



# American Guild of Organists Blue Ridge Chapter

## December 2025

[www.blueridgeago.org](http://www.blueridgeago.org)

## From the Dean

Happy Advent friends and colleagues. Indeed, there's a song in the air! For some of you, it sounds like "flight of a bumblebee", as you dream intently of "silent night." For others in your congregations, it's the anticipation of beautiful organ and choral music. Our members this year seem to be singing and playing like angels as never before. Thank you colleagues for the beautiful music you are making.

Many of us delighted to gather in Brevard last month to sing / read through many staples of choral anthems, and some new organ releases, generously provided by Lois Fyfe music company. Many thanks to Brennan Szafron (brilliant in his maiden voyage!) who led us in singing, and provided insightful and fun anecdotes along the way. Likewise, a BIG thank you to Michael Helman for his masterful sight reading skills at the piano, and for hosting the meeting at Brevard Davidson River Presbyterian Church and demonstrating the organ. We always enjoy hearing another instrument in the area.

I am feeling really good about our BRAGO chapter and I sense that many of you are too. Yes, that IS a fund raising campaign opener. **The AGO National office has laid down a challenge to all chapters. If a chapter raises \$500, they will match it.** \$500 + \$500 for programming, to bring in the best. I believe we can do that easily. If every member contributes just \$10, we would be successful. We have set up a link on our home page to receive donations online. I am confident that it is easy and secure. We have already received several donations. Click here to visit our website: [www.blueridgeago.org](http://www.blueridgeago.org). Can you contribute \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100? Could we knock this out into the cosmos by Christmas? Hark! The herald angels sing! The Executive Committee would be very VERY grateful. A Merry Christmas to one and all.

One more thing. I just received a phone call from National Office letting me know that I had won the election for Southeast Regional Ambassador with around 250 votes. I am so very grateful for that support and your votes from our (upgraded merged unified bigger) Blue Ridge AGO members.

Wishing you a very joyful holiday season,

Tim Shepard, BRAGO Dean, Southeast Regional Ambassador elect



# Holy Cross Advent Recital Series

Wednesdays at 12 noon · free will offering

Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Benjamin Barker, hammer dulcimer

Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>: Tate C. Addis, organ playing excerpts  
from "La Nativite du Seigneur" by Olivier Messiaen

Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>: "Holy Harmony" vocal ensemble

## FINE ARTS · FALL EVENTS · 2025

### BC Music

#### Faculty Showcase

Sep 7, 3:00pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### Student Showcase Recital

Sep 18, 7:30pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### With Every Breath: Awake and Live

*Brevard College Wind Ensemble*

Sep 22, 7:30pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### Connections

*Concert Choir and Chamber Singers*

Oct 12, 3:00pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### The Viola in My Life

*Vance Reese, piano; Lillian Green, viola*

Nov 2, 3:00pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### Celestial Bodies

*Brevard College Wind Ensemble*

Nov 17, 7:30pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### Lessons and Carols

Dec 6, 7:30pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

#### Vivaldi Gloria+

*Transylvania Choral Society*

Dec 11, 7:30pm  
Scott Concert Hall, Porter Center

### BC Music Colloquium

#### Once Upon a Time:

#### Folk Tales and Music

*Vakama Trio - violin, cello, piano*

*(Mariya Potapova, Katie Hamilton,*

*Vance Reese)*

Aug 27, 2:00pm

#### Guest Performance Colloquium

*Andrea Price, soprano; Andrew Adams, piano*

Sep 17, 2:00pm

#### Influence of Black Mountain College on Art Song

*Casey Edwards, tenor; Vance Reese, piano*

Sep 24, 2:00pm

#### Student Performance Colloquium

Nov 5, 2:00pm

#### Love Stories and Fairy Tales

*Opera and Musical Theatre Scenes*

Nov 19, 2:00 pm

Ingram Auditorium, Dunham Hall

#### Student Performance Colloquium

Dec 3, 2:00pm

*All colloquium performances take place in  
Scott Concert Hall unless otherwise noted.*

