The CYPHER

Newsletter of the Southern Arizona Chapter
American Guild of Organists

Chapter Website: www.saago.org

Volume 46, Number 2
October 2026

Chapter & Member Programs at a glance through January 9

Evensong, True Concord Voices and Orchestra
Sunday , Oct 11, 5 p.m.
St. Francis in the Valley Episcopal Church
Green Vallely

***SAAGO*—Look, Ma, No Hands!, Using ForScore Valerie Harris**
Saturday, Oct. 17, 10 a.m.
Catalina United Methodist Church

Woosug Kang, Organ
Sunday, Oct. 18, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church

18th Annual Hymn Fest
Sunday, Oct. 18, 2 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, Sierra Vista

Brahms, *Ein Deutsches Requiem*
Saturday, Oct. 24, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

A Candlelight Concert for All Saints Day
Sunday, Nov. 1, 6 p.m.
Chapel, Trinity Presbyterian Church

***SAAGO*--Showcase Concert**
Sunday, Nov 15, 3 p.m.
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church

Howells' *Requiem* and Dove's *Passing of the Year*
Saturday, Jan. 9, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

Look, Ma, No Hands!
Join your colleagues for an interesting and useful presentation.

Look, Ma, No Hands, Using ForScore
Valerie Harris

Saturday, October 17, 10 a.m.
Catalina United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall
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.

The designers got pretty much everything right: score library downloading and management, annotations, setlist creation, and plenty of metadata fields to make even large libraries easily catalogued and searchable. It also has practice aids which allow the performer to track practice time, set goals, and use features, such as a pitch pipe.

Valerie Harris is the AGO West Regional Ambassador and is past dean of the Central Arizona Chapter—and not a stranger to SAAGO. She serves as Arts Advocacy Chair and Media Chair for the National Federation of Music Clubs and she is Associate Music Director and Organist at First United Methodist Church in Mesa. In addition, she has a full concert schedule and she performs frequently as guest recitalist on the historic Aeolian-Skinner organ at the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City and at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix on the 1859 Robjohn organ. She has given many workshops and presentations across the country including for the AGO 2024 National Convention. She holds degrees in organ performance, including the DMA from ASU, where she studied with Kimberly Marshall.

ForScore is a great tool for practice, service playing, or just listening along to your favorite Bach.

Be sure to join us at Catalina UMC at 10 a.m. on the 17th for an engaging session on how to use this excellent tool more effectively.

See you there!

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

SOUTHERN ARIZONA CHAPTER

P.O. Box 31315
Tucson, AZ 85751-1315

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To contact an Executive Committee member by email or phone, please use your membership directory.

SAAGO email address:

southernarizonaago@gmail.com.

This email is checked by an Executive Committee member at least twice daily. Contact members using email and phone numbers in the membership directory, which is not a public document.

The CYPHER

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

Submission Deadlines for the 2026-2027 season are the 15th of each month.

Advertising space available

NOTE: Chapter members are invited to submit program information for inclusion in THE CYPHER and online. 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, copying Richard Hockett, for inclusion online. The information will appear in the print edition and the online edition and will also be included in the SAAGO website. Material may be edited as needed.

Please email information to both Dusty Johnson and Richard Hockett, keeping in mind that the ***deadline is the 15th of the month.***

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

THE CYPHER is a newsletter published by the Southern Arizona Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Articles, features, or advertisements in THE CYPHER do not necessarily represent the views and/or endorsements of the Southern Arizona Chapter of the AGO, its officers or members. Articles may be edited to accommodate space and formatting requirements.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	NATIONAL PRESIDENT	WEST REGIONAL AMBASSADOR
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Message from the dean...

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The season always starts with a huge variety of meetings. Some are monthly, but fortunately several are only once a year.

All College Day at Pima Community College is an annual event prior to the first day of classes that is always an energizing way to kick off the new academic year. With both faculty and staff participating, it's surprising how large the PCC family is; in my first half hour there, I only ran into one person that I already knew!

The Tucson Music Teachers Association starts the season with an opening meeting that includes a read-through of all of the pieces that have been chosen for the Ensemble Concert that will be in the spring. This year's read-through was particularly fun because everyone was able to participate. Instead of having duet, duo, and trio teams taking turns performing, we met in the showroom at Hachenberg and Sons Pianos, and everyone who wanted to play did so. There were probably over two dozen of us teamed up at the various pianos in the showroom, and we sightread the entire program together. It was great fun.

A far less frequent event for me recently was buying a new(er) car. It didn't exactly have my own name on it, but close. I bought a 2023 Hyundai Tucson Hybrid, so now, even I roam fairly far afield, I can still have Tucson with me.

