



SAAGO

The CYPHER

*Newsletter of the Southern Arizona Chapter
American Guild of Organists*

*Volume 43, Number 8
April 2024*

Chapter Website: www.saago.org

Programs at a glance through June 2

Hymn Festival

Sunday, April 7, 9 a.m.
Lutheran Church of the Risen
Savior, Green Valley

Green Valley Organ Crawl

Saturday, April 13
Meet at Catalina Methodist
Church at 9:15 a.m.

Carolyn Smith, Organ

Sunday, April 14, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Donation

Young Performers' Recital

Sunday, April 21, 2 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church
Sierra Vista

Evensong Organ Prelude

Sunday, April 21, 4:15 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills
Episcopal Church

Wurlitzer "Hands On"

Monday, May 6, 6:30 p.m.
Fox Theatre, Tucson

All the Bells and Whistles: Mother's Day Concert

Sunday, May 12, 4 p.m.
Christ Church United
Methodist

Evensong Organ Prelude

Sunday, May 19, 4:15 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills
Episcopal Church

Summer Social and Membership Meeting

Sunday, June 2, 4 p.m.
Colonia Verde Club House

Focus on April programs. . .

Green Valley Organ Crawl

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m.
Carpool: Meet at Catalina Methodist Church at 9:15 a.m.

Four organs are included in the crawl. They are listed below in order of location, from North to South (along I-19) and in order of the times for each visit.

10:00 a.m., United Methodist Church of Green Valley
300 W. Esperanza Blvd.

Linda Truesdell, Organist and Music Director, host
Organ: Reuter, 1980, 35 ranks and Walker digital ranks

11:00 a.m., Lutheran Church of the Risen Savior
555 S. La Canada Drive

Patricia Leege, Director of Music and Organist, host
Organ: Holtkamp, 2015, 33 ranks

12:00 noon, St. Francis in The Valley Episcopal Church
600 S. La Canada Drive

Michael Case, Organist; Gerald Near, Music Director, hosts
Organ: Rodgers digital, 2001, three manual 45 ranks

1:00 p.m. box lunch in the St. Francis Church courtyard. Please RSVP to Dee Schultz by Tuesday, April 9, at adschul@yahoo.com or by calling 520-343-5343

1:30 p.m., Valley Presbyterian Church

2800 S. Camino Del
Craig Lindsey, Pastor, host
David Wang and Heruhito Miyagi from Organs AZ will demonstrate the organ
Organ: Rogers Infinity, 2023, three manuals

2:30 p.m. Approximate end of tour.

CARPOOL

Meet at the East parking lot of Catalina United Methodist Church (2700 E. Speedway) at 9:15 a.m. The drive to Green Valley should take approximately 40 minutes. Stop lists and other information about the churches will be available during the tour.



Holtkamp, Opus 2112 (2015)
Lutheran Church of the Risen Savior

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The CYPHER

Stardust (Dusty) Johnson, Editor (skj5@cox.net)

**Submission Deadlines for the 2023-2024 season
are the 15th of each month.**

NOTE: Chapter members are invited to submit program
information for inclusion in THE CYPHER. We want to include your
programs!

Please send program descriptions, along with pertinent
information—title, date, location, time, brief description, cost, and
photos—to Dusty Johnson, *CYPHER* editor. The information will
appear in the print edition as well as in the online edition. Material
may be edited as needed.

Please email information to

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***To play only what is written is the domain of science. To
realize what is not written is the domain of art.***

—Jean Langlais.

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message from the dean...



Dear Southern Arizona Chapter Members,

As you read this, you have journeyed through Lent, hopefully with some time for self-reflection, and Easter, with all the joy surrounding it.

The Texas bluebells are in full bloom where I live, and it won't be long before the trees begin to bud, along with the desert flowers. It is a truly lovely time of year here in the Sonoran desert. That's outside.

Inside, we have had the pleasures of Pamela Decker's workshop on some of her accessible organ works, two Saturdays where members could spend hands-on time on a few of the large pipe organs in town (thank you, Stan Kartchner, for spearheading that), recitals by members Steve Keyl at St. Alban's Episcopal Church and me at Christ Church United Methodist, as well as the Nathan Laube recital at Catalina United Methodist Church as part of the Catalina Organ Festival. Our chapter is pleased to provide some financial support to the Catalina Organ Festival. In return, members may attend one concert per season without charge. Whew! I hope I haven't omitted anything.

Yet to come is the organ crawl in Green Valley, our neighbor to the south. Sub-dean David Gay has assumed leadership of this event, and it should be great fun and give us a chance to experience those organs and musicians.

In, around, and among all these events, the Nominating Committee (Lars Andersen, Cathie Kennedy, and Carolyn Smith) has come up with a slate of proposed candidates for all our chapter positions, and you will have opportunity to cast your votes soon.

Also, the Program Committee, led by David Gay, has been hard at work considering and outlining programs for next season, and has come up with some intriguing ideas.

All this faithful service and dedication leads me to share a thought from the Chaplain's article in the March 2024 issue of *The American Organist*. She wrote:

Please pace yourself...Your music is a gift, and gifts need to be treasured – but so do you.

I appreciate more than I can say all the effort, both musical and administrative/creative that goes into making this chapter so vibrant. At the same time, I treasure each of you and trust that you will not overdo, that you will take time for fun, rest, and relaxation along the path as we spring into Spring!

Dean Janet Tolman



Chapter and Member Programs

Hymn Festival with Dr. Jeffrey Blersch

Sunday, April 7, 9 a.m.
Lutheran Church of the Risen Savior
555 S. La Canada Drive, Green Valley

Dr. Blersch, Professor of Music at Concordia University (Nebraska), regularly performs recitals and hymn festivals across United States. Recent appearances have included hymn festivals at The Meyerson Symphony Center, Dallas, and conventions of the American Guild of Organists, Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, National Association of Pastoral Musicians.

Carolyn Smith, Organ St. Alban's Organ Concert Series

Sunday, April 14, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church
3738 Old Sabino Canyon Road
Freewill offering

Carolyn performs "Chorale Preludes and Other Baroque Gems," with music by Praetorius, Scheidt, Telemann, Pachelbel, Bach, and others. A long-time church organist in Tucson, England, and Scotland, Carolyn holds a Master's Degree in English Church Music from the University of East Anglia in conjunction with Cambridge University. She also holds a degree in organ performance from the University of Arizona where she studied with Roy Johnson. She is Organist and Chancel Choir Accompanist at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.



Young Performers' Recital

Sunday, April 21, 2 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church
800 Taylor Dr., Sierra Vista
Freewill Offering

A special organ performance program featuring organ students from Sierra Vista and Tucson.

Organ Prelude and Choral Evensong

Sunday, April 21, 4:15 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church
4440 N. Campbell Ave.
Free-will Offering

Wurlitzer at the Fox Theatre "Hands On"

Monday, May 6, 6:30 p.m.
17 W. Congress St.

This will be a particularly interesting event for SAAGO members who will have the opportunity to play the Mighty Wurlitzer at the Fox Theatre.

When the Fox Theatre opened on April 11, 1930, the organ was an integral element of this and nearly every 'Movie Palace' built in that era. Unfortunately, in the



1950s, the Fox Theatre's original 'Mighty Wurlitzer' was sold for parts. However, in 2002, midway through the Fox restoration, Dr. Malin Dollinger generously donated his meticulously cared for 1922 four-manual, 27-rank Wurlitzer organ to the theatre. The organ was restored by member Graham Davis, (Pipe Organ Artisans) with some assistance by SAAGO members.

Details and sign up times will be provided in the May CYPHER.

All the Bells and Whistles: Mother's Day Concert

Sunday, May 12, 4 p.m.
Christ Church United Methodist
655 N. Craycroft Rd.

A musical celebration with Organ, handbells, choir, instrumentalists, and piano; with Janet Tolman, organist and Dean, SAAGO and John Neve, handbell director and member of SAAGO. This event benefits the Christ Church Food Bank. Attendees are requested to bring nonperishable food items.

Summer Social and Membership Meeting

Sunday, June 2, 4 p.m.
Colonia Verde Club House
2700 N. Camino Valle Verde

The annual members' meeting will take place at 4 p.m. followed by a potluck dinner and fellowship time.

March Programs Recaps

Janet Tolman, Organ, March 1, at Christ Church United Methodist with fellow performers., taking a bow.



Rudolph Rostash, Janet Tolman, John Neve

Stephen Keyl, Organ, March 3, at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Fritts organ, Opus 35, 2012, 22 stops, mechanical action.



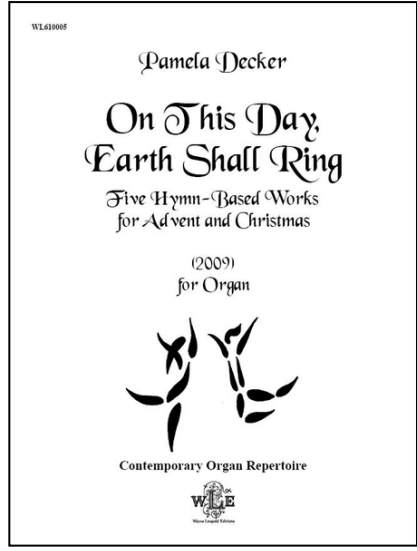
Pamela Decker's Accessible Church Music Workshop, March 3, St. Philip's



Pamela Decker introduced the various pieces she selected for inclusion in the workshop, commenting specifically on each one before the various SAAGO members were going to play the works selected, including one composition by Ken Yukl.



Performers: Ken Yukl, Jeffrey Campbell, Janet Tolman, Pamela Decker, David Gay



March Programs Recaps *continued*

Play Tucson's larger pipe organs

Stan Kartchner, event organizer, expresses thanks to all those who made the recent larger organ event possible and especially to the organists and other representatives of the respective churches. Those include Neil West and Mariana Vidal at Catalina, Janet at Christ Church, Jeffrey Campbell at St. Philip's, John Brobeck at Northminster, and Chris Fresolone at St. Michael's. We very much appreciate your generosity of time and availability in providing this rather unique opportunity to our members and friends. I understand the experience was well-received and valued. And, of course, we also welcome any feedback you are willing to provide concerning the experience from your perspectives.

Participants' Comments

Quinton Hurst (Northminster Presbyterian and Catalina UMC). Many thanks to SAAGO and Stan Kartchner for organizing this multi-organ open console event!

Both the Quimby organs are fabulous instruments and a joy to play. I appreciated the time and effort that John Brobeck of Northminster put into providing a history of the church and the organ as well as showing me around the organ chambers and explaining the features of the console.

My favorite aspect of the event was the fact that it was not a performance. I spent a good portion of each visit just exploring the sounds, colors, and voices of the instrument. I did not have any repertoire chosen specifically for either visit. Once I had familiarized myself with the instrument, I pulled out my tablet and tried out a few familiar pieces with different styles to see how they sounded. For both visits, I found that 45 minutes just flew by, and I left wishing I had more time. Thank you so much to the churches and the organists who opened their sanctuaries and volunteered their time to make this experience possible.

Jessie Jewitt (Catalina). As I just moved here from Paris, I was keen on playing an instrument suitable for my French repertoire. I had heard that the Catalina Methodist organ was the best in town! So, I quickly registered and played the Vierne Toccata. The experience was almost like being back in a French Cathedral playing a Cavaillé-Coll organ, minus the reverb. The reeds were absolutely awesome, and unlike a French instrument were in-tune! Thanks for this wonderful opportunity.

Laura Silva (Catalina UMC). Many thanks to all who organized this event and welcomed us in to play some different organs. I visited Catalina United Methodist Church, bringing along some Bach, Dubois, and Mendelssohn. It was great to listen to this repertoire on a different instrument than I use for practice. The benefits of this event are to expand our ideas about our performance practice and to meet our organist friends coming and going from practice times.

Lynn Moser (Catalina UMC). I thoroughly enjoyed playing on the Quimby organ at Catalina United Methodist Church! It was fun to play on an organ twice the size of the instrument that I usually play! By the time I had explored all the individual sounds, it was about time to leave, so perhaps longer time at the organ would've been useful. I also appreciated the tour of the chambers that David Horr gave me; climbing up the outside ladder was an adventure. It's an engineering marvel how 57 ranks fit into the chambers! I really appreciate the Chapter providing this opportunity and I'd love to do it again!

Lars Andersen (St. Philip's, Christ Church United Methodist, St. Michael's, Northminster) I had the opportunity to play four of Tucson's major organs. My first stop was St. Philip's; I had not played that Holtkamp since 1991-92 during the [then] annual Bach marathon. The new Quimby console is absolutely delightful and well designed. The sound of that organ is absolutely awesome and speaks very well in that building. Jeffrey left a great explanation of the organ (how to turn it on, etc.) and what additions it has been prepared for.

My 2nd stop was Christ Church United Methodist. I was the only member who signed up to play this superb Schlicker instrument. The 8' Principal rank is to die for ... no other American builder has ever been able to match the unique Schlicker sound of their 8' Principal ranks. Unfortunately my visit was cut short due to a schedule change and I had only 10 minutes.

My 3rd stop was St. Michael's. Chris Fresolone was a wonderful host and explained all the nuances of the instrument before I played. I had played this instrument once before, but it sounded quite different perhaps due to the position of the console. The drapes in the chancel are now gone. Exposing the pipework has improved the sound.

Continued on the next page.

March Programs Recaps *continued*

My last organ was Northminster. I had previously played the old McDowell when the choir division was in the little south side alcove. I remember the delightful Cromorne stop of that instrument and was thrilled that it was retained in the Quimby organ.

In each visit, I sampled each stop independently and then "noodled" around with combinations of stops, then played the same pre-selected pieces on each organ. I made a recording of one piece at St. Michael's and at Northminster. Once they're edited, I'll post them on my BOX account (cloud storage) to share with others via a direct link. I think 45 minutes was ample.

Mark Stockwell (St. Philip's, Northminster, St. Michael's). Thanks to all who were involved in creating the opportunity to play some of the larger local pipe organs. There were many who were indispensable in the event, including the organ caretakers and my instrument instructors, but thanks especially to Stan Kartchner for organizing this amazing event. It had been a very long time since I played a real pipe organ, that being when I played a few Bach items at my wedding at Christ Church UMC on January 25, 1997. I forgot how different and difficult it is to be proficient on a *real* pipe organ and how different it is from my home built electronic MIDI consoles.

I was able to spend about 4 hours on St. Philip's organ and about 45 minutes each on Northminster's and St. Michael's organs. It was awesome filling huge spaces with (sometimes) harmonious sounds and tuned rumble and was an unforgettable experience! I hope to participate in something like this again. Thank you very much to all who made this great event possible!



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- Nine new compositions commissioned especially for the convention, as well as three additional commissions from the national AGO.
- The St. Cecilia recital performed by a woman for the first time in its history.
- A masterclass by David Higgs.
- 63 workshops covering a wide range of topics.



Erecting the Quimby organ, Opus 69, 2014, at Catalina UMC, 57 Ranks - 3,382 Pipes



IN MEMORIAM

I Go to Sing continued

Ralph Geror (1947-2024)

It is with sadness that we share the news that Ralph Geror, a former member of our chapter, passed away on March 24, 2024. A lifelong musician, he was the organist at Lutheran Church of the Foothills for over 40 years. He learned to play the piano as a boy and sang in the Tucson Boys Chorus for years.



A memorial service will be held 10 a.m. Saturday April 6, 2024 at Lutheran Church of the Foothills, 5102 N Craycroft Rd.



Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.

We extend our deepest sympathy to all those who mourn.

It's the singing.
I go to sing.

It's the willingness to *stand if you are able*,
the common agreement on page number,
the voluntary sharing of songbooks with people on your row,
even ones you rode there with –
but most of all,

it's the collective in-breath before the first sound is made,
the collective drawing upon the grace of God,
the collective, if inadvertent, admission
that we are all human,
all fragile,
all in need of the sustaining air, freely dispensed,
all in need of each other to get the key right and not
sound discordant –

it's the hidden life-celebration
in the act of making a joyful noise,
all together.

We don't even have to sound that good.
Singing together still brings home
the *we-ness* of worship,
the *not-alone-ness* of life in God,
the best of all we have to offer each other.

When we are singing, I think that I might actually be
able to forgive you
for being so terribly human,
and you might be able to forgive me
for being so terribly not there yet,
and we might be able to find peace *now*,
not postpone it for some heavenly hereafter
but live and breathe it today,
drawing in the grace of God,
voicing out our need and hope and gratitude and
longing.

When we are singing, I can feel the better world
coming,
and if I get to be a part of it, you do too . . .

so sing with me,
and we'll make our way down that blessed road
together,
collectively better
than we ever thought possible.

I Go to Sing

Posted on January 4, 2019 by lindythompsonblog
Submitted by Jeffrey Campbell

I GO TO SING

I might be exhausted and the children might be cranky,
but I will be going to church on Sunday.
Don't know who is preaching, doesn't matter –
the sermon may be helpful or not, holds my attention or
doesn't –
it's the singing.
I go to sing.

I get up,
get clean,
get dressed,
possibly get mad (at not-ready kids, at empty coffee
pot, at traffic)
get going,
get there,
get seated,
get comfortable,
get focused

and when the music starts,
get saved.



IN FROM THE HEAT! Summer Siesta Concerts

Saturday, June 29, 2024

Emma Whitten



Lunch \$ 20/pp
\$30 for 2
persons
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door

Lunch will be served at NOON
In Fellowship Hall
with organ recital in Sanctuary.



Catalina United Methodist Church
2700 E. Speedway Boulevard, Tucson
www.catalinamethodist.org/organfestival



<https://www.catalinamethodist.org/organ-festival/>

April Birthdays

- Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
- Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)
- Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709)
- Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924)
- Franz von Suppé (1819-1895)
- Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)
- Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881-1950)
- Louis Spohr (1784-1859)
- Alessandro Stradella (1639-1682)
- Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919)
- Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722)
- Franz Lehár (1870-1948)

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2024 SAAGO Elections

The Nominating Committee has completed its work, and the proposed slate of officers for the 2022-2024 term of office appears below. Thanks to all nominees (new and incumbent) willing to serve and special thanks to the Nominating Committee who has done its important work in a timely fashion.

Dean – Raymond Ryder
Sub-dean – Laura Silva
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Hospitality – Delores (Dee) Schultz
Newsletter – Stardust (Dusty) Johnson
Publicity – Richard Hockett
Education/University Liaison – Pamela Decker
Member-at-large Class of 2026– Mark Stockwell
Member-at-large Class of 2026– Kathryn Snodgrass

Ballots, with space for write-in nominations, will be distributed by mail to voting eligible members on April 8, with a return deadline of April 21.

The results will be announced in the May issue of THE CYPHER and at the annual business meeting.

Roy Johnson Memorial Scholarship

Established by the Southern Arizona Chapter of the AGO in memory of Professor Roy Andrew Johnson, the scholarship is available to assist in funding organ study as follows:



- ◆ lessons at any level through collegiate
- ◆ introductory organ lessons for pianists
- ◆ Registration fees for an educational event, including a Pipe Organ Encounter (POE)
- ◆ for collegiate level students, registration fees for regional and national conventions of the AGO
- ◆ for collegiate level students, full membership in the American Guild of Organists, Southern Arizona Chapter

Scholarship awards for organ study will range from \$350 to \$1500. For educational events, the scholarship will cover the cost of registration.

An application form may be found online at www.saago.org. **Completed forms may be submitted to the Scholarship Committee Chair at any time.**



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- Also, please take a few minutes to update your information on AGO ONCARD. The email address, home address, and phone numbers listed on that database are used for the membership directory.
- Chapter Friends and those without computer access. Please contact Lars Andersen for information on renewal or joining as a new Chapter Friend (LarsAndersen@tvlc.org) at 520-909-9038.

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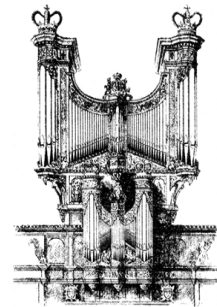
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