### BC Theatre

#### No Exit\*

*by Jean-Paul Sartre*

Oct 2–Oct 4, 7:00pm

Oct 5, 2:30pm

Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

#### Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson – Apt. 2b\*

*by Kate Hamill*

Nov 13–Nov 15, 7:00pm

Nov 16, 2:30pm

Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

#### Fall Mixtape

Dec 2, 7:00pm

Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

#### A Christmas Carol\*

*A one-man adaptation by William Leach*

Dec 5, 7:00pm

Dec 6, 2:30pm

Morrison Playhouse, Porter Center

*Unless otherwise noted, events are free and open to the public.*

*\*Event is ticketed. \$5 for BC students, staff, and faculty, \$10 for community members. Please visit [www.onthestage.tickets/brevard-college/season](http://www.onthestage.tickets/brevard-college/season)  
+Please visit Transylvania Choral Society to purchase tickets*

### BC Spiers Gallery

#### Whistling Past Eternity

*David Sheldon & Mark Connelley*

Aug 28–Sep 26

Opening reception Aug 28, 5:00pm

Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

#### Juried Student Exhibition

Oct 2–Nov 7

Opening reception Oct 2, 5:00pm

Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

#### The ballad of 370 dollars

*Photography by Jordan Whitten*

Nov 14–Dec 5

Opening reception Nov 14, 5:00pm

Spiers Gallery, Sims Art Building

*Spiers Gallery is open weekdays*

*8:00am–5:00pm*

**BREVARD COLLEGE**  
BREVARD, NORTH CAROLINA

# Celebrate the Season

## WITH THE ADVENT ORGAN RECITAL SERIES

The seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are upon us—a time filled with light, beauty, and music that lift our hearts in hope and anticipation. As we enter these sacred weeks, the Beulah McMinn Zachary Memorial Organ Foundation is delighted to invite you to the tenth annual Advent Organ Recital Series, featuring two gifted performers whose artistry will bring the sounds of the season to life.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5**

**12:30 P.M.**

**AT BREVARD FUMC**

*Elizabeth LaJeunesse, organist*



**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12**

**12:30 P.M.**

**AT BREVARD FUMC**

*James Taulbee, organist*

Both organists will include both sacred and secular music relating to the Advent season. This concert is open to the public and free. **A donation of \$10 is suggested to help defray the cost of the series and support the continuing work of the Organ Foundation in maintaining our magnificent Schantz Organ.** Due to construction adjacent to Methodist Drive, **concert-goers are asked to park in the church's Caldwell Street parking lot beside/behind the Thai Restaurant.**

*A crossing guard will be available for assistance.*

Join us for these inspiring midday recitals as we welcome the sounds of Advent—music that prepares our hearts for the joy and mystery of Christmas.

# The Blue Ridge Ringers PRESENT

## An International Christmas

CELEBRATING  
**30**  
YEARS

**Wednesday, December 3, 2:00 p.m.**

Tryon Estates, Columbus, NC\*

**Sunday, December 7, 3:00 p.m.**

*Hendersonville Community Band Joint Concert*

Blue Ridge Conference Hall,

Blue Ridge Community College, Flat Rock, NC

Adults-\$12, Free for Students

**Monday, December 8, Noon**

Transylvania County Library, Brevard, NC

**Thursday, December 11, 2:00 p.m.**

Julian Woods Retirement Center, Arden, NC\*

**Sunday, December 14, 4:00 p.m.**

Lutheran Church of the Nativity, Arden, NC

**Monday, December 15, 7:15 p.m.**

Deerfield Retirement Center, Asheville, NC\*

\* This concert is at a senior facility and residents are given seating priority.

Please check with the facility before attending to confirm that the concert is open to the public.

### CONTACT US

For information, or to arrange an appearance by the Blue Ridge Ringers, contact:  
[theblueridgeringers@gmail.com](mailto:theblueridgeringers@gmail.com), or call Donnie Halter, **828-577-1297**. Find us on Facebook at  
[facebook.com/theblueridgeringers](https://facebook.com/theblueridgeringers). Our concerts are FREE, but donations are gratefully accepted.

The Blue Ridge Ringers is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.



## A Night of Incarnation and Illumination



Meditations on the Nativity in Word and Sound

Olivier Messiaen – *La Nativité du Seigneur*

W.H. Auden – *For the Time Being*

Tate Addis, organist

Tambi Swiney, reciter

Sunday, December 21, 2025

7:00 p.m.

First Baptist Church

5 Oak Street, Asheville, North Carolina 28801



# Blue Ridge ♦♦ Big Band



A VINTAGE  
CHRISTMAS  
CONCERT!

