



The American Guild of **ORGANISTS**

European Chapter



NEWSLETTER
Fourth Quarter
2023

The Dean's Corner

Dear European Chapter Members,

With the imminent Thanksgiving **on November 23rd**, it is an excellent moment to express our gratitude to all who have contributed to our European Chapter's splendid and unique character. Our primary appreciation goes to our Board Members and our esteemed members!

A few weeks ago, the European Chapter Board held its board meeting to grant final approval for the upcoming Spring Meeting and concurrently establish a long-term plan.

The fact that we have younger board members who are highly active professionally is a real asset to our European chapter. However, organizing a physical Board Meeting somewhere in Europe is more complex.

Since some Board Members work as church musicians and others teach at music schools and conservatories in different countries, finding mutually available free moments is like piecing together a puzzle. Moreover, the geographical distances add an extra layer of complexity. Our attempts to resume in-person Board Meetings resulted in precisely what we were trying to avoid: a new online Board Meeting!

With even more tremendous pride, we present to you in this newsletter a part of the fruits of our work with the announcement of the Spring Meeting 2024. For me, this marks 20 years since my first participation – and in the same region, no less!

Enjoy reading this newsletter!
Johan - Chapter Dean

The Board

Dean:

Johan Hermans

Sub-Dean:

Giorgio Parolini

Secretary:

Alissa Duryee

Treasurer and Membership Coordinator:

Ludo Vandersmissen

Newsletter Editor and Web-Master:

Barry Jordan

Members at large:

Bernard Sanders

Axel Wilberg

Katelyn Emerson

Contact details for office-bearers may be found on our web page (<https://www.agoeurope.eu>). Email sent to the address [board\[at\]agoeurope.eu](mailto:board[at]agoeurope.eu) will reach the entire board.

Cover photo: St Martini in Groningen: Arp Schnitger 1692, using older material; Franz Caspar Schnitger and Albertus Antonius Hinsz, 1728 - 1730.

From the editor

Dear members,

This will once again be a fairly “thin” edition of the newsletter. This is caused partly by all the excitement leading up to my retirement, effectively in just a week now, but perhaps even more by the precarious state of my health - which is why we are looking for a successor for me! So if you’ve ever felt a burning desire to be responsible for our Newsletter, our web page and our Facebook page, please get in touch with me. I will explain everything! It is not really all that much work; obviously, though, it comes in waves. It would be great to have someone in position before it becomes absolutely impossible for me to continue.

It was of course high time for us to divulge the most important information of the year: the destination of the Spring Meeting 2024. It will be “Dutch Treat III”! I am really excited about that. I have asked Judy, who will be Organiser and Fearless Leader along with the ever-patient Wim, to write two articles: one is about the conception of the week, the other about the details of the hotel, booking it and so on. Please read this very carefully; I do not think there is anything one might need to know that is not covered there! Above all, please do observe any deadlines you may find there. As I know from experience, emails which begin with the phrase “I know it’s very late but...” can make life exceptionally difficult.

That is all from me now - you will find a little about my activities in the last few months of my work here a few pages on!

Best wishes to all

Barry Jordan

News from composing Chapter Members

Bernard Sanders’ new organ work “Diversions in Stone” was premiered by the composer on September 23rd, 2023 at the Church of St. Gallus in Tuttlingen, Germany. It consists of four movements, each bearing a subtitle with various stones from the Bible: The Stone Tablets (Exodus 24,12), The Rock (Psalm 18,3), The Cornerstone (Matthew 21,42), and the Living Stones (1 Peter 2,5). In the same program he performed the European Premier of his “Concertino for Organ and Strings” with Constanze Rommel conducting.

Anders Borjesson’s *Ten Pieces for organ (Volume 1)* was released by Wayne Leupold in October. The music is dedicated to the memory of Rachel Laurin. Anders is the organist of Sweden’s Mariestad Cathedral and is a comparatively new Chapter member; you may remember that we introduced him earlier this year.

Finally: the international Organ Festival at Turku Cathedral (Finland) commissioned a substantial organ piece from me to mark their 50th year. The piece, *Ox and eagle, angel, lion* lasts about a quarter of an hour; I premiered it in Turku in July, and gave the first German performance last Saturday at my farewell recital. A projected recording could not unfortunately take place, owing to illness.

