

American Guild of Organists Blue Ridge Chapter October 2025



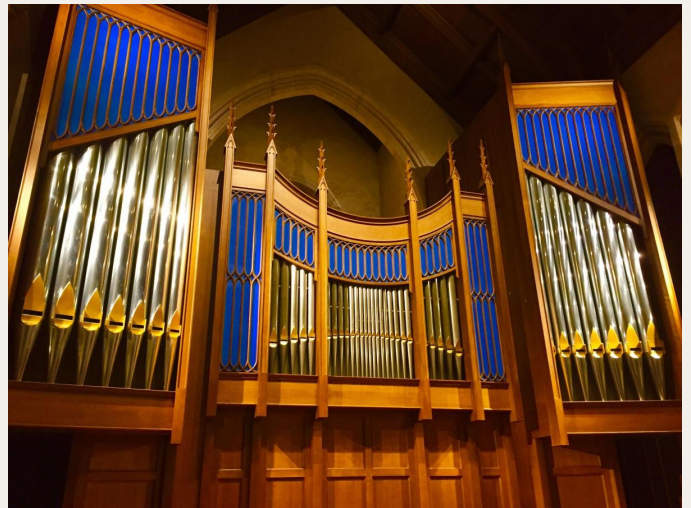
www.blueridgeago.org



From the Dean

Greetings colleagues and friends,

The vote is in, and we elected to be **ONE BIG UNITED FAMILY**. At our first meeting of the year, the Blue Ridge AGO voted to open our arms and merge with the WNC chapter. Although the vote was taken unanimously with a yawn, there was a certain sense of celebration about everyone working together to build a vital chapter. Our merger becomes official when the National Council meets in October.



What made our first meeting in Tryon fantastic was the fellowship of more than 30 gathered organ enthusiasts around tables to share stories, celebrate successes, and offer support. After supper, we migrated to the sanctuary and were treated to a sampling of the fine instrument by your Dean and sub Dean. Thanks again to Brennan for hosting us at Holy Cross.

On **Saturday, October 11**, we gather on Church Street in downtown Asheville for an **organ crawl** through three fine pipe organs and a perfect time to meet a few new colleagues in town. Starts at 2:00 @ Central UMC. I look forward to meeting new colleagues. We are grateful to these three hosts. I hope to see you on Church Street.

All the best,
Tim Shepard, Dean

Downtown Asheville Organ Crawl

October 11 · 2pm · Meet at Central United Methodist, Asheville
Free · Open to the Public · Bring Your Friends!

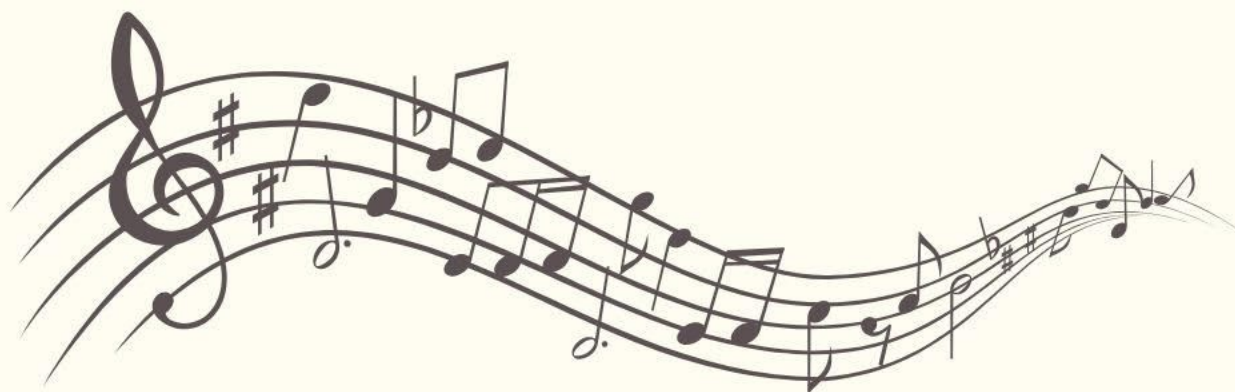
Choral Reading Session

Save the date! Our popular **Choral Reading Session** returns on **November 22** at **11:00 am** at **Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church**. More details to follow in the next newsletter. All are welcome; bring some tenors!

All are invited to a
reception honoring
Tim Shepard

Sunday, October 5th | Drop in 3-5 PM

Depot Railroad Avenue Park 390 Railroad Ave., Brevard



*Gifts of appreciation for Tim received at the
reception or at Brevard FUMC.*

Gray Pearson Organ Recital

7pm · Thursday, October 16
Trinity Episcopal Church, Asheville

Works by Bach, Franck, and Distler

Free and open to the public!