ENJOY A FESTIVE CONCERT  
FEATURING BELOVED HOLIDAY HITS  
FROM THE LATE 1940S AND EARLY  
1950S — ALL SET IN A NOSTALGIC  
RADIO SHOW ATMOSPHERE!



*20 Dec*

5:00 PM  
ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH  
337 ASHEVILLE ST  
ASHEVILLE, NC 28801



## A Christmas Fantasia

Snow flakes faintly falling as carolers sing Distler motets in the narrow cobblestone streets. Candlelight flickering in the frosty windows. The harmonium groans with beloved carols of yore; a peacock pie perches proudly on the table while the vicar ignites a ponderous, plump pudding and the precentor bedecks the *en chamade* with a gay garland; what could make this resplendent, effulgent Yuletide scene complete?

That's right: a copy of the newest **Blue Ridge AGO Newsletter** under the tree with your next event in her stentorian pages! There's no better time than now to send your concerts, community announcements, position descriptions, and sugarplum-wanted ads to the editorial department: [cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net](mailto:cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net)

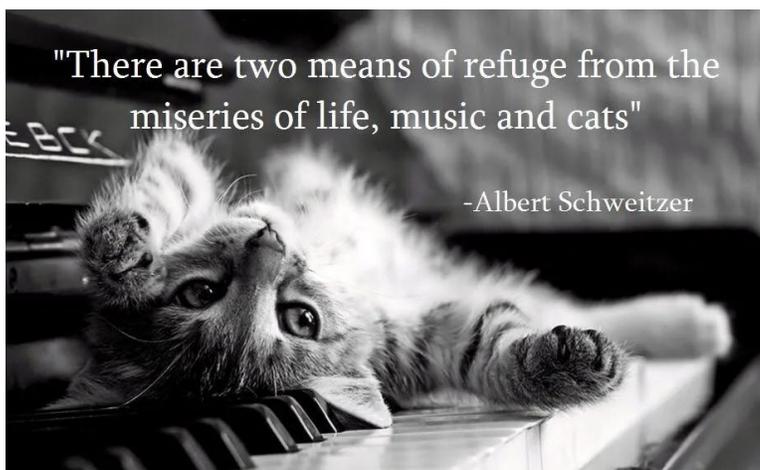


### Newly discovered organ works by JS Bach

As of 17 November, the index of Bach's works (BWV) is richer by two numbers: Leipzig Bach Archive director Peter Wollny has succeeded in identifying two previously anonymous organ works as composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. In a livestreamed official ceremony in the presence of the Minister of State for Culture, Wolfram Weimer, and the Mayor of Leipzig, Burkhard Jung, the city of Leipzig and together with the worldwide Bach community celebrates the first performance of these works for 320 years in St Thomas' Church in Leipzig.

Leipzig-based Bach researcher and Bach Archive director Peter Wollny has been familiar with the two works that have just been identified as Bach's, the Ciacona in D minor, BWV 1178, and the Ciacona in G minor, BWV 1179, for more than 30 years. He found them in the Royal Library of Belgium. During the course of his research career, the musicologist collected numerous clues which now, with the final piece of the puzzle – the naming of the scribe – form a complete picture. This identification took place in the context of work on the BACH Research Portal, a research project by the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Leipzig, in which for the first time all the available archive resources about the entire Bach family of musicians are being opened up and made publicly available in digital form.

The two anonymous works Ciacona in D minor und Ciacona in G minor are held in [Bibliothèque royale de Belgique de Bruxelles / Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België](#) (Königliche Bibliothek Belgiens), Bruxelles/Brussels, shelf mark: Ms II 3911 Mus (Fétis 2013). The sheet music is available from Breitkopf & Härtel. The livestream of the official ceremony, including a performance of the works by Dutch organist Ton Koopman in St Thomas' Church, Leipzig, can be accessed on-demand [YouTube-Kanal des Bach-Archivs](#).