Spring Meeting - preliminary Itinerary

Spring Meeting 1-6 April 2024 - "Dutch Treat III" in the Netherlands

It's time to celebrate!

20 years ago in 2004, Judy and Wim Riefel organized for the second time, a Spring Meeting in the Netherlands- "Dutch Treat II." This Meeting came only 5 years after the very first Spring Meeting of the European Chapter in 1999, which Judy and Wim also organized and gave the title "Dutch Treat I." Who might have guessed that European Chapter members would be able to join and enjoy consecutive (with one break for COVID) Spring Meetings all through the years hosted by our own members living all over Europe, and one Meeting hosted by one of our many members in the United States? But here we are.

Wim and Judy are thrilled to welcome everyone back to the Netherlands!

Preliminary Itinerary Information

Since the first two Spring Meetings in the Netherlands were centered around Zutphen in the east-central part of the country in the Province of Gelderland, this time we're going to spend time in three additional Dutch Provinces in the north and northeastern part of the country. The Provinces of Friesland, Groningen and North Holland have been added to this year's itinerary. We think this will give attendees a delicious taste of several of the most important historical organs that have given this small country of 17 million inhabitants its reputation as an organ "mecca." It will also allow Chapter members the chance to experience and discover the differences and similarities in the landscape, historical background, culture, languages, and so on. The Netherlands is packed full of picturesque villages and cities literally around every curve in the road, the majority with a church in the center and an interesting organ hiding inside. For the players among us: Please don't be nervous when you skim through the itinerary and notice that most of the organs listed were built in the 18th century. Repertoire from later periods works very well on several of these instruments. Also, you will want to have short pieces that will highlight the many truly beautiful sounds of one single rank of pipes, quietly shouting to sing on its own.

In conclusion, you might think that we saved Doesburg and its 19th century organ for the last day to give our ears the chance to acclimate back into the 21st century. And that was, indeed, one of our thoughts. The other one was that spending the last day of "Dutch Treat III" in the Zutphen-Doesburg area might be a lovely way to celebrate coming full circle, Zutphen to Zutphen, on the 25th Anniversary of our Spring Meeting journey together.

Preliminary Itinerary Overview

The city of Leeuwarden in the Province of Friesland, will be our central gathering point for the Spring Meeting. Our designated Spring Meeting Hotel is in the city center of Leeuwarden -- Fletcher Hotel-Palais Stadhouders Hof. Registration and our Opening Dinner will take place at this hotel on Easter Monday, April 1st. Hotel details can be found at the end of this itinerary overview. Also, our tour bus will depart from this hotel every morning, Tuesday-Friday, to take us to our destinations.

Monday, April 1, 2024: Leeuwarden, Friesland

Registration: 4:00-6:00 pm Fletcher Hotel-Palais Stadhouders Hof;

Opening Dinner: 7:00 pm at the same hotel

Tuesday, April 2, 2024: Province of Friesland

Harlingen, Grote Kerk (Great Church): 1776 organ by Albertus Antoni Hinsz, two manuals, pedal, 14 stops

Leeuwarden: Grote of Jacobijner Kerk (Great or Jacobinus Church): 1724/1727 organ by Christian Müller, three manuals, pedal, 37 stops

Waalse Kerk: 1740 organ by Johann Michael Schwartzburg, two manuals, attached pedal
Organ demonstrations by Peter van der Zwaag

Wednesday, April 3, 2024: Loppersum and Groningen, Province of Groningen

Loppersum, Petrus en Pauluskerk: 1735 organ by Hinsz, 1803 Rückpositiv added by Freytag, 2018/2019 restoration by Bakker & Timmega, 2 manuals, attached pedal

Groningen: Martini Church: 1691/1730 organ by Arp Schnitger/Hinsz, 3 manuals, pedal, 53 stops. Organ demonstration by Sietze de Vries

Aa-Kerk: 1700/1815 organ by Arp Schnitger and Timpe, 3 manuals, Pedal, 33 stops. Organ demonstration by Peter Westerbrink

