

PipeNotes

American Guild of Organists – Milwaukee Chapter

P.O. Box 11731

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

www.agomilwaukee.org • chapter@agomilwaukee.org

Volume 71 – March 2025



SAINT PATRICK'S DAY ORGAN CONCERT

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2025 | 3:00 PM

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL

818 E JUNEAU AVE | MILWAUKEE

Co-sponsored by AGO Milwaukee Chapter and All Saints' Cathedral



**Benjamin Stone, Craig Sproat, Nick Renkosik, Organists
and Rob McWilliam, Bagpiper, perform a
Saint Patrick's Day Organ Concert.
Pepper-Graves Memorial Organ | 3 Manuals 46 ranks.**



BENJAMIN STONE is Director of Liturgy and Music and Assistant Professor of Sacred Music at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, and is also the Director of Music at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Elkhart, Indiana. Ben holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance from the University of Notre Dame, and is a dual member of the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and AGO St. Joseph Valley Chapter (Indiana). He will perform the blockbuster Sonata No. 4 "Celtica," Op. 153 by Charles Villiers Stanford. The Sonata's final movement is based on the hymn tune St. Patrick's Breastplate. The audience is invited to join in singing the hymn embellished by Ben's organ improvisation after the Sonata!



CRAIG SPROAT is the Assistant Professor of Organ and Director of the Church Music Program at Concordia University Wisconsin. Craig serves as Kantor at Luther Memorial Chapel in Shorewood. Originally from the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Craig holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance from the University of Oklahoma. Craig serves on the Board of the AGO-Milwaukee Chapter. Highlighting Craig's program will be From the Gaelic: Ten Preludes on Irish Melodies, Op. 81 by Derek Healey (b. 1936). See the separate article in Pipe Notes about the music.



NICK RENKOSIK is a frequent performer on both classical pipe organ and American theatre organ. Nick is based out of Kenosha and has performed in such venues as Orchestra Hall Chicago, the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, NY, Sanfilippo's Place De La Musique in Barrington Hills, IL, the Oriental and Riverside Theatres in Milwaukee, WI, and other venues across the United States. Nick received a Bachelor of Arts degree in organ and piano performance from Carthage College as a student of Christopher Berry (organ) and Dr. Wael Farouk (piano). Nick also received a Master of Science in Business Design and Innovation from Carthage College. Nick is a member of the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and the Dairyland Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. Highlights of Nick's program include Fantasia in F minor, K. 608 by W. A. Mozart, and Irish Air from "County Derry" by H. Lemarc.



ROB MCWILLIAM is a Bagpiper, music composer, recording engineer, and organist living in Milwaukee. Rob is a member of the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and will join Nick Renkosik in performing movements from the Highland Cathedral Suite arranged by James Wetherald for pipe organ and bagpipes.

FREE PARKING AVAILABLE:

Immanuel Presbyterian Church Lot, 1100 N Astor St, just one block East of All Saints' Cathedral.

EVERYONE IS INVITED:

Post-concert reception in Guild Hall hosted by the All Saints' Cathedral Hospitality Committee.

A FREE-WILL OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN.

All Saints' Cathedral photos by Rick Bate Photography.

Chapter Directory
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chapter@agomilwaukee.org

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Pipe Organ Encounters

POE Pipe Organ Encounters are a 4–5 experience for young people, ages 13–18, organized by local AGO chapters. During the POE, participants receive group and individual instruction, take field trips to hear and play notable instruments, and enjoy recitals by accomplished performers. Most importantly, participants get a chance to meet and interact with other young people who share an interest in the organ. In 2025, three POEs are planned:

June 15-20, Twin Cities, Minnesota

[Twin Cities Chapter](#)

[David Jenkins](#), Director / [Catherine Rodland](#), Co-director

[Download Twin Cities POE Brochure](#)

June 22-27, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

[Harrisburg Chapter](#)

[Shelly Moorman-Stahlman](#), Director

[Download Harrisburg POE Brochure](#)

July 20-25, Houston, Texas

[Houston Chapter](#)

[Jeong-Suk Bae](#), Director

[Download Houston POE Brochure](#)

[Click here](#) to register. Use this form to apply for any of the POE sites above.

Advanced students should also consider the 2025 POEA in the tab below.



