



# Peninsula Pipings

The Newsletter of the Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter of  
The American Guild of Organists

December 2019

For the last eight months I have gone twice a week to a dermatology clinic in Fremont. Every Tuesday and Thursday I sign in for my appointment, always careful to arrive a few minutes early because A). The place runs on a tight schedule, and B). I rarely have a good excuse to be late. I wait awhile, and then a nurse calls me into the exam room, where she blasts patches of my skin with a special laser gun in an attempt to restore the color that I've lost to vitiligo. The concentrated UVB light burns my skin at first, but it eventually tans; and so, slowly but surely, the melanin returns where it was once eaten away by a protective but overly vigilant immune system.

The clinic employs three laser nurses, though most of my appointments are with two of them. Even though the appointments are brief, we've learned a few things about each other these past several months. "Did you do anything fun this weekend?" one of them asks as she calibrates the laser machine one Tuesday morning.

"I played for church on Sunday," I reply, "but that was about it."

Now she's curious. She has a kid who plays percussion in band. Maybe she played in band herself back in the day—I can't quite remember if she's told me that or not. Though she isn't a professional musician, she clearly appreciates music, so I tell her a little bit about what I do as a substitute organist. "It's basically freelance work," I say. "Sometimes, when a church's organist is gone for vacation or otherwise unavailable, they'll contact me and ask if I can fill in for them."

"So you don't have to be busy every weekend, and you can choose when you want to play?"

"Basically."

What I don't tell her is that I'm also employed once or twice a month at a church in Los Gatos. We have Christmas coming up, and it's all hands on deck for Christmas Eve. What she doesn't know is that I will play the 10:00 PM Christmas Eve service there, and then, at 9:00 AM the following morning—while she drinks coffee in her robe and slippers, and her kids unwrap the presents that Santa left for them under the tree—I have another service to play for at the VA hospital, because I'm a sucker for sick veterans at Christmas.

In most other writings about the holiday season, this should be the point where I include a sentimental cliché about stepping back from one's busy schedule and enjoying the spirit of

Christmas. But we are organists, and this is Advent. While others can sit back and enjoy their chestnuts roasting on an open fire (or, in the case of my devoutly Baptist grandparents, a glass of hard eggnog), we have work to do. It is nothing less than a calling to be an organist, but we still have work to do. As we enter the Advent season, perhaps we can experience the joy of this time of year without dismissing all the time and effort that we put into it. Just remember:

Christ is born.

Keep your head, arms, and legs inside the ride at all times, and  
Merry Christmas.

-Katherine Ou,  
*Editor*

### ***In This Issue***

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## PA/Pen AGO Visits Stanford Carillon

On Sunday, November 17, chapter members were treated to an after-hours tour of the carillon located at the top of Hoover Tower at Stanford University. Jim Welch, Stanford University carillonneur, took visitors up the tower and shared some facts about this landmark. Members were given the opportunity to play some of the bells, and heard Welch play some pieces of carillon repertoire. Many thanks to Jim for taking the time to show us this musical treasure!



## Letters

*The following is in response to the chapter Salon event held on Saturday, October 19.*

I attended the October Salon 1st Presbyterian Burlingame. I did not have anything new to present but I played Setting I Lutheran Agnus Dei that I had added F#s to the harmony giving it a jazzy feel, also played a hymn with passing tones that I added as I am completely incapable of improvising as my harmony is non-existent and played Miniature #14 in Eb Flor Peeters.

I got a great suggestion from Don Mulliken to try to play a hymn 1 step up in trying to learn to transpose.

I enjoyed the organ and Peter is very kind and upbeat.

Everyone played wonderfully - Colin Chan, Ed Jennings, Jay Martin, Sam from Apple, Don Mulliken, and Peter Bassford. It was fun to hear the music everyone is working on.

I really enjoy sharing and talking about music. I would encourage everyone to come to share and enjoy each others [sic] company, encouragement and insights to the music being presented.

*-Linda Collins-von Rothstein*

# A NEW CHRISTMAS CD BY THE CHOIRS OF ST. PAUL'S

~ Release on December 7 ~

## Searching for Stars

You are invited to a search for stars through nine centuries of song with the Choirs of St. Paul's and Director Susan Jane Matthews, from the Medieval chant of Hildegard von Bingen and the Romantic keyboard music of Fanny Hensel, to Modern settings of the poetry of Sara Teasdale by American Frank Ticheli and Latvian Ēriks Ešenvalds.

Based on the program of music from the 2018 Christmas concert, *Searching for Stars* was recorded at the end of May by the Choirs of St. Paul's (grade K through adults) accompanied by organ, string quintet, woodwinds, handbells, water-tuned glasses, and even Tibetan bowl.