As to other events, the pace has slowed a little, much of the planning has either already been accomplished or is well underway. And SAAGO's programs are already off to a strong start. The open console event at the Fox Theatre Tucson was a very fun way to start the season. Like the TMTA Ensemble read-through, everyone who wanted to play had a turn at the console. After giving an overview of the project of once again having a theater organ in the Fox, Grahame Davis also helped with registrations and changes of registration.

Just under two weeks later, our Opening Service and Installation of Officers at Northminster Presbyterian Church was very well organized, and Dr. Brobeck provided marvelous music by César Franck and J. S. Bach. It was great to see so many familiar faces as well as relatively new faces there. The dinner after the service, catered by Andy Bruno, provided a nice opportunity to socialize for all who attended. As I write this, Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza is still down the road, but already has two or three times as many participants registered as we've had in prior years.

So all in all, the season is off to a great start. And now that the season is underway, I'm looking to having more time to practice! Years ago, I had a pastor who would say "Keep on keeping on." Let's keep on making music and sharing our music with others.

Raymond T. Ryder, Dean

Chapter and Member Programs

Solemn Choral Evensong

Sunday, Oct. 11, 5 p.m.
St. Francis in the Valley Episcopal Church
600 S. La Canada Drive
Green Valley

Solemn Choral Evensong will be sung by members of True Concord Voices and Orchestra under the direction of Gerald Near, with J. Michael Case at the organ. The service is offered in honor of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the St. Francis Parish. The afternoon's music will include *How beautiful upon the mountains* by John Stainer, *Evening Canticles in E* by Herbert Murrill, John Ireland's anthem *Greater love hath no man,* and *Hide me under the shadow of thy wings* by John Ebenezer West, as well as sung responses and psalms.

Woosug Kang, Organ

Sunday, Oct. 18, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church
3738 N Old Sabino Canyon Rd.
Free Will Offering



Woosug Kang returns to Tucson to perform in the St. Alban's Organ Concert Series. Woosug was formerly director of music at St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church and an active member of SAAGO. Originally from New Zealand, he came to the U.S. and earned his Master of Music from Yale University and Doctor of Music from Indiana University. He has performed throughout the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. He is Director of Music Ministries at St. George's Episcopal Church in Nashville, where he leads a nationally recognized program.

Woosug's program will feature some of J.S. Bach's greatest pieces: the Prelude and Fugue in E minor, nicknamed "The Wedge," BWV 548, and the expressive chorale prelude "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr," BWV 662. Other literature includes compositions composed before and after Bach, especially well suited for the exquisite Fritts organ.

"Woosug Kang is an extraordinary performer. He has the desired mixture of technical brilliance and intense musicality that results in artist-level playing. His recital on our series was greeted with cheers and a standing ovation." — Pamela Decker, Composer/Organist , School of Music, University of Arizona

18th Annual Hymn Fest

Sunday, Oct. 18, 2 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
800 Taylor Dr, Sierra Vista
Free, donations accepted



Lars Andersen

Everyone is invited to the 18th year of the Sierra Vista Hymn Fest at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish. St. Andrew's is home to the largest pipe organ in Cochise County, a 1948 Moller 3 manual, 30 rank instrument (1,750 pipes) which speaks into a large sanctuary and which has a superb orchestral Swell division. Recent upgrades include a Peterson Console Controller, and the completion of the 16' Spitzflute stop (digital) for the lowest 12 notes in the pedal division, a missing feature since its installation in 2007-08.

SAAGO member Lars Andersen has been the organist for this event since 2008. Other chapter members at St. Andrew's are Rebecca Williams and John Hill.

Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*

Saturday, Oct. 24, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church
4440 N. Campbell Ave.
Free, donations accepted

The St. Philip's Choir sings the chamber version arranged from Brahms' London version by Heinrich Poos for two pianos and timpani, featuring soloists Asleif Willmer, Soprano, and Andrew Stuckey, Baritone. Heinrich Poos (1928-2020), arranger, was professor of music theory at the Berlin Hochschule der Künste while also having teaching assignments and holding guest professorships at the Berlin Technical University and the University of Frankfurt/Main.



A Candlelight Concert for All Saints Day: Music of Remembrance and Hope

Sunday, Nov. 1, 6 p.m.
Chapel, Trinity Presbyterian Church
400 E. University Blvd., Free



A Candlelight Concert for All Saints Day featuring Music of Remembrance and Hope. The program takes place in the Trinity chapel, which houses the David Harris two-manual mechanical action organ. This free program of meditative and peaceful music will be presented by Lynn Moser (piano and organ), Christine Harper (flute), Max Adler (oboe), soloists from the Trinity Choir, and handbell players from the Trinity Ringers.

