years he was active in music in the Anglican church and was a founding member of The Southend Boys Choir, one of Britain's foremost youth choirs. He earned degrees from The Queen's College, Oxford University, and Harvard Business School. His composing has flourished since moving to America in 1988, largely through his involvement in the music ministry at Providence Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, where he is currently organist and composer-in-residence. He has written hundreds of pieces for church and secular use.



## Great Lakes Regional Convention 2019 Convention Chairperson's Report

At the outset of the planning, the steering committee established five outcomes that would help focus our process:

- An all-inclusive registration (transportation and banquet)
- A student scholarship program that would encourage AGOYO participation
- A first-class roster of performers carefully matched with instruments
- A "Grand Rapids Organbook II" featuring a collection of compositions donated by composers from the region and distributed on thumb drives to attendees thereby eliminating the need for a costly new commission
- A day trip to Holland featuring the new organ at the Jack Miller Center for the Musical Arts on the campus of Hope College

We managed to achieve all of these goals while facing the financial challenges resulting from the decline in regular registrations and the tepid response from potential exhibitors. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the fiscal responsibility of our steering committee, the 2019 was profitable for the chapter. As was the case in 1985 and 2005, our decision to host a regional convention will have a positive impact on the future of our chapter. We will look ahead to future scholarship initiatives and chapter programming with the assurance of solid financial footing.

I was fortunate to have a steering committee that was actively engaged in all aspects of the convention planning. Lacking the numbers required to truly form all of the sub committees as prescribed in the handbook, we used our time at monthly meetings to review all of the preparations and problem solve with the collective wisdom of a group that boasted a 99% attendance rate for three solid years.

As our 2019 regional is now in the rear-view mirror, my hope is that the scholarship program we offered will not be relegated to the bottom drawer of a file cabinet. Rather, I hope it will spark the creativity of the next crop of steering committee members to discern how they can best serve the next generation of organists. If our three years of convention planning in Grand Rapids only accomplished this one task of pushing student initiatives to the front burner, it would all be worth it.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Kurdziel  
Convention Chair



## **GREAT LAKES - REGION V Convention, June 30—July 3, 2019**

Headquartered in the elegant Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Great Lakes Regional Convention kicked off its three and one half day convention on Sunday, June 30, 2019. Interestingly, the hotel was originally called the Pantlind Hotel and was the site of the first organizational meeting for the Grand Rapids AGO Chapter in 1937.

The steering committee of this convention had early discussions about how to include young organists in the convention and decided to offer scholarships to include the hotel and registration fees. Initially it was thought that ten or twelve scholarships would be offered. As time went on generous donors appeared to support this part of the convention, allowing the committee to offer scholarships to twenty young organists. These folk were ushers for concerts during the convention and nine of them played in two master classes with Dr. Huw Lewis at Hope College and Nathan Laube at Park Congregational Church.

In keeping with an intent to encourage young organists, the program committee made a concerted effort to have younger artists perform. They were able to secure performances by Katelyn Emerson, Nicole Simental and David Heinze.

In an effort to expose convention attendees to a variety of instruments both old and new, the program committee scheduled an afternoon concert at Central Seventh Day Adventist Church where Dr. Gregory Crowell played the Johnson & Son (1893) instrument. Tuesday the convention moved to Holland where the newly installed Pasi (2016) instrument was played in concert by Rhonda Sider Edgington. On the campus of Hope College the convention was treated to a concert by Dr. Huw Lewis on the recently installed (2015) Casavant Organ in the new Jack H. Miller Center for Musical Arts.

While in Holland, the convention offered the option to take a ride out to beautiful Lake Michigan to experience this natural wonder. The opportunity to enjoy a box lunch on the campus of Hope College or to explore downtown Holland were also options.

Grand Rapids is favored to have several five manual instruments and two of them were featured in concerts on Monday afternoon and evening. The first was at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church. Todd Wilson played the Austin 1996/Allen 1996 organ. Ken Cowan played the evening program at Fountain Street Church. The organ there is like that at LaGrave although the work was completed in 2003. Both of these recitalists play from memory and never disappoint in concert!

On Wednesday the Grand Rapids Public Museum was one of the venues where the Wurlitzer (1928) theater organ was featured with Clark Wilson providing music for a hilarious Laurel & Hardy silent film. At lunch that day, the convention convened outdoors to hear a carillon recital on the campus of Grand Valley State University. Helen Hofmeister was the recitalist.

The convention also included worship services beginning with a prelude by Nicole Keller

and Evensong presented by the Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys. The Festival Worship Service was held at the Basilica of Saint Adalbert and featured local musicians in the choir, conductor, Larry Biser and organist, Jonathan Tuuk. A concert at Central Reformed Church featured Scott Dettra and the Majestic Brass.

The convention ended with a banquet that was included in the price of registration in the opulent Pantlind Ballroom at the convention hotel. The final concert of the convention was at Mayflower Congregational Church with Nathan Laube.

Receptions and coffee breaks were inserted throughout the convention to give attendees the opportunity to connect with new and old friends which contributed to a feeling of a more relaxed schedule. We owe thanks to Third Reformed Church in Holland, Fountain Street Church and LaGrave Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids for their hospitality. There were opportunities to learn through many workshops interspersed within the daily schedules.

With nationally recognized artists like Lynne Davis, (who graciously agreed to an on-air interview on the local public radio station before the convention began), Ken Cowan, Nathan Laube and Todd Wilson, this convention was a success in bringing the best of the organ world to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Please go to: [grago2019.org](http://grago2019.org) for more details of this convention.

Caron M. Farmer AAGO



### The 2019 Steering Committee Great Lakes Region

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Larry Biser, Program  
 Emily Brink, Ph.D., Hospitality  
 Dennis Buteyn, Exhibits  
 Barbara Dulmage, D.M.A. Hospitality  
 Caron Farmer, AAGO, Competition  
 Joel Gary, Program Book  
 Helen Hofmeister, Transportation  
 Dick Hoogterp, CAGO Registration  
 Peter Kurdziel, D.M.A., Chair  
 Errol Shewman, Registration  
 Rebecca Snippe, Secretary  
 Kevin Soodsma, Cvent  
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