



The CYPHER

Newsletter of the Southern Arizona Chapter
American Guild of Organists

Volume 45, Number 8
February 2026

Chapter Website: www.saago.org

2025-26 calendar at a glance

SAAGO—Phoenix Organ Crawl

Saturday, Feb. 7, 7:45 a.m.
Two instruments, the MIM
and a concert

Nathaniel Gumbs, Organ Catalina Organ Festival

Friday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m.
Catalina United Methodist
Church

St. Philip's Sings:

Mass in B Minor, J.S. Bach

Saturday, Feb. 21, 4 p.m.
Saint Philip's in the Hills
Episcopal Church

Kimberly Marshall, Organ Roy Johnson Memorial Organ Series

Sunday, Feb. 22, 3 p.m.
Holsclaw Hall, UA School of
Music

Young Voices Rejoice! 8th Annual Children's Choir Festival

Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m.
Northminster Presbyterian
Church

SAAGO—Bachathon Members' Recital

Sunday, Mar. 22, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church

SAAGO—How the West Was Won, Valerie Harris

Saturday, Apr. 18, 10 a.m.
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
Church

Phoenix Organ Crawl, February 7

Saturday, Feb. 7, meet at 7:45 a.m. to carpool

The 'crawl' to Phoenix promises to be an exceptionally interesting event. It includes visits to two significant instruments (Berghaus, La Casa de Cristo and Richards & Fowkes, Pinnacle Presbyterian), plus a reserved tour at the Music Instrument Museum (MIM) where we'll also have lunch. FYI, the MIM is the largest museum of its type in the world. The collection of over 15,000 musical instruments and associated objects includes examples from nearly 200 countries and territories, representing every inhabited continent. Whew.



A bonus to the visit to Pinnacle Presbyterian Church is a recital by Rhonda Edgington, performing Music of Germany and the Baltics. Ms. Edgington, who is Organist and Director of Music at Hope Church (RCA) in Holland, MI, performs regularly in the US, and in Europe. Her credential include spending seven years in North Germany, originally with a Fulbright scholarship to study with Harald Vogel. The concert celebrates the 20th anniversary of the installation of the Richards & Fowkes organ.



Richards & Fowkes, op. 14, 72 ranks, 49 stops

Please sign up for the crawl whether you are driving yourself or whether you want to carpool, meeting at Catalina Methodist Church at 7:45 a.m..

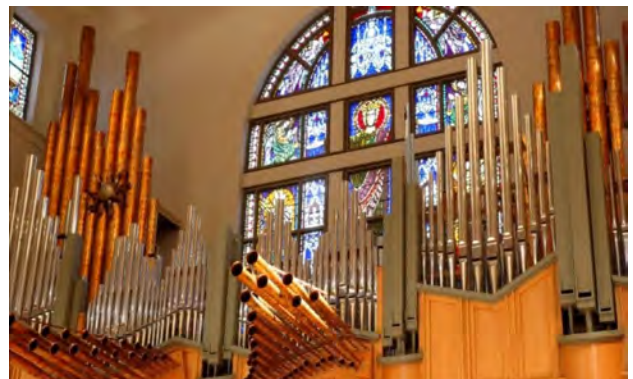
We need to have a count for our entrance and pre-arranged tour of the MIM. Contact Dee Schultz at adschul@yahoo.com or phone her at 520-343-5343 by Thursday, Feb. 5. Once again, we need to know if you plan to attend—and hope you are!

MIM Entrance Fee: \$20.

Pay Raymond at the MIM. We'll enter the MIM as a tour group.

Lunch Information: We'll eat lunch on our own at one of the two MIM cafes.

See page 6 for the crawl schedule and additional information.



Berghaus organ, op. 224, 91 ranks, 92 stops

**AMERICAN GUILD
OF ORGANISTS**

**SOUTHERN ARIZONA
CHAPTER**

P.O. Box 31315
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Our chapter has a generic email
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public document.