Join the program in person or online at trinitytucson.org/watch-live & facebook.com/tpctucson.
You can also watch on the BoxCast app, on Roku TV, Apple TV & Fire TV.

SAAGO Annual Showcase Concert

Sunday, November 15, 3 p.m.
St. Michaels and All Angels Episcopal Church
602 N. Wilmot Rd.
Reception Following, Donation

Our Annual Showcase displays the talents of SAAGO members and this year the program features Laura Silva, Pamela Decker and Ken Yukl. This is always a special program which displays their artistry as well as some of the organ repertoire's most beautiful music.

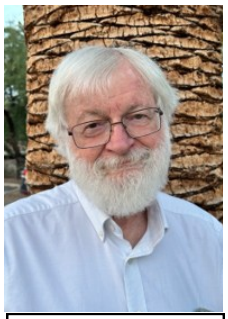
Performers will play the Æolian-Skinner pipe organ dedicated to the memory of Alan Schultz. Originally built in 1959 for the Hyde Park Methodist Church in Cincinnati, it was moved, restored, and enlarged to 64 ranks and was rededicated in 2005 with a recital by Todd Wilson.



Laura Silva



Pamela Decker



Ken Yukl

Laura Silva, CAGO, has served various churches as organist and/or choir director in Richmond, CA, Richland, WA, and Columbus, OH, and has served as Dean of the Mid-Columbia (Washington) and Columbus (Ohio) AGO chapters. She is past Sub Dean of SAAGO and currently serves as the organist for her residence organ, Fritts-Richards Opus 2B. She studied the organ privately with Sandra Soderlund and David Dahl; piano teachers included Bela Nagy, Helen Madsen, and Judith Schoepflin. She holds the B.S. and M.S. degrees in Chemical Engineering from Washington State University and enjoyed various engineering, management, business, and executive roles at Chevron, Battelle, Velocys (which she cofounded), and Tech Launch Arizona at the University of Arizona, from which she recently retired. She is playing the Bach St, Anne fugue and Mendelssohn Sonata 6.

Pamela Decker, UA long-time professor of organ, theory and composition is well known to Tucson audiences. She holds the DMA from Stanford University, studied organ and composition in Lubeck, Germany, on a Fulbright Scholarship, has won national and international competitions, and concertizes extensively. In addition, she has multiple CDs in distribution, has performed at national AGO conventions and as part of many other conferences and festivals at national and international levels. Her compositions, published by Wayne Leupold Editions, C. F. Peters, Augsburg, Hinshaw Music, Inc. and World Library Publications have been performed by musicians worldwide. Her Showcase program includes works by Tunder, J. S. Bach, Buxtehude and Decker, movements III and IV of the *The Colorado Suite* (2025)

Ken Yukl, organist, composer, and conductor, has enjoyed a long career as a master organ pipe craftsman, working with the Holtkamp Organ Company (over ten years) and as an independent business owner. He served as Organist/Choirmaster for many years at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Akron, Ohio, where he managed an organ recital series that was national and international in scope. It was there that he met Pamela Decker after engaging her as an artist for the series. His work titled *Meditation* is dedicated to Pamela Decker. His works for organ have been performed and recorded by many artists, including Douglas Cleveland and Jonathan Ryan. His program includes his own compositions, including the popular *Meditation*.

St. Alban's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2026
AT 3:00 PM.

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DR. JI SUN LEE, MUSIC DIRECTOR.

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Program Recaps

Open Console at the Fox, Monday August 31

Chapter members enjoyed a MIDSUMMER night's opportunity on Monday, August 31,playing the Wurlitzer at the Fox, a special summer Open Console program hosted by the chapter and Grahame Davis, who pioneered—and was the indispensable force behind— the return of a 4/27 (1922) Wurlitzer organ to the Fox theatre (donated by Dr. Malin R. Dollinger in 2002.) Members had opportunity to play the instrument and that included member Larry Grove, who spent critical hours volunteering time assisting Grahame Davis in the restoration of the instrument. The Fox Theatre and the organ are in great shape and members had a great time showing off their theatre vibes.



Lto R: Grahame Davis, Larry Grove, Mark Stockwell, Dusty Johnson, Raymond Ryder, Bill Kuhlman, Ji Sun Lee, Yvonne Kuhlman, Laura Silva, Jeff Hall, Alex Bennett, Stan Kartchner, Mark Mackeben Not pictured: Dee Schultz who took the photo.