Vocal and Piano Recital

Sunday, October 5 · 3pm

Brian Weber, Baritone; Tom Stuart, Pianist
Featuring music of Felix Mendelssohn, John Jacob
Niles, and Aaron Copland.

St. Matthias Church · 1 Dundee Street, Asheville
Free Admission



Things that go Bump in the Night

Thursday, October 30; 7:00 p.m.

St. James Episcopal Church, Hendersonville

The Linda Lassiter Hill Organ Recital Series presents Tate Addis, Organist--“Things that go bump in the night” St. James Artist-in-Residence Tate Addis will play works by McKinley, Cochereau, Gounod, Bingham, Edmundson, and J. S. Bach including the Toccata & Fugue in D Minor and Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor. The organ console will be moved for all to see; no tickets are required; reception follows the concert! Wear your spookiest finest!

Want to see your next event here?

If you're looking for the perfect platform to publicize your pitched percussion premier of Pachelbel preludes, look no further. Just write the details (in pencil) on the back of an autograph of POP102 and mail it to the editorial department today! Alternately, you may email your event details to: cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net

Organ Recital

3pm · Saturday, November 1
St. Mark's Lutheran, Asheville

Gray Pearson, Organist

Free and open to the public!

Welcome to a new monthly feature from the Blue Ridge AGO exploring 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

PANIC!!! An extra service is dropped in your lap and you've no time to prepare. You need to grab a book or handful of pieces that you can sight-read. Or, you are a fairly new organist, and while you can play the manuals with ease, you need time for your feet to catch up. At the same time, you must play a 20 minute wedding prelude without congregational singing (that can cover your pedal mishaps as you improve your skills). **Where do you turn? Check out this AGO HQ Webinar:**

Music for Manuals

This webinar, presented by J.W. Arnold, “The Weekend Organist” columnist for The American Organist magazine and the AGO’s marketing and communications specialist, will introduce a wide variety of pieces composed for manuals alone (or with minimal pedal) that are effective on both small and large instruments and in a wide variety of settings from worship services to weddings and funerals.

<https://youtu.be/Lhr7ue8ijR4?si=oU4CdxRAdl3U7uVy>



BLUE RIDGE CONSORT

choral music for Western North Carolina

Celebratio

7 pm October 4 2025
First Baptist Church
Asheville

Blue Ridge Consort, a professional choral ensemble serving Western North Carolina, is excited to open our third season with Celebratio – a vibrant evening of choral music that uplifts with the joy of community, connection, and collective voice. Join us as we begin our season at the First Baptist Church of Asheville with music filled with warmth, energy, and life. Celebratio is centered upon a performance of Arvo Pärt's Berliner Messe, which we are performing in honor of the composer's 90th birthday. The program also features other celebrated Baltic and Scandinavian voices like Ola Gjeilo, Pärt Uusberg, Edvard Grieg, and Jean Sibelius.



October 26 • 3:00pm

Asheville's British-style Brass Band

under the direction of Dr. JT Womack, Mars Hill University

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

10 North Liberty Street · Asheville NC

Free and open to the public

Concerts and Worship Happenings

Lutheran Church of the Nativity 2425 Hendersonville Rd. Arden, NC

Hymn Festival: The Hymns of Mary Louise Bringle Sunday, October 19 @ 4pm

Mary Louise (Mel) Bringle is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Coordinator of Integrated Studies Major at Brevard College. A professor at heart, a published author and a theologian by training, Dr. Bringle became an award-winning hymn writer whose original texts and translations appear in hymnals around the world including Evangelical Lutheran Worship and All Creation Sings which we use in our parish. Mel will talk about hymnody in worship, hymn writing and we will sing some of her hymns along with the festival choir and instruments.



Tom Eure & Amelia Osborne: Folk Duo Sunday, November 16 @ 10am worship



Tom Eure & Amelia Osborne offer up a heartfelt fusion of Folk, Celtic, and Appalachian influences. The two come together as a veteran singer songwriter and a fine artist with the voice of an angel, combining their multi-instrumentalist talents to paint a musical picture as uplifting as it is engaging.

The duo hail from the fertile musical grounds of North Carolina, where they draw endless inspiration. Their "folk process" of absorbing musical traditions and allowing them to shape their own sound creates a unique folk fusion.

Tom and Amelia have led music at various synod gatherings and will be in concert the same afternoon at 4pm at St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church in Flat Rock.

Blue Ridge Ringers Sunday, December 14 at 4pm

The Blue Ridge Ringers will be here to share some Christmas favorites old and new. They were with us last year and we had such a great response they will be here again. Come get in the spirit of the season with a great afternoon of ringing.





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

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
+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