The CYPHER

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

**Submission Deadlines for the 2025-2026 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

Dusty Johnson, editor, at skj5@cox.net by the 15th of the month.
You may also send it via U.S. mail.

Advertising space available

Full page, \$150
Half page (horizontal), \$100
Quarter page (vertical), \$75
Quarter page (horizontal) \$75
Business card size, \$75
Website, any size, \$50

A *as in an organ from one blast of wind
To many a row of pipes the soundboard breathes.*
Milton—*Paradise Lost*. Bk. I. L. 708.

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Message from the dean...

Dear Colleagues,

I seem to continue making rather odd Dean's Messages, but some random threads today seemed to be part of a larger fabric. The most important thread relates to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Until the MLK Sunday morning, I took him for granted, in a sense. But after listening to a few minutes of him speaking, rather than just the "I have a dream 'sound bite," I suddenly gained profound appreciation and respect for him. That is why I prefer to refer to him now as the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., all dozen or so syllables.

I had only a vague memory of his assassination and reputation, but (until this year) had never listened to an entire speech of his, nor had I read any complete thing that he wrote. On MLK Sunday (now informally part of the liturgical year), we had a guest pastor who began the sermon with several minutes of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. It wasn't the most often replayed lines, but rather a couple of other minutes from earlier in his speech. And those couple of minutes really resonated with me. Two things in particular. One was the fact that his most iconic speech was delivered when I was far too young to appreciate it or even be aware of it. And so, sadly, I have never actually heard more than a few famous seconds of that famous speech.

The second thing that resonated with me about the MLK Sunday was/were themes from a book I started reading a couple of weeks ago. Like most books I read, it seemed to capture my attention, and then just jumped off the shelf and into my arms! Over my winter break, I visited my family in Colorado. While I was there, my sister, brother-in-law, and I visited one of my favorite independent bookstores, Words of Windsor. The owner was having a 'pre-inventory' sale that drew us in, although we probably would have stopped by anyway. One of the books that captured my attention was "Begin Again: James

Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons For Our Own," published in 2020. The author, Eddie S. Glaude Jr., addresses racism, which I found to be particularly relevant to our current times. That book, and the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., remind me of America's profound strengths as well as its struggles. If you haven't listened to Dr King's "I Have a Dream" speech lately, I urge you to do so. It is well worth your time, and still relevant. Until recently, I naively assumed that the Civil Rights movement had been successful. I was too young to appreciate the struggle, or even the context. My hunch is that most of us haven't listened to the "I Have a Dream" speech lately, if ever. But I urge you to do so. It is well worth your time.

The other thread of thought that weighs heavily upon me as I write, but not in any negative sort of way, is a funeral service I attended on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day itself. Dorothy Dungan was a friend and colleague from the Arizona State Music Teachers Association who passed away January 11th. I only learned of her passing from an email less than 24 hours before her services. Such unexpected news hit me hard, but I was glad that I was able to attend the service for her at the Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church. Coming from a modern American protestant background, I had very little idea of what to expect and yet felt totally welcomed into the unfamiliar and very liturgical setting.

The service lasted over an hour, and was almost entirely chanted by the priest, or sung by the choir; no instruments at all. And yet, perhaps because of those aspects, the service seemed more profound, and cathartic. I don't want to become sectarian by going into more details, but let me just say that as a

Continued on page 5

Chapter and Member Programs

Nathaniel Gumbs, Organ

Catalina Organ Festival

Friday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m.

Catalina United Methodist Church

\$10 Student, \$25 Seniors, \$30 under 60

Concert organist Nathaniel Gumbs serves as Director of Music at The Riverside Church in New York City and maintains a vibrant performing career, appearing at many distinguished venues in the U.S.A. and abroad. Consistently gathering new followers, Dr. Gumbs presents his concert programs with energy and always makes a compelling connection with his audiences through his own vitality and music that inspires.



