



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

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October Newsletter

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Director's Note

Greetings, friends of the Task Force for Gender Equity! This is our inaugural issue for mass distribution, and as you will see, it's a wide variety of articles and recordings we think might be of interest to you. Some things are months past, some are quite recent -- and we hope to increase the percentage of timely material, as we engage all of you in our efforts to find all the important stories and share them as widely as possible.

We promise to highlight the progress being made, whenever and wherever we can, but we will also point out issues and concerns that we think need to be addressed. Gender equity, like everything else in the world now, it seems, is a work in progress. Thanks for reading our newsletter; thanks for sharing our concerns, and we hope you'll continue to be involved in our work.

All the best,

Nancy Cooper

Get Involved!

Have you completed any research recently that you are wanting to share with the public? Have you reworked your doctoral dissertation on women organ composers, cut it in half and eliminated all words of more than 4 syllables, and are ready to submit it somewhere? Consider publishing in TAO. Nick Bergin is the new, enthusiastic editor, and is very (I mean, VERY) supportive of the TF's work in the past year. We are continuing it for the upcoming year as well, but no one has said that Women Can Only Have One Article Per Month, right? Talk with Nancy, or with Lyn Loewi, or write Nick directly (nbergin@agohq.org).

Queen Elizabeth II Funeral

As many of you may have seen from the news, Queen Elizabeth II's funeral drew much attention from around the world. Here are some items of interest related to the funeral service and committal ceremony for Queen Elizabeth II, on September 20, 2022. First, here is an article about women who played a key role in the service.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S FUNERAL: THESE WOMEN PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN HER MAJESTY'S SEND-OFF

Prior to the start of the committal ceremony, the St. George's organ scholar played, and HER name is Miriam Reveley. **Miriam Reveley**, Organ Scholar for 2022-2023, began her musical career as a Chorister at Ely Cathedral in 2016. She was appointed Sixth Form Organ Scholar at Ely in 2019, and Assisting Organist in 2022. She has also regularly accompanied services at Tewkesbury Abbey and Peterborough Cathedral, and she has studied part time at Birmingham Conservatoire. Miriam passed her FRCO diploma in July 2022, winning the coveted Limpus prize for her playing exam. Next year, she will be the Organ Scholar at Jesus College Cambridge, where she will read for a degree in Music.



Two pieces by women were played at St. George's as the committal service was beginning (in addition to works by Bach, Howells, Vaughan Williams, and others):

O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid – [Dame Ethel Smyth](#) (1858-1944)

The Tree of Peace – [Judith Weir](#) (1954-)

Although you can find more about **Judith Weir** later in the newsletter (see Composer of the Month), we want to highlight her here as well. She composed a specially commissioned piece that was sung for the Queen's funeral. It was a setting of Psalm 42 to music composed by the Master of The King's Music, aka Judith Weir. Listen to it here:

[Psalm 42: 1-7, COMPOSED BY JUDITH WEIR](#)



Joy Sutcliffe has been making history as well. It may come as some surprise to hear that there are still church choirs which won't accept female altos. The 19-year-old recently made history when she won the first female scholarship at the prestigious 900-year-old Norman-built place of worship: "It's great that these opportunities are now finally being made available to female singers and I hope that Durham is setting a trend for other UK cathedrals," she says.

The Queen had a history of connecting with other women, including musicians. One of those connections is with **Jeanne Demessieux**, who was the first woman to play at a British state event. The event was Queen Eliabeth II's coronation. Here is an article (pages 7-9) where you can learn more about Jeanne Demessieux's life as an organist during that time:

[JEANNE DEMESSIEUX: PORTRAIT OF A STAR](#)



History has also been changed during the Queen's reign. One of the biggest and newest changes comes from the The Choir of St George's Chapel. The Dean and Canons of St George's Chapel Windsor Castle announced that, by September 2023, girls and boys will be singing side by side as choristers in the renowned Chapel Choir. This follows the appointment of their first female lay clerk in November 2021. Further details will be announced in due course. Learn more about this change as a first in its 674-year history.

