



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

May Newsletter

Lecture Recital

Check out Michelle Kardos' Lecture Recital on Unheard Voices: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion of Sacred Music in the United States. This recital includes an overview of the current literature from the past 5 years, as well as highlighting composers and their stories in sacred music. Program notes can be found in the YouTube link below!



[LECTURE RECITAL](#)

SWO Marathon Organ Performance



Check out this article about the Society of Women Organists (SWO) celebrating International Women's Day. The article discusses the underrepresentation of women in organ music. To address this, SWO held a marathon performance featuring more than 20 women organists at London Bridge Station on International Women's Day. What a great way to celebrate by our colleagues across the pond!

[CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE](#)

Composer of the Month

Dame Ethel Smyth

Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) was a force to be reckoned with. Not only did she break barriers as a prolific composer in a male-dominated field, but she also fiercely advocated for women's rights as a prominent figure in the British suffrage movement. Her life, a vibrant tapestry woven with music, activism, and a defiance of societal norms, continues to inspire today. Born into a well-to-do English family, Smyth's musical talent blossomed early. Despite her family's initial resistance to a professional music career for a woman, her determination prevailed. She honed her craft in Leipzig, a hotbed of musical innovation at the time, defying Victorian expectations of proper feminine pursuits.



Smyth's compositions encompassed a wide range of genres, including operas, orchestral works, chamber music, and songs. Her music, influenced by composers like Brahms and Wagner, was known for its passion, energy, and masterful orchestration. The Mass in D, a powerful and dramatic piece, garnered her early recognition in 1893. However, Smyth's path to success was not without obstacles. The prevailing attitude towards female composers often relegated their work to the fringes. Critics often dismissed her compositions as derivative or lacking the "masculine strength" expected from a serious composer. This marginalization fueled Smyth's determination to prove herself.

Smyth's fight for recognition extended beyond the concert hall. A passionate advocate for women's suffrage, she joined the movement in the early 1900s. Her fiery spirit and unwavering commitment made her a prominent figure alongside Emmeline Pankhurst and the militant suffragettes. Smyth's life was unconventional, both personally and professionally. Openly living as a lesbian during a time of social disapproval, she challenged societal norms and defied expectations.

[ETHEL SMYTH](#)

[LIBRARY OF CONGRESS](#)

Guinness World Record

A Guinness World Record attempt saw musicians perform over 24 hours of music, all written by women and non-binary composers. More than 120 musicians gathered in central London on Thursday 22 February, coming together in a Guinness World Record attempt for the 'Longest Acoustic Music Live-Streamed Concert.' Learn more below!



MUSICIANS BREAK GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Mark Your Calendars!

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! The National Convention of the American Guild of Organists is held biennially in even-numbered years and reflects the diverse aspects of the Guild and its official work across the country. Held as a function of the national organization in partnership with a selected chapter, it represents a coalition between the national leadership and the host chapter's leadership. This joint venture combines the talents and creative strengths of each and represents the larger vision of the whole membership and its needs. This year's upcoming convention will be in San Francisco from June 30-July 4, 2024. When you register, be sure to check for the workshop being given by the Task Force for Gender Equity and the Society for Women Organists. We hope to see you there!

AGO 2024 SAN FRANCISCO



AGO Task Force for Gender Equity

Dr. Nancy Cooper, Director | Dr. Michelle Kardos, Newsletter Editor | Dr. Lyn Loewi
Dr. Eileen Hunt, AGO President and ex officio member | Leslie Wolf Robb