Saint Philip's Sings:

Mass in B Minor, J. S. Bach

Saturday, Feb. 21, 4 p.m.

Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

4440 N. Campbell Ave.

Hear Bach's monumental work that is considered a summation of his entire musical genius, and which is considered one of the greatest sacred compositions ever written. See page 7 for additional information.

Kimberly Marshall, Organ

Roy Johnson Memorial Organ Series

Sunday, February. 22, 3 p.m.

Holsclaw Hall, UA School of Music,

Kimberly Marshall, renowned Professor of Organ, Arizona State University, returns to Tucson to perform in the UA Johnson Series. In addition to her career as a concert artist, she has held teaching positions at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and Stanford University. She has been a recitalist, workshop leader and adjudicator at nine National Conventions and she served as a project leader for the Göteborg Organ Research Center in Sweden.



Steinway Series: Bernadette Harvey, Piano

Saturday, March 21, 4 p.m.

Saint Philip's in the Hills

Free, donations gratefully accepted.

Concert featuring internationally renowned Australian pianist Bernadette Harvey.

SAAGO—How the West Was Won by Valerie Harris

Saturday, Apr. 18, 10 a.m.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

7650 N. Paseo Del Norte

Valerie Harris, Dean, CAZAGO, will present an interesting workshop regarding the intermingling of the development of the Arts, specifically music, in the West in conjunction with the arrival of the railroads. She is a concert organist, church musician, presenter and educator, who performs regularly as guest recitalist on the historic Aeolian-Skinner organ at the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, and at the Musical Instrument Museum on the 1859 Robjohn organ.

Dong-ill Shin, Organ

Catalina Organ Festival

Monday, Apr. 27, 7 p.m.

Catalina United Methodist Church

2700 E. Speedway Blvd.

Don-ill Shin is a renowned South Korean organist who is also professor at Yonsei University as well as university organist. He is well known for winning major international competitions and for his innovative collaborations with traditional Korean instruments and classical artists like Yo-Yo Ma.

SAAGO—Look, Ma, No Hands, Using ForScore

Valerie Harris

Saturday, May 9, 10 a.m.

Catalina United Methodist Church

2700 E. Speedway Blvd.

Dr. Harris presents a workshop on using ForScore, the sheet music digital app which allows musicians to organize their music libraries digitally and to turn pages via screen taps, custom gestures, or hands-free with a Bluetooth pedal. It also has practice aids which allow the performer to track practice time, set goals, and use features, such as a pitch pipe.



Catalina Organ Festival

2025-2026 Season



Nathaniel Gumbs

Friday, February 20, 2026 - 7:00 PM

Serving as Director of Music at The Riverside Church in New York City, Dr. Gumbs brings electrifying energy to performances across the U.S. and abroad. With a dynamic presence and inspired programming, he brings every organ console to life, forging powerful connections with listeners and leaving audiences energized long after the final chord.

Catalina United Methodist Church
2700 E Speedway Blvd, Tucson AZ

\$10 Student
\$25 Seniors
\$30 under 60



VISIT WWW.CATALINAMETHODIST.ORG/ORGAN-FESTIVAL/ FOR INFO AND TICKETS!

Dean's Column *continued*

Available Position

church musician, and just as a person, I have attended or participated in dozens of memorial services and Celebrations of Life, and Dorothy's service was perhaps the most profoundly moving of all. I don't think it was the mere coincidence of honoring the memories of both the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dorothy Evelyn Kish Dungan that ties the two together in my mind. Both remind me that each one of us is a part of a far, far, larger whole. To lift a phrase, slightly out of context, from Dorothy's service, each of us is connected to the Circle of Life both 'voluntarily and involuntarily.'

So I ask myself, as well as each of you, how do we as musicians bridge these things? How do we bridge our life as musicians with the world around us, and almost more importantly, how do we personally as musicians fit into the flow of humanity on this small, blue planet as that flow unfolds from generation to generation, from century to century, and from one millennium to another? How can we shape the future by connecting our present condition with our heritage?