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Tour of Kenosha and Racine - February 22, 2025

Thank you to all who came out and participated in the Church and Organ tour and to our host churches who came and let us visit their buildings and play their instruments. We had a great time visiting new and old friends (people and instruments) and seeing some wonderful architecture along the way. Here are a couple of pictures from the day. If you are on Facebook, you can see more pictures and a couple reels(videos) put together by Keri Kelly on our page. (Thank you, Keri Kelly, Larry Wheelock, and John Schubring for some of the pictures)

St. Matthew's Episcopal - Kenosha



Holy Communion Lutheran Church – Racine



St. Luke's Episcopal Racine



First Presbyterian – Racine



March 2025

2 (Sun) 2:30 Organ Prelude
3:00 Choral Evensong for the Last Sunday of Epiphany
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
914 E. Knapp St
Milwaukee, WI

16 (Sun) 3:00 St. Patrick's Day Organ Concert
Dr. Ben Stone, Dr. Craig Sproat, Nick Renkosik with
Rob McWilliams Bag Pipes
All Saints' Episcopal Cathedral
818 E. Juneau Ave
Milwaukee, WI
www.agomilwaukee.org

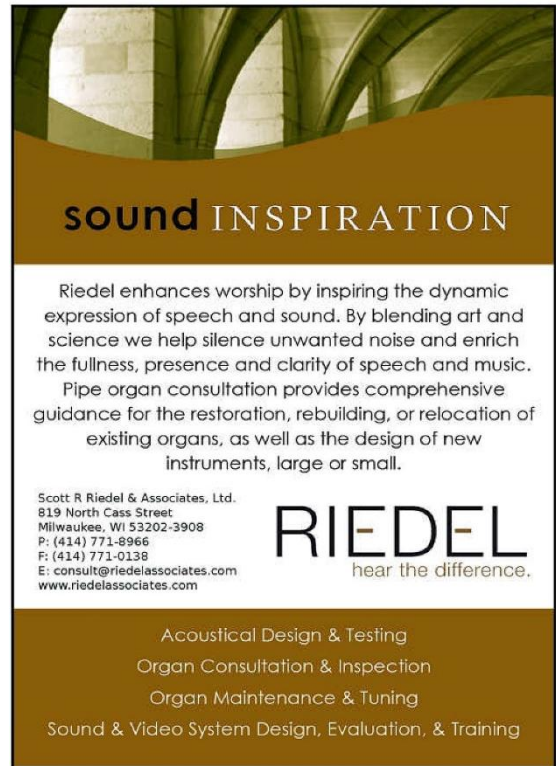
19 (Wed) 12:00 Bach's Birthday Bash
Curt Sather and John Paradowski, Organists
Part of MSO's 2nd Annual Citywide Bach Fest
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
1615 Wauwatosa Ave
Wauwatosa, WI

21 (Fri) 7:00 Bach Birthday Recital
Curt Sather, Organist
Part of MSO's 2nd Annual Citywide Bach Fest
Trinity Episcopal Church
1717 Church St
Wauwatosa, WI

April 2025

6 (Sun) 2:30 Evensong for the Fifth Sunday in Lent
With Organ Prelude
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
914 E. Knapp St
Milwaukee, WI

Events can be submitted to
event@agomilwaukee.org



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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Liz Walloch/Archivist and Historian

archivist@agomilwaukee.org

This year the AGO was invited by the Royal College of Organists to join them in “Play the Organ Year 2025.” This year of playing organ music holds endless opportunities to encourage musicians of all ages, at all musical levels of study to perform on the King of Instruments. From the performers’ perspective to the audiences, organ music aided by today’s technology of in person to live streaming offers new dimensions to the visual and aural enjoyment. Adding to this year of “Play the Organ Year 2025,” the chapter this month is celebrating “Woman Composer Sunday” on March 9. Let’s support all the women composers in our chapter and beyond for their contributions.

A SHARING BY TWO WOMEN COMPOSERS OF OUR CHAPTER

Karen Beaumont shares:

“When I was thirteen years old, I decided that my life would be dedicated to music. Life circumstances prevented me from doing everything I wanted to do, and composition which was on my list was the easiest to set aside, resurfacing now and then to write descants for the choir I was conducting at the time.