Opening Service & Installation of Officers, September 13, Northminster Presbyterian Church

The new season began with SAAGO's traditional opening service, lead by Brother Dave Hedges, Chaplain, and Past Dean Janet Tolman leading the installation of newly elected officers. Mark Stockwell and Kathryn Snodgrass participated as readers, Br. Dave gave an inspirational reflection, John Brobeck gave outstanding renderings of Franck and Bach on the beautiful Quimby organ and it was all followed by fellowship and a super dinner prepared by Chef Andy Bruno. A really great kick-off to the new season!



L to R: Dave Horr, Kathryn Snodgrass, Raymond Ryder, Lars Andersen, Richard Hockett, Dee Schultz, Mark Stockwell, Dusty Johnson, Pamela Decker.
Photo, Janet Tolman

A few more photos from Sept 13 meeting. . .





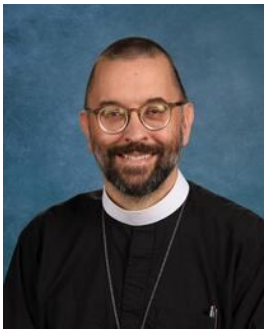







Our Freedom in Christ,
Our Hope for Tomorrow
18th Annual Community
Hymn Festival
A Christian Celebration of America's 250th Anniversary
Date/Time: Sunday, Oct 18, 2026, 2pm
Place: St. Andrew's Church, 800 Taylor Dr. ,
Sierra Vista AZ
Director: Reynaldo Romo
Join other hymn-lovers and lift your voice in praise to God as we sing a variety of sacred music accompanied by a volunteer choir, pipe organ, piano, brass and strings.
There is no charge for this event.
A freewill offering will be taken to benefit Peach's Pantry.
For more information contact:
Maryann Hockstad, 520-456-5555 or
Rebecca Williams, 520-234-0888

Chaplain's Reflection



Dear SAAGO friends,

It was my pleasure recently to officiate at the annual Opening Service and Installation of Officers for SAAGO, at Northminster Presbyterian Church. The service included the reading of Psalm 98, which directs the people of God to sing to God, with harp, trumpet, and horn. But it also notes: "Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it... let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord..." Along with several other biblical passages, this Psalm shows us that the whole creation, the whole cosmos praises God by its very being.

I believe that when we make music to the Lord, we are doing more than singing and playing to praise God. We are, with the rest of creation, becoming more fully the people and creatures God made us to be - fulfilling our vocation to give our whole selves to the glory of God. Music has its obvious cultural and personal dimensions, but church music helps people to be who they are: created, redeemed, and sanctified children of the almighty. So today I give thanks for your work, not only in its musical and congregational spheres, but as part of the order of the cosmos.

Thank you!

The Rev. Canon David Benedict Hedges, BSG
Rector, Saint Michael & All Angels Church
(520) 886-7292
Emails are checked Tuesday through Friday

Detail from the Great Silbermann Organ, Cathedral, Freiberg, Germany, constructed 1711-14— the first "big" organ by the 27 year old organ builder.



Photo, Roy Johnson

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 https://saago.org/

Encourage your students to apply!

October Composers' Birthdays

Billings, Bizet, Bortniansky, Bourgeois, Dukas, Ives, Crumb, Hassler, Howells, Galuppi, Gretchaninoff, Liszt, Paganini, Roman, Rorem, Saint-Saëns, Scarlatti, Schütz, Strauss, Vierne, Vaughan Williams, Verdi, Willan, Zelenka

Saint Philip's IN THE HILLS
4440 NORTH CAMPBELL AVENUE
TUCSON · ARIZONA · 85718

Concert Series



SAINT PHILIP'S SINGS:
Ein Deutsches Requiem
Saturday, October 24, 2026, 4:00 PM
Asleif Willmer, Soprano
Andrew Stuckey, Baritone

The Choir of St Philip's sings the chamber version arranged from Brahms' London version by Heinrich Poos for two pianos and timpani. A free concert. Donations will support St Philip's Friends of the Music Commission Fund.



SAINT PHILIP'S SINGS:
Passing Of The Year
Saturday, January 9, 2027, 4:00 PM

The Finzi Singers, Saint Philip's chamber choir, will usher in the new year with a program of Howells' achingly beautiful *Requiem* and Jonathan Dove's explosive song cycle, *Passing of the Year.* A free concert. Donations will support the UK Residency and Pilgrimage Fund.