Raymond T. Ryder, Dean

PIANIST/ORGANIST

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Tucson, Arizona

ABOUT ST. MARK'S

Moved by compassion and rooted in faith, we are a community actively engaged in ministries of peace, justice and reconciliation. Gospel-based hospitality and welcome form the heart of our congregation. We are LGBTQIA+ inclusive, committed to gender and racial equity, and honor the dignity of all persons. We are thoughtful; we are creative; we are joyful; we are persistent! Through worship, prayer, and action, we seek to become the Beloved Community reflecting the love and justice of Jesus Christ. Learn more about us at www.stmarksaz.org

POSITION OVERVIEW

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church is seeking a Pianist/Organist to provide instrumental music for worship services and serve as accompanist for our church choir. This is a part-time, salaried position averaging 10 hours per week annually. The Pianist/Organist reports to the Music Director with accountability to the Lead Pastor/Head of Staff.

Schedule, Phoenix Organ Crawl, Saturday, February 7, 2026

7:45 a.m. Carpool departs from Catalina Methodist Church, 2700 E. Speedway

Contact Dee Schultz by Thursday, Feb. 5th, to let her know you will attend. She also needs to know if you want to carpool or if you plan to drive yourself so we can give MIM an accurate headcount. You can reach her at adschul@yahoo.com or phone her at 520-343-5343.

10:00 a.m. arrive at La Casa de Cristo

6300 E. Bell Rd., Scottsdale

Host: Dr. Jeremy Peterman

11:30 a.m. depart La Casa de Cristo to drive to the MIM

11:45 a.m. arrive at the Musical Instrument Museum

4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix

MIM Admission: \$20. Pay Raymond who will pay for the entire tour group at entering.

Have lunch at the MIM at one of the two cafes.

Café Allegro, which features a rotating menu of global cuisine

Beats Coffee Bar, which features specialty roasted coffee, espresso, tea drinks, pastries, breakfast offerings and grab and go.

Parking is free. The parking lot entrance is located on Mayo Blvd., just south of Loop 101

2:15 p.m. depart to Pinnacle Presbyterian Church

25150 N. Pima Rd., Scottsdale

Host: Dr. Ilona Kubiaczyk-Adler

3:00 p.m. Organ Recital by Rhonda Edgington

Music of Germany and the Baltics

5:00 p.m. depart to Organ Stop Pizza as a dinner option (about a 35 minute drive)

6:45 to 7:00 p.m. depart Organ Stop Pizza for Tucson, arriving about 9:00 p.m.

The Berghaus four-manual organ at La Casa de Cristo Lutheran Church contains 91 ranks, 92 stops, and 5067 pipes, including harp, chimes and nightingale. The organ was completed in 2008 and its striking architectural design was inspired by the landscape of the McDowell mountain range located in the Northeast Phoenix valley.



The Thomas Robjohn organ, 1859, has two manuals, 10 stops. It is the only surviving instrument by the New York builder; the historic case is rosewood veneer over solid walnut. 14'-2" tall, 9' wide, 4' deep + pedal board. Pipes are not original, but are either new (façade) or vintage (inside) and carefully scaled to match originals. Key desk is attached and inset into the case with doors. Electric blower with on/off switch. Matching walnut organ bench and pedal board. Installed (circa 2020) by M.L. Bigelow & Co.

The Richards & Fowkes organ at Pinnacle Presbyterian Church has 72 ranks, 49 stops and 3364 pipes, including a Cymbelstern and a Vogelgesang. The carvings on the instrument are based on southwest Indian motifs realized in the classical European aesthetic of symmetry, motion, and proportion to harmonize the traditional structure of the pipe organ with the native surroundings. The dedicatory recital was played by David Higgs on January 15, 2006.





Saint Philip's IN THE HILLS

4440 NORTH CAMPBELL AVENUE
TUCSON · ARIZONA · 85718

SAINT PHILIP'S SINGS: *Mass in B Minor, J.S. Bach* SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026 4:00PM

An artistic and spiritual summit of Western civilization, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* continues to speak across more than 300 years, asking the eternal questions of salvation and redemption. Clothed in the multi-faceted musical forms of the Baroque language, Bach seems in this work to inhabit and share today the mysteries of our earthly and spiritual pilgrimage. A rare performance, and a first for Saint Philip's, not to be missed.

FREE ADMISSON

www.stphilipstucson.org



“Young Voices Rejoice!”

Tucson’s 8th annual Children’s Church Choir Festival

Saturday, March 7, 2026, 10:00-3:00pm
Northminster Presbyterian Church
2450 E. Ft. Lowell
Corner of Ft. Lowell and Tucson Blvd

Young Voices Rejoice is a children’s choir festival involving many Tucson children’s choirs. Come and join us for an exciting day as we join together in song. Interested choirs can choose to sing individually and/or in the mass choir. The day will include rehearsals, games/activities, choir chimes, lunch and a performance for family and friends. Children need to wear a red T-shirt or blouse and bring a sack lunch. **Free!!!!**

Interested Children’s Choir directors please contact Gloria Day, Director, Northminster Presbyterian Church Children’s Choirs, gjeanned@aol.com for registration forms. Festival music will be selected based on number and age of participants.



Program Recaps

Epiphany Party/Potluck.

Members who attended the Epiphany Party enjoyed great food, great company and interesting games. We also welcomed new Tucsonans, Marsha Foxgrover, well-known organist and recitalist, with her husband, David, who only recently moved to Tucson. Thanks to Bill and Yvonne Kuhlman for planning, hosting and generally being gracious hosts.

Pedals, Pipes and Pizza 2026

Due to low enrollment, our chapter's annual Pedals, Pipes and Pizza will be rescheduled to the next program year with the hope that more interest can be generated for this very special outreach program.

Thanks, however, to all who were prepared to present this very attractive and important outreach of our chapter.

Roy Johnson Memorial Scholarship

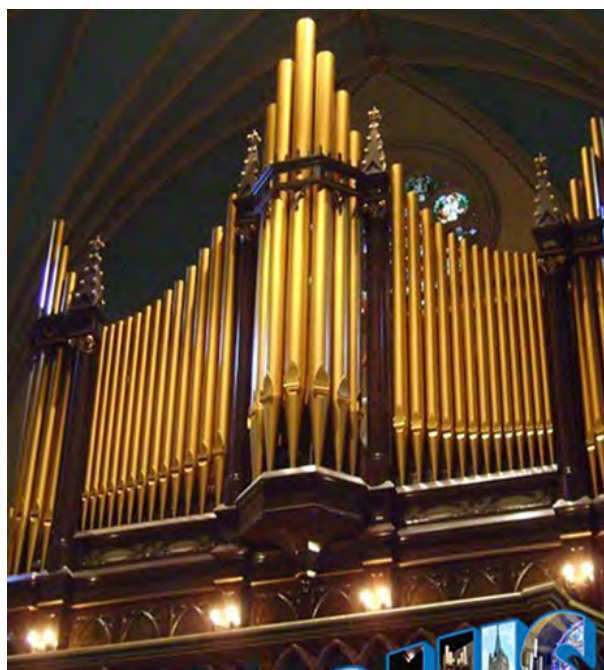
Students may apply for a scholarship!

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.

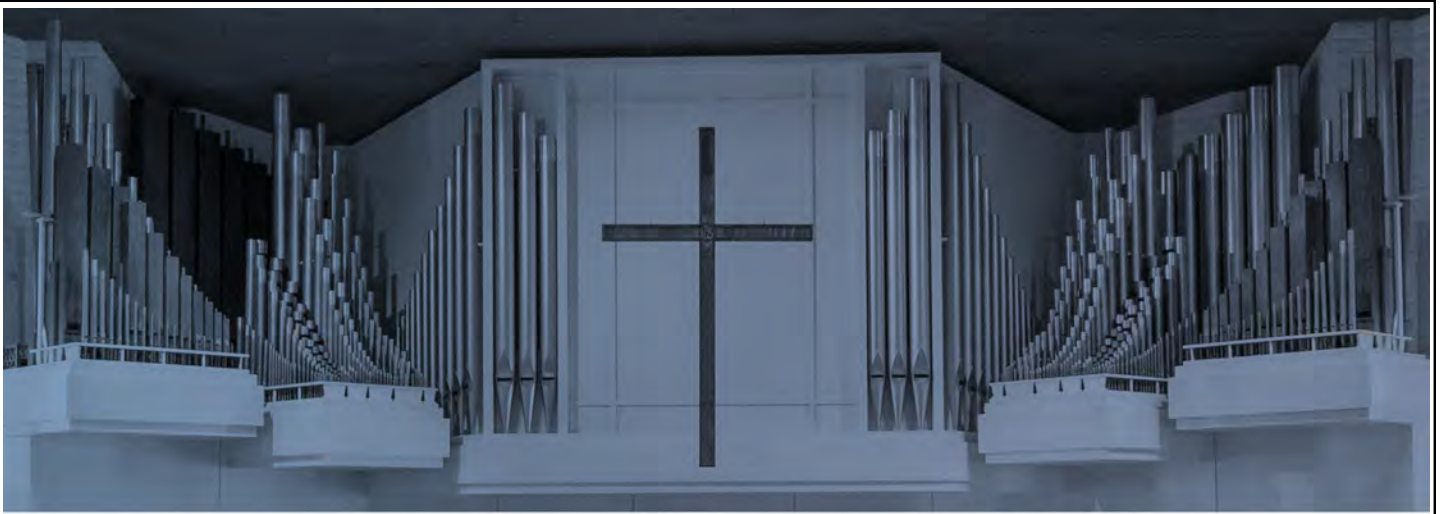
Scholarship awards for organ study will range from \$350 to \$1500. For educational events, the scholarship will cover the cost of registration. Application forms are online at www.saago.org.



February Composers' Birthdays

Handel, Mendelssohn, Rossini,
Corelli, Boccherini, Berg,
Widor, Bridge, Delibes, Czerny,
Godowsky, Praetorius, Parry,
Dobrzyński





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2025-26 SAAGO & Member Programs

SAAGO—Opening Service, Catered Dinner, Business Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 14, 3 p.m.
Christ Church United Methodist

Pamela Decker, Organ

Roy Johnson Memorial Organ Series

Sunday, Sept. 28, 3 p.m.
Holsclaw Hall, UA School of Music

St. Philip's Rising Stars Duo Recital

Saturday, Oct. 4, 3 p.m.
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

SAAGO—Organs of the Gadsden Purchase

Saturday, Oct. 11, 10 a.m.
Northminster Presbyterian Church

Community Hymn Sing

Sunday, Oct. 12, 2 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Sierra Vista, AZ

Guy Whatley, Organ

Sunday, Oct. 12, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church

Candlelight Concert for All Saints Day

Saturday, Nov. 1, 6:30 p.m.
Chapel, Trinity Presbyterian Church

All Saints Sunday Performance of

St. Philip's *Missa Brevis*, Ēriks Ešēvalds

Sunday, Nov. 2, 10 a.m.
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

SAAGO—Annual Showcase Recital

Friday, Nov. 7, 7 p.m.
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

Faythe, Freese, Organ

Catalina Organ Festival

Friday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.
Catalina United Methodist Church

Service of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, Dec. 21, 4:30 p.m.
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

SAAGO—Epiphany Party

Saturday, Jan. 3, 1 p.m.
The Highlands Clubhouse
332 W. Matterhorn, Oro Valley

SAAGO—Pedals, Pipes and Pizza

Saturday, Jan. 17, 10 a.m.
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church

SAAGO—Phoenix Organ Crawl & visit to the MIM

Saturday, Feb. 7, 8 a.m. carpool
Various instruments

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St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Dong-ill Shin, Organ

Catalina Organ Festival

Monday, Apr. 27, 7 p.m.
Catalina United Methodist Church

SAAGO—Look, Ma, No Hands?, Using ForScore Valerie Harris

Saturday, May 9, 10 a.m.
Catalina United Methodist Church

Youth of St. Philip's Fundraising Concert

Saturday, May 9, 7 p.m.
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

All the Bells and Whistles

Sunday, May 17, 3 p.m.
Christ Church United Methodist

SAAGO—Summer Social, Potluck & Business Meeting

Sunday, June 7, 4 p.m.
Colonia Verde Clubhouse



October 17-19, 2025

Voices of Immigrants

Folk Songs from the Irish, English, Scandinavian, Jewish, Mexican and Cuban traditions



November 21-23, 2025

Give Me Your Tired

SHAW *To the Hands*
LAURIDSEN *Lux Aeterna*
Stephen Paulus Emerging Composers Competition Winner

December 11-14, 2025

Lessons & Carols by Candlelight An American Christmas

December 17, 2025 Holiday Special

January 16 -18, 2026

Music of the Pioneers

COPLAND *Old American Songs*
Stephen Foster songs, hymns, African American Spirituals

February 27-March 1, 2026

I Dream a World

RUNESTAD *Dreams of the Fallen*
BOYER *Dreaming a World*

April 17-19, 2026

West Side Story & The Great American Songbook



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Chronicling the American
Journey through Song

"We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal..."
—Preamble to the Declaration of Independence



TUCSON'S TWO-TIME
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THE 22ND SEASON 2025-2026

CLOSE-UP VOCAL RECITALS

January 20



Will Liverman

March 3



Filigree Ensemble

April 7



Jennifer Johnson Cano

TICKETS & INFORMATION AT
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National Convention, July 6–10, 2026
St. Louis, MO
 Hosted by the St. Louis Chapter
AGOSTL2026@agostlouis.org
 Burnell L. Hackman, Coordinator

A little nostalgia from 2005. Can you name the SAAGO members and the place?



Ken Yukl, Matthew Whitehouse, Janet Miller, Shirley Lockard (St. Mark's Presbyterian Church)

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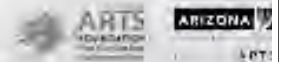
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 520.792.8141

Ryan Phillips, M.M., Music Director

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"Safety Last" with Harold Lloyd
Feb 17



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Vitamin String Quartet
Feb 21



The Ten Tenors
Feb 18

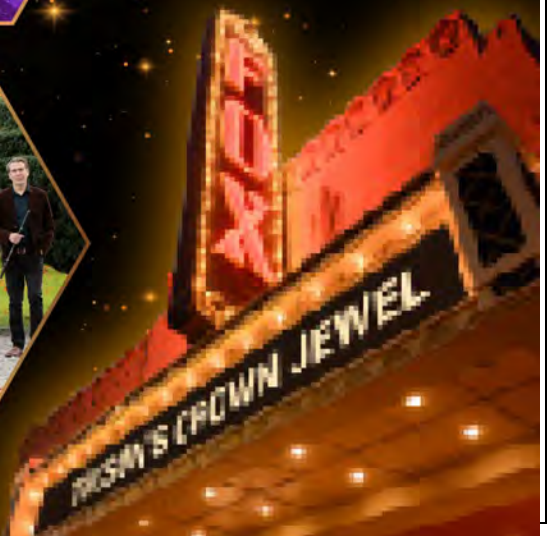


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