In 2019, in an attempt to fill in the gaps I noticed in the piano teaching repertoire, I began writing short pieces for piano students and in 2021, tried my hand at a chorale prelude for organ. I was recording for a publisher in Scotland at the time who offered to publish three sets of my chorale preludes but not more. Another publisher here in the States took on another modest piece but, again, no more. About to give up, I contacted Carson Cooman at Harvard who is a champion of modern organ repertoire, and we began a collaboration for which I am grateful.

While I have written for some other instruments, I keep coming back to the piano, because of my nearly lifetime experience with the instrument, and to organ, because of my deep love and intimacy with the expressive potential of this instrument. As I have never once found the organ tedious, I never am lacking ideas for what I might write for the organ.

The bulk of my work is published on Sheet Music Plus/Sheet Music Direct with some modest pieces available from Lorenz. All of my work is recorded on my YouTube Channel and much of it recorded by Carson Cooman on his YouTube Channel.”

Source: email of January 13, 2025

Carol Lynn Peterson, CAGO shares:

“My interest in music began at an early age when I took piano lessons from my grandmother, Kari Svennungsen, and later on organ lessons with Mary Helen Halaas, our Pastor’s wife. I soon started playing for worship services in my home church and a neighboring congregation. In college I studied with Ruth Berge and after college with Heinrich Fleischer at the U of Minnesota and Myron Roberts at the U of Nebraska in Lincoln. All of these teachers were excellent and laid the groundwork for my love of playing anything by J. S. Bach. When I moved to Milwaukee and joined with AGO, I studied with Sr. Mary Jane Wagner who helped me prepare for the CAGO examination. Again, I was fortunate to have fine instruction from a gifted teacher.

When I was in graduate school, we students had the assignment of composing pieces using the modes. Those assignments began my love of composition. In the years that followed, I composed several works for particular occasions such as Confirmations, Weddings, and Psalms for worship. One of my favorite arrangements was from Psalm 17:8, keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me under the shadow of your wings.' I wrote that as a verse/refrain for the choir and congregation. A few years ago, I was asked to write a piece for a wedding using piano, voice and harp. In consultation with the bride and groom 1 Corinthians 13 was chosen as the scripture. I enjoyed writing that very much and I titled it 'Love Never Ends.' When our local chapter put together a collection of organ works composed by members of the guild, I submitted a piece based on the tune, Monkland, using the text, 'Let Us with a Gladsome Mind, Praise the Lord for He is Kind.' I enjoyed writing that piece and appreciated being able to share it in the collection. I have made a few revisions since the publication came out, however.

In my work as a church musician, the playing of hymns is one of my greatest joys. I believe that bringing to life the texts and spirit of each hymn, along with the liturgy, is of utmost importance. I strive to create interesting introductions and improvisations on at least one of the verses depending on the texts. I approach this work with much care and thanksgiving for the opportunity to help lead the congregation in worship.

Source: email of February 7, 2025

As an Archivist and Historian, I express my sincere thanks to both chapter members Karen and Carol for sharing highlights of their journey into composing music with the members and friends. Let's support "Woman Composer Sunday" on March 9 by recognizing the musical contributions of women composers through the decades by playing a hymn, prelude, offertory or postlude written by a woman composer. We have a winning combination this year to showcase women composers as we "Play the Organ Year 2025." I believe there are more women composers within our chapter. Please send me an email to the address at the beginning of my article. I am intrigued and welcome the opportunity to share your story in a future PipeNotes article.



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St. Jerome Catholic Parish, Oconomowoc, WI

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AGO Milwaukee Chapter

Nominating Committee: Jim Burmeister, David Bahrke, Tom Koester, Lee Erickson

Nominees:

Board Members Class of 2027



Craig Sproat is originally from the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Craig Sproat holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance from the University of Oklahoma. He also studied at Concordia University Wisconsin and Indiana University, where his teachers included James Freese, John Behnke, and John Schwandt. From 2011 to 2015, Craig taught private lessons and courses in organ and church music from the American Organ Institute at the University of Oklahoma. From 2015 to 2022, he was an Instructor at the Weitzenhoffer School of Musical Theatre at the University of Oklahoma, where he served as a staff accompanist, did some vocal coaching, and music-directed productions. In 2022, he was appointed Assistant Professor and Director of the undergraduate church music program at Concordia University Wisconsin. He also serves as the Kantor of Luther Memorial Chapel in Shorewood.