STEINWAY SERIES:
Aaron Krister Johnson
Saturday, March 13, 2027, 4:00 PM

A multi-keyboardist and composer, Aaron Krister Johnson will present a program from J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* using various keyboard instruments.



SAINT PHILIP'S SINGS:
Evensong Favorites
Saturday, April 10, 2027, 4:00 PM

Come here favorite evening canticle and anthem settings, which the Saint Nicholas Choir and Schola Cantorum will be taking to Exeter Cathedral in July 2027. A free concert. Donations will support the UK Residency and Pilgrimage Fund.



Justin Appel and Friends
Saturday, May 8, 2027, 4:00 PM

Saint Philip's Music Director, Justin Appel, together with fellow musicians will present a collaborative program of chamber works by Schubert and Hisaishi. Donations benefit the UK Residency and Pilgrimage Fund.

www.stphilipstucson.org



Needed: Advertising Chair

Support SAAGO by volunteering to serve as Advertising Chair for the coming year. SAAGO has had superb advertising chairs for several years whose efforts have helped enormously in bringing needed income into the chapter coffers, income which provides essential support.

The task includes contacting current advertisers, receiving ad copy as well as payments and working with the Public Relations and Membership chairs and the CYPHER editor. The work is generally completed over some weeks at the end of the preceding season..

If you can help, please contact Raymond Ryder, Dean, at Raymond Ryder <raymond4music@gmail.com>

Position Available

Part-Time Minister of Worship & Music Opportunity
New Spirit Lutheran Church
8701 E Old Spanish Trail
Part-time, approximately 15 hours/week,
$19,500-23,400 annually.

New Spirit is an ELCA congregation in Tucson entering an exciting next chapter of ministry. Worship style is a blend of contemporary with Lutheran liturgical and musical traditions.

We are Seeking a person who sees worship and music as ministry, who can help people use their gifts to proclaim the Gospel.
Pastor Greg Hartman

Full details and the online application are available here:

https://newspiritlutherantucson.org/about/minister-of-worship-music/.



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Dr. Pamela Decker

Professor of Organ and Harpsichord

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520-204-5691

For more information please contact Christina Beasley, Assistant Director, Student Success

Email: cswanson@arizona.edu

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Saturday, Jan. 9, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

David Higgs, Organ
Sunday, Jan. 10, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church

***SAAGO*—Epiphany Party**
Saturday, Jan. 16, 1 p.m.
At the home of Bruce Anderson and David Wachter

Pamela Decker, Organ
Roy Johnson Memorial Organ Series
Sunday, Jan. 24, 3 p.m.
Holsclaw Hall, UA School of Music

***SAAGO*—Dr. Stephen Wurst presentation: A Belgian in the American Southwest: The Life and Music of Camil Van Hulse**
Saturday, Feb. 13, 10 a.m.,
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

***SAAGO*—Bach and Friends**
Saturday, Mar. 6, 1—6 p.m.
Christ Church United Methodist

Aaron Krister Johnson, *Well-Tempered Clavier*
Saturday, Mar. 13, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

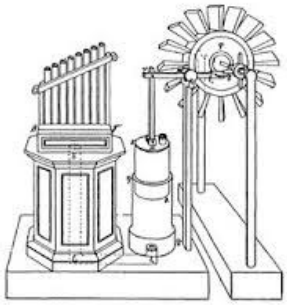
Evensong Favorites
Saturday, Apr. 10, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

Kimberly Marshall, Organ
Roy Johnson Memorial Organ Series
Sunday, Apr. 25, 3 p.m.
Holsclaw Hall, UA School of Music

Justin Appel and Friends
Saturday, May 8, 4 p.m.
St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church

***SAAGO*—Members' Recital**
Sunday, May 16, 3 p.m.
St. Alban's Episcopal Church

***SAAGO*—Social, Potluck & Business Meeting**
Sunday, June 6, 4 p.m.
Colonia Verde Clubhouse



Listings include member events and are included at editor's discretion and may be edited for space and style. Information is subject to change. Please check with the sponsoring organization.

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Lessons & Carols *by Candlelight*

That Glorious Song of Old:
Carols in the American Voice

DECEMBER 10-13, 2026

How Sweet the Sound

Hymns Old & New

JANUARY 15-17, 2027

Bach St. Matthew Passion

FEBRUARY 19-21, 2027

Latin (In) Fusion!

Choral Music from Latin America

APRIL 16-18, 2027

Close-Up *Series*

Jennifer Johnson Cano November 17
Emily Marvosh January 19
Chelsea Helm & Edward Vogel February 23
Ana María Martínez April 20

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