[FIRST GIRL CHORISTERS](#)

[THE CHOIR OF ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL](#)



Finally, below is a link to all the music performed at the Queen's funeral. Queen Elizabeth's Funeral Music included a nod to her 1947 wedding to Prince Philip. Among three hymns at the funeral service was "The Lord's my Shepherd," which was also sung at her 1947 wedding ceremony and noted to be one of the Queen's favorite hymns.

[WHAT MUSIC WAS PERFORMED AT QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S FUNERAL?](#)

Composer of the Month

Judith Weir

Judith Weir (born May 11, 1954) is a British composer and the first female Master of the King's Music. In July 2014 Judith Weir was appointed to the 395-year old royal post of Master of the King's Music, in succession to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Amongst her priorities in this role are the support of school music teachers, of amateur orchestras and choirs, and of rural festivals. In this role she has written music for national and royal occasions, including the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations and the UK's official commemoration of the 1918 Armistice. She has also created new music for many community groups and schools, including Burntwood School Wandsworth, Aberdeen Art Gallery, St Mary's Church Dover and Greenacre School, Barnsley



Learn more about her from the links below!

[JUDITH WEIR, COMPOSER](#)

[JUDITH WEIR | CLASSIC FM](#)

[JUDITH WEIR | WIKIPEDIA](#)



Check It Out

Thanks to AGO President Eileen Hunt for forwarding this article to our attention. Exciting and amazing work being done!

[A NEW LABEL REVIVES FORGOTTEN FEMALE COMPOSERS' MUSIC](#)

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral has appointed Dr. Katie Burk as Canon for Cathedral Music. The dean calls attention to the ground-breaking nature of the appointment, which you can read below.

[DR. KATIE BURK NAMED CANON FOR CATHEDRAL MUSIC](#)

Leslie Wolf Robb forwarded Joy-Leilani's research list of resources, with embedded links to scores and recordings of underrepresented composers. Take a look and explore the links!

[RESEARCH | JOY-LEILANI GARBUTT](#)

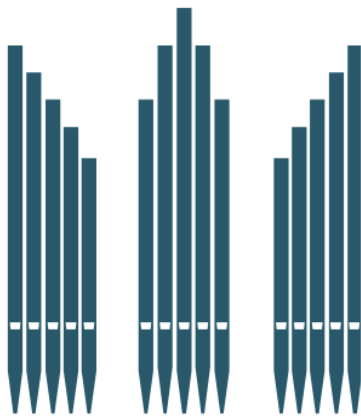
Julia Wolfe's "Her Story," a commemoration with an eye toward the future, premieres in the state where the 19th Amendment achieved ratification. Learn more below!

[REVIEW: AN ORATORIO CAUTIOUSLY LOOKS BACK ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE](#)

Plan Ahead!

Gail Archer and her organization, MusForum, are sponsoring a conference in February 2023; read more about it here, and start planning now! It will be taking place at Arizona State; our friend (and American SWO member) Lindsey Johnson, is a student there, and our colleague and TF supporter Kimberly Marshall is the Professor of Organ there.

WOMEN IN THE WEST: ARIZONA MUSFORUM CONFERENCE



Mark your calendar! The next Woman Composer Sunday will be March 5, 2023. This is the spotify playlist that SWO compiled in advance of the 2022 WCS. Listen and enjoy!

WOMEN COMPOSERS FOR THE ORGAN

WOMAN
COMPOSER
SUNDAY

If you haven't heard about SWO (Society of Women Organists), here is an introductory video. Membership is free and the organization is dedicated to celebrating women organists in all areas of music-making. Here is their website:

<https://www.societyofwomenorganists.co.uk/>

INTRODUCING THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN ORGANISTS



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

Nancy Cooper, Director | Michelle Kardos, Newsletter Editor | Mary Newton | Lyn Loewi

Eileen Hunt, AGO President and ex officio member | Leslie Wolf Robb | Vicky Schaeffer