Mary Seboldt is a local, active church musician who has served a variety of churches in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in performances, service playing, handbells, children's and adult choral, and worship planning leadership in many different styles of music.

Her organ degrees are from Wartburg College in Waverly, Ia., BME, and the University of Iowa City, Ia., MA in Organ Performance. Major teachers were Dr. Warren Schmidt, Gerhard Krapf, Dr. Delbert Disselhorst, and Dr. Delores Bruch. In addition, she attended the RSCM summer course at Addington Palace in London, England, and coached with Peter Hurford. Also included that summer was coaching with Harold Vogel in Germany.

Mary is proud to have studied with two students of Helmut Walcha. She has experience as a collaborative pianist and vocal coach. Milwaukee has a rich heritage of churches, organs, organ building, and music. The MCOGO has done an excellent job of supporting that legacy. Our job for the future is to address the organist shortage, find creative ways to reach out to our local organists to interest them in the AGO Milwaukee Chapter and reach young musicians.

Marilyn Schrader has been a church organist for over six decades, two-thirds of that time at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Bay View. I studied music education and organ at UW-M. I taught elementary music in MPS for 33 years and took early retirement 24 years ago. During my retirement, I have enjoyed traveling, reading, playing cards, and chilling with Gin Ger Lee, my feline companion. I have served on the AGO board as secretary, treasurer, sub-dean, and dean in many capacities. Therefore, I believe that I have the background to serve on the board. I encourage everyone to attend as many local events as possible. My sister Ann Lemmenes and I enjoy attending the regional and national AGO conventions. If you have never attended such, you are missing the boat. I hope to see you at All Saints' Cathedral **on March 16th** for a St. Patrick's Day Organ Recital and at Saint Paul's Church on **May 4th** for the Organ Concert performed by James Kennerley, Municipal Organist of Portland Maine, the Kotszshmar Memorial Organ.



Secretary:

Sharon Adel began studying piano at age seven. She continued piano studies with the late Alan Biehn in Racine, Wisconsin. Sharon began studying the pipe organ at 27 years of age after her mother, an established church organist, encouraged Sharon to get into playing the organ. She studied privately with the late Dr. Marilyn Stulken, focusing on sacred church music and music theory. Sharon continued private pipe organ study with the late Gerald Buck of First Presbyterian Church, Racine. She became a member of AGO at this time. In 2022, after three years of intensive study, she received her Certification as Director of Music/Organist/Choir Director through the Sacred Music Institute of America. Sharon completed a week-long Organ Workshop at Concordia Theological Seminary - Ft. Wayne, Indiana, studied under Dr. Paul Grime, Kantor Kevin Hildebrand, and Kantor Matthew Machemer and not only learned the importance of hymnody but also the sound theology that is behind it. She has been invited back each year to a summer concert series, Music and More, at First Presbyterian Church, Racine. She plays the William Johnson Opus 238 three

manual pipe organ annually. As an accomplished pianist and organist, she is currently Director of Music and Organist at St. John's Lutheran Church and School, Racine, Wisconsin, where she has the privilege of playing a three-manual Schlicker Pipe Organ. She directs the Senior Choir, Handbell Choir, and Hand Chime Choir. Her passion and goal is to continue her music ministry related to enhancing each worship service. She has taught private piano lessons for 35 years.

Treasurer: TBD

*Additional nominations may be made by petitions signed by at least five (5) Chapter Voting Members in good standing. Such petitions must be received by the Secretary prior to April 1, or within thirty (30) days after the notification of the members of the Chapter Nominating Committee's slate, whichever is later.
National Bylaws Article VIII Section 3*

***WE NEED YOUR HELP, AND IT ONLY TAKES
15 MINUTES!***

The National Council is beginning work on the next three-year AGO Strategic Plan. The first step is an extensive survey of all members to assess the current state and needs of the profession. All members were emailed a link to the survey earlier this week. If you haven't done so already, please take 15 minutes to share your thoughts. [Click here](#) to take the survey.



Webinars & Workshops

The AGO offers a wide range of instructional programming and resources to members, chapter leaders and volunteers, and musicians interested in learning more about the organ and church music. Most programs are free; however, registration may be required. Upcoming webinars can be found on the national webpage, www.agoHQ.org. More past workshops, webinars, and performances can be found on the [AGO YouTube channel](#).