The Asheville Senior Chorus presents

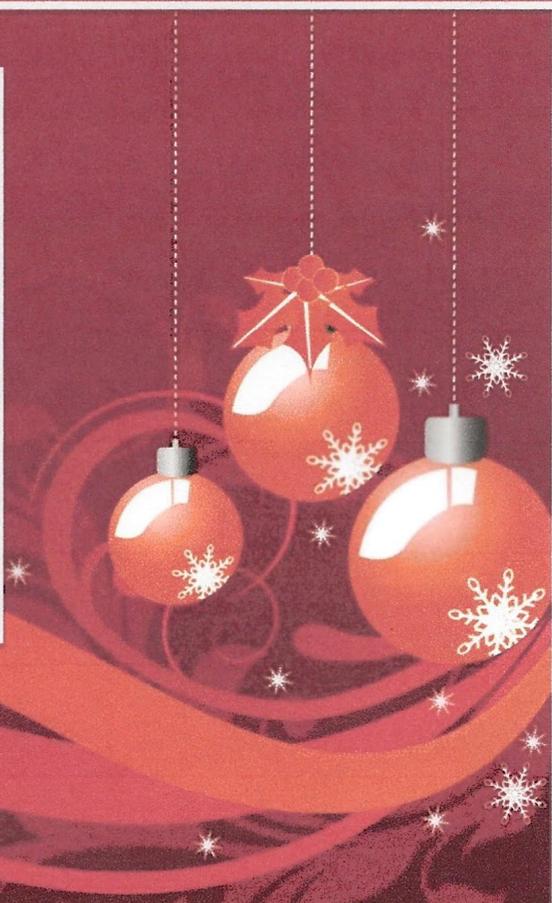
# HOLIDAY JOY

from Silent Night to Broadway Bright!

**7 PM · MONDAY · DEC 15**

A fun and joyful evening  
of beloved Christmas songs,  
contemporary and traditional  
holiday music, and classic carols.

Director Chuck Taft  
with Accompanist Eric Fricke



The OLLI – Reuter Center on UNCA Campus

Free & Open to The Public

Donations Welcome at the Door



QR Code for PARKING INFORMATION or online at  
[parking.unca.edu/parking-permits/visitor-parking/](https://parking.unca.edu/parking-permits/visitor-parking/)

This monthly feature from the Blue Ridge AGO explores ways that our organization provides resources for your real-world challenges. Get ready to get practical with:

## ***SOS - Someone Offers Solutions!***

*with Dr. Rhonda Furr*

Have you wanted to explore using a tablet for your music but didn't know where to learn about the technology? Maybe there was a brand new tablet under the tree this year? Check out the AGO HQ website (Education/Webinar/Technology):

### capella Software for AGO Members

This webinar, presented by AGO Young Organists, introduces tablets and technology as a tool for organists and provides a tutorial on the forScore app and its many features.

<https://youtu.be/A05aA4bi2iE?si=pBJL3Xfa4KXzjiiR&t=2>



### **Is your membership current?**

In addition to the excellent programming you've come to expect from the Blue Ridge chapter, your membership includes a subscription to

*The American Organist*, **the glossiest magazine south of Santa's workshop.** Please visit [www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org) to check on the status of your membership, or contact chapter registrar Tom Bernard: Tbernardjr1949 (at) gmail.com

## **Save the Dates**

As you fill up your 2026 planner, be sure to write down the following BRAGO chapter events!

**January 24, 4:00pm: Organ Demonstration**  
at the home of chapter member John Beaver.

**February 15, 3pm: AGO Members' Recital**, First United Methodist Church, Hendersonville NC



## SacredMusicDownloads.com

printable PDFs / reproducible downloads

by Timothy Shepard

***Ready with your Christmas handbell music? SacredMusicDownloads.com offers these:***

[AzaleaCircle Christmas Collection](#)

2 Octaves Handbells OR  
3 Octaves Handbells

[Carol of the Bells](#)

4 Octave Handbells  
Mallets  
3 Octave Chimes (*optional*)

[African Noel](#)

5 Octave Handbells  
3 Octave Chimes

## Open Positions

### **Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Fairview NC**

Lutheran (ELCA) congregation in Fairview, N.C. seeking pianist to support Sunday morning worship.

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church in Fairview is searching for a pianist (or pianist/guitarist) to play for our services Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. Worship is casual and cozy with an average attendance of 20 people. Worship music consists of a mix of contemporary and traditional music, generally this is a prelude, three hymns/songs, a psalm refrain and postlude as well as some liturgical service music. We welcome all types of people to Abiding Savior and are an LGBTQ+ affirming church. The accompanist will work with the interim pastor to choose songs and play on Sunday mornings, as well as Christmas Eve and Wednesday evening services during Lent.