The CD will be on sale for the first time at the reception following Advent Lessons and Carols on Saturday, December 7, and online at <https://www.stpaulsburlingame.org/stpauls-cds>. This CD will make a terrific gift for friends and families this Christmas. Sales benefit the Choir School. \$ 20.

May you find stars to light your heart in this music this Christmas,  
and throughout the year.

1. Fanny Hensel | Präludium for organ
2. Jan Sandström | Es ist ein Ros entsprungen
3. Jonathan Dove | Seek him that maketh the seven stars
4. John Karl Hirten | As newborn stars
5. Hildegard von Bingen | Caritas abundat
6. John Tavener | Mother of God, here I stand
7. Frank Ticheli | There will be rest
8. Carol | O little town of Bethlehem
9. Paul Edwards | No small wonder
10. Will Todd | My Lord has come
11. Fanny Hensel | November (Das Jahr for piano)
12. Carol | From heaven above to earth I come
13. Fanny Hensel | December (Das Jahr for piano)
14. Fanny Hensel | Nachspiel (Das Jahr for piano)
15. Paul Halley | Huron Carol
16. Philip Ledger | On Christmas Night (Sussex Carol)
17. Peter Cornelius | The Three Kings
18. Carol | Away in a manger
19. Ēriks Ešenvalds | Stars
20. arr. Owain Park | Have yourself a merry little Christmas
21. Fanny Hensel | Postludium for organ



## Upcoming Events

- Advent Lessons and Carols—December 7, 5:00 PM, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 415 El Camino Real, Burlingame. Works by Melissa Dunphy, Hildegard von Bingen, Palestrina, Stephen Cleobury, John Taverner, and Ēriks Ešenvalds. Free will donation.
- Lessons and Carols—December 8, 4:00 PM, St Francis Lutheran Church, 152 Church St, San Francisco. Choirs of St John the Evangelist and St Francis. Daniel Gonzalez, organ, Dr. David Schofield, director. Free, festive reception to follow.
- Advent Lessons and Carols—December 8, 4:00 PM, All Saints Episcopal Church, 555 Waverly St., Palo Alto. Featuring choral music by Palestrina, David Willcocks, Boris Ord, Malcolm Archer, Michael Praetorius and Nicholas Carozzi, along with organ voluntaries by Samuel Scheidt and J.S. Bach.
- The Choir of St. Paul’s Burlingame and Chamber Orchestra—December 15, 4:00 PM, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 415 El Camino Real, Burlingame. *Celebrate Christmas with a journey in music to Italy, beginning in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Rome at St. Peter’s Basilica with an a capella 5-voice motet of Palestrina, continuing to a 17-century Milanese convent for the mesmerizing 8-voice Magnificat primo of Chiara Cozzolani, and concluding in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Venice for the timeless Gloria of Antonio Vivaldi.* Susan Jane Matthews, director. General admission \$35, Student \$20. Tickets go to fund the St. Paul’s Choir School and may be purchased at the 10:00 AM coffee hour or online at <https://stpaulschristmasconcert.bpt.me/>
- Season of Hope—December 16, 7:30 PM, Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph, 80 Market St., San José. Featuring the San José Symphonic Choir and the San José Baroque Orchestra. Free Admission.
- Messiaen’s *La Nativite*—December 17, 7:30 PM, Cathedral of Christ the Light, 2121 Harrison St., Oakland. Jonathan Dimmock, organ.
- The Choir of St. Paul’s Burlingame—December 21, 5:00 PM, Filoli, 85 Cañada Rd., Woodside. Christmas works by Stephen Cleobury, David Wilcocks, Antonio Vivaldi, and Owain Park, sung in the grand ballroom at Filoli Historic House and Garden. For more information, including admission info, visit <https://filoli.org/events/holidays/>
- Angela Kraft Cross, Organ—December 22, 4:00 PM, Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, 1111 Gough St., San Francisco. Admission \$10.
- Margaret Martin Kvamme, Organ—January 12, 4:00 PM, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkely. 3:00 PM Evensong, reception to follow

organ recital. Music of Böhm, Buxtehude, Bach, Carson Cooman and Sue Mitchell Wallace

**Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.**

P.O. Box 582, Menlo Park, CA 94026-0582 [www.papenago.org](http://www.papenago.org)

*Don Mulliken, Dean [damulliken@aol.com](mailto:damulliken@aol.com) Rani Fischer, Sub Dean [ranifisc@gmail.com](mailto:ranifisc@gmail.com)*

*Tom Lohmuller, Secretary [tom.lohmuller@gmail.com](mailto:tom.lohmuller@gmail.com) James Martin, Webmaster [martinjg@flash.net](mailto:martinjg@flash.net)*

*Katherine Ou, Newsletter Editor [kvloudermilk@gmail.com](mailto:kvloudermilk@gmail.com)*