Thursday, April 4, 2024: Haarlem and Alkmaar, Province of North Holland

Haarlem, Grote of St. Bavokerk (Great or St. Bavo Church): 1738 organ by Christian Müller, 3 manuals, pedal, 64 stops. Organ demonstration by Anton Pauw

Alkmaar, Grote Sint Laurenskerk: 1645 organ by Hagebeer/Schnitger, 3 manuals, pedal, 55 stops
1511 organ by van Covelen, 2 manuals, pedal, 13 stops (oldest organ in the Netherlands). Organ demonstrations by Pieter van Dijk

Friday, April 5, 2024: Zutphen and Doesburg, Province of Gelderland

Zutphen, Sint Walburgis Kerk: 1643/1815, organ by Bader/Timpe, 3 manuals, pedal, 38 stops

Doesburg, Grote Martini Kerk: 1916 organ by Walcker, 4 manuals, pedal, 75 stops

Organ demonstration by Wilbert Berendsen

Closing Dinner

Spring Meeting - Hotel arrangements

As has become customary for Spring Meetings during the last several years, organizers try to find one hotel to designate as our "Spring Meeting Hotel." Although not required, we do urge participants to consider using this hotel, as it can help tremendously to keep the group together for communication purposes. Staying in the same hotel also gives participants the chance to socialize with other attendees.

All this having been said, participants should feel free to choose another accommodation. In deciding to stay elsewhere, however, please keep in mind that the bus will leave from the Spring Meeting hotel every morning, and it will be the responsibility of everyone to meet the bus there and on time. In making the hotel choice, consideration was given to finding a reasonably priced, good quality hotel in a central location with tour bus access, restaurants/shops in and around the hotel, and the train station nearby. This time we found a hotel that meets all these criteria.

Fletcher Hotel-Paleis Stadhouders Hof, Hofplein 29, 8911 HJ Leeuwarden, Netherlands.
Tel: +31 (0) 58 216 2180, email: info@hotelstadhouderlijkhof.nl

We hope you will be pleased to stay in this former 18th century palace of the Dutch royal family, which has retained the allure of a palace while offering its guests recently renovated hotel rooms as well as traditional accommodations, not yet renovated, such as the Royal Suite and Imperial Suite.

Important Hotel reservation information

Each participant will be expected to make his/her own reservation at the hotel for the Spring Meeting, 1-6 April 2024. The hotel staff has shown a friendly, helpful and accommodating attitude toward making our visit as pleasant as possible. The hotel has offered us a group rate for selected rooms that are often reserved for groups for an extended stay. These rooms are located on 3-4 floors in what used to be the "Hofschool" of the palace and were totally renovated four years ago. The hotel has many rooms, so there should be no problem accommodating all of us. But please don't wait to make your reservation! If you do this right away, the better your chances will be to secure your preferred room in the hotel and it will help us and the hotel in its planning. Also, if you have special needs of any kind, do not hesitate to communicate these to the hotel when you make your reservation.

Two types of rooms are being offered with a group discount:

Comfort Double room with private bathroom/shower

Comfort Double room with private bathroom with bathtub/ shower

Price for a Single room (one of the Comfort Double rooms) on the basis of 1 adult per room is 90 Euros per night. Price for a Double room on the basis of 2 adults per room is 100 Euros per night.

These rates include a full buffet breakfast and exclude a tax and handling fee of 3 Euros per person per night.

Also, there is a 3rd category of rooms in the former Hofschool that are not included in the group

rate above:

The Double Comfort Deluxe room. This room is what the hotel describes as a large, authentic “attic” room on the 4th floor of the former Hofschool. There is definitely room for another bed to be placed in the room for an additional fee. Four occupants would be allowed to stay in this room. The hotel has said it would also give a discount (smaller than the group discount due to the larger size of the room) to our participants for this type of room. If you are interested in this room you should ask the hotel upon booking what rate they are willing to offer, being sure to mention that you are part of the American Guild of Organists group.

Useful information: There are several elevators in the hotel, so all of the rooms are accessible to everyone. On the ground floor, there are some steps (3-4) now and then in the hallways.

Tips for reserving your room for the Spring Meeting

The hotel suggests that if you have trouble making an online room reservation, you may call the hotel to reserve your room or

Write a personal email to the hotel: info@hotelstadhouderlijkhof.nl

Tell them you are part of the group of the American Guild of Organists for our Meeting 1-6 April, 2024

Give the dates and the category of the room you wish to reserve

Feel free to communicate any particular needs/wishes

Group rate extension: If you want to reserve more nights before or after our Spring Meeting, 1-6 April, our contact person at the hotel, Laura de Groot (Banquet sales/Fletcher Hotels,) has told us that the group rate may be applied. Also, hotel reservations may be cancelled up to one week before the Meeting. Please check on this when you make your reservation.

Registration and costs for the Spring Meeting

IMPORTANT

European Chapter members: As soon as you have decided to attend the Spring Meeting and have reserved your room, write an email to Judy (Judith.riefel-lindel@outlook.com) and to the European Chapter Dean, Johan Hermans (j.h.o@skynet.be) to tell us you have done so. At this point your name will be placed on our Participant’s List. PLEASE DO THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE and NO LATER THAN THE END OF JANUARY to help us proceed with the planning of group meals, bus transportation, and so on. As usual, the European Chapter subsidizes a large percentage of the costs for the Spring Meetings. At registration Participants will be asked to pay an amount of money in cash, in Euros, which will help pay for bus transportation and for your own Opening and Closing Dinner, for example, for which we will have made a reservation for you. This amount will be announced in March.

Non-members are welcome to join our European Chapter AGO Spring Meeting, if we have enough places, but they will be asked to pay an extra registration fee, the equivalent to a Chapter Friend membership in the European Chapter (20 Euros), in addition to the amount asked of our members above.

PLEASE, if you have any questions concerning the Spring Meeting “Dutch Treat III” in the Netherlands, don’t hesitate to write to me, your organizer, Judy Riefel-Lindel. Judith.riefel-lindel@outlook.com If I don’t know the answer, I will get it for you!

Watch for the full agenda in the January newsletter!

Barry Jordan retires from Magdeburg Cathedral

Time flies when you’re having fun, they say. Still, 29 years (and four months) is a long time, perhaps too long to be good. However, that’s the way it worked out; when I went to the cathedral back in 1994, there was no adequate organ and much else was in disarray. With lots of luck and some good judgement I was blessed to find some really enthusiastic and able people to get the organ projects under way (so obviously, you can’t even think of going elsewhere!), then the organs (there ended up being two new ones, 2008 and 2012) were finished and I liked them very much, so I had no motivation there either. And my beloved wife is very much rooted here, and then there were the children...

Nothing ever really recovered from the pandemic, especially as regards the choirs (it put a total end to my *Junge Kantorei*, just on the verge of getting really good) but we managed to recover some of our prowess, so I was encouraged to schedule quite a big programme for this last not-quite-a-year. Then I unfortunately got sick, so what with all the explorations and procedures and chemotherapy and what-not, not everything has worked out quite as hoped. Still: in September, marking the weekend on which I came to this town for the first time thirty years ago to jump through the necessary hoops to get appointed to the job, we sang Britten’s “Rejoice in the Lamb” and Martin Palmeri’s “Misatango”. It was an evening full of great joy. I had hoped to play Messiaen’s wonderful “Livre du Saint Sacrement” for a fourth and last time, but that was not possible. Last Saturday I presented my farewell recital on the organ I conceived and which I have deeply loved; once again, the scarcity of practice time meant that I had to be more modest in the choice of repertoire than planned, but it was a good evening. Next Saturday (25th November) we will perform the “Messiah”. There will be not one but two “farewell ceremonies” owing to the fact that The People Up There could not agree as to whose privilege and/or duty it is. Some things never change! And that is that. Unfortunately, I will not have access to the instruments in the future. That is a slightly bitter pill!



Recitals by Chapter Members

Unfortunately I have only one recital listing for December:

Saturday December 2, 3:00 pm Johan Hermans Hasselt Cathedral

This would be the perfect time to open your diaries for 2024 and see what's coming up!



Leeuwarden

Our internet address: www.agoeurope.eu

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/agoeurope> - a public page, anyone, on or off Facebook, can see it.