#### Qualifications

- Skilled piano player
- Guitar playing would be a definite plus but is not required
- Experience with church music - both traditional and contemporary – is preferred
- Small church experience or desire to work in a small community preferred
- Flexibility, sight-reading and willingness to collaborate are desired

For more information or to apply for this position, please email [president@abidingsaviorlutheranchurch.org](mailto:president@abidingsaviorlutheranchurch.org)

### **First Presbyterian Church, Greeneville, Tennessee (Presbyterian Church, USA)**

First Presbyterian – Greeneville is endeavoring to hire an organist for the two traditional services each week. Salary: \$ 17,000 per year, 10 hours per week, contractual part-time employee, under the supervision of the Director of Music. Responsibilities for this part-time position include providing accompaniment for our choir and congregation as well as voluntaries during services. Music is one of the hallmarks of our congregation and we support efforts to continually grow this ministry. Music is a tool for leading people to Christ, for strengthening our faith, for helping persons experience true worship, and for glorifying God.

Qualifications Include: A high level of musical talent, proficiency, education, and experience playing the organ in liturgical services is required. Proficiency playing the piano is required. A Bachelor's degree in organ, piano, or sacred music is preferred. Five years' experience as an organist in a liturgical, mainline protestant church is preferred.

Applications should be sent to the attention of the Organist Search Committee at [fpcscty@gmail.com](mailto:fpcscty@gmail.com). The church telephone number is (423) 638-4533. For more information on our church community, or to stream a live service, please visit us at [www.firstpresgreeneville.org](http://www.firstpresgreeneville.org).

A candidate qualified as an organist, and also as a choir director, may apply for a part-time (20 hours/week) combined position: Director of Music. Please contact [fpcscty@gmail.com](mailto:fpcscty@gmail.com) for the description of the choir-related and administrative duties for the combined position.

**St. Andrew's on the Hill Episcopal Church, Canton NC**

St. Andrew's seeks a part-time (12-15 hrs/wk) musician who is called to serve in ministry in a mutually creative and collaborative relationship with the Rector, choir, and congregation. Our congregation is deeply committed to prayer, community, and service. We enjoy musicians within our congregation who share the following gifts: sing in a quartet; play dulcimer (hammered and mountain), guitar, and violin; compose and arrange music; and direct our children's choir. We seek a Parish Musician with experience on organ and piano as well as directing a small, volunteer adult choir. We currently have choir rehearsal on Wednesday evenings and before Sunday morning worship, which begins at 10:30. A year-round position is preferred, but other options will be considered. Compensation: \$17,000 - \$19,500, based on experience for a year-round position. Benefits include 5 weeks paid time off and \$500/year for continuing education. If you are interested in seeing the full job description, please check our homepage at: [www.standrewscanton.org](http://www.standrewscanton.org) or contact Karen Barfield at [rectorstandrewscanton@gmail.com](mailto:rectorstandrewscanton@gmail.com)

**First United Methodist Church, Brevard, NC**

First United Methodist Church of Brevard seeks a full-time Organist and Director of Music to lead and enrich our vibrant and diverse music ministry. Our congregation averages around 200 multi-generational worshippers each Sunday, united by our mission: "We are Christ's people, drawn together in love, moving out to serve." The Organist/Director of Music provides leadership for all musical activities of the church. The Director oversees and collaborates with choirs, instrumental ensembles, handbell groups, and the praise band, fostering an inclusive and spiritually enriching worship environment. The ideal candidate will uphold and support the beliefs and worship practices of the United Methodist Church. Brevard FUMC has a long-standing reputation for musical excellence within both the church and the community. Our sanctuary houses a three-manual Schantz pipe organ (28 ranks), enhanced with a Festival Trumpet rank and updated electrical system, supported by an endowed foundation. A two-manual tracker organ graces our chapel, and other instruments include a harpsichord, handbells, Orff instruments, and more. Our praise band leads the contemporary worship service each Sunday. Learn more about our music ministry at [brevardfumc.org](http://brevardfumc.org).

Required Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in Church or Sacred Music (or equivalent); strong organ and keyboard proficiency; substantial experience directing choral ensembles; demonstrated leadership and supervisory skills; ability to build relationships and collaborate with musicians of all ages. Preferred: Graduate degree in Organ, Church, or Sacred Music; experience directing handbell and/or instrumental ensembles; familiarity with contemporary worship and praise music. Salary: \$50,000-\$70,000, commensurate with experience and skills; health insurance; retirement plan; paid vacation and sick leave

To apply, please submit: a cover letter including a brief personal statement of faith; a résumé highlighting relevant experience.

Email materials or request a detailed job description at [admin@brevardfumc.org](mailto:admin@brevardfumc.org)

**Trinity Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, NC**

Music Director — Part time: 20 hours

The Music Director will provide leadership and oversight to the music programs of Trinity Presbyterian Church, including the Chancel Choir, and assist the Pastors and Worship Ministry with planning and providing appropriate music for worship services and other special services as needed. Trinity is a family of faith, trusting and following Jesus Christ, welcoming and nurturing all people, reaching out to serve the needs of our communities near and far, and doing these things humbly and joyfully, believing that the greatest commandment is LOVE. Please send application materials to: [worship@trinitypresnc.org](mailto:worship@trinitypresnc.org)

A PDF containing a letter of application and resume/CV.

URL links to videos of the applicant:

Conducting a church anthem with an SATB choir

Playing prelude/postlude repertoire music (organ and piano)

Congregational singing of hymn on organ

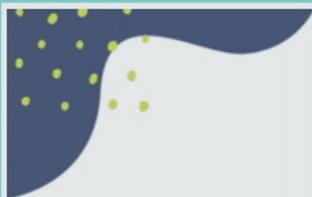
Names and contact information (email/phone #) for three professional references.

**First United Methodist Church, Waynesville, NC**

Waynesville First United Methodist Church is seeking a passionate and skilled musician to lead our Chancel Choir. We are looking for a leader who can balance musical excellence with a heart for ministry, encouraging volunteers while maintaining high standards. The position is part-time and includes directing the Chancel Choir on Sunday mornings throughout the year and leading Wednesday evening rehearsals September through May. Select, prepare, and direct the chancel choir, collaborate with the Pastor and/or Worship Committee, recruit, encourage, and support volunteer choir members of varying skill levels, work closely with the church organist, prepare/direct special services such as Christmas Eve and Holy Week, oversee the management of the music library and annual music budget. Qualifications: A degree in Music, experience conducting an adult choir within a church setting, strong conducting skills, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, a commitment to Christian faith and to the mission, vision, and values of our church. Approximately 20 hours per week which are flexible based on the liturgical seasons; \$20,000-25,000.



For more details and how to apply: <https://tinyurl.com/mry2uf46>



## YOUNG Organist Competition

Sponsored by the  
Greater Columbia AGO Chapter

Saturday, March 7, 2026  
Columbia, S.C.

Open to grades 8–12

First Prize \$3,000  
Second Prize \$2,000  
Third Prize \$1,500  
Hymn Playing Award \$1000

For rules and application see  
Young Organist Competition 2026  
at [www.columbiaago.org](http://www.columbiaago.org)



# Blue Ridge AGO Chapter

[www.blueridgeago.org](http://www.blueridgeago.org)

Founded  
August 15, 2013

## OFFICERS

**Timothy Shepard**  
Dean

**Brennan Szafron**  
Sub Dean

**Thomas Bernard**  
Treasurer and Registrar

**JC Cecconi**  
Secretary

**Rhonda Furr**  
**Hunter Holbert**  
**Michael Helman**  
**Tate Addis**  
Members at Large

**Vance Yoder**  
Past Dean

**David Anderson**  
Newsletter Editor

**American Guild of Organists**  
National Office:  
475 Riverside Drive  
Suite 1260  
New York, NY 10115  
[www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)



## About Us

Our mission is to enrich lives through organ and choral music. To achieve this, we encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music; inspire, educate, and offer certification for organists and choral conductors; provide networking, fellowship, and mutual support; nurture future generations of organists; promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles; and engage wider audiences with organ and choral music.

## Area Organ Highlight

Cornel Zimmer Organ Builders Opus 21, 1997  
Originally Casavant Frères Ltée. (Opus 3082, 1970)

### Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church



Husband (to listening-in Wife). "WHAT'S THE MATTER, DEAR? IS IT BAD NEWS, OR STRAVINSKY?"

Husband (to listening-in Wife). "What's the matter, dear?  
Is it bad news, or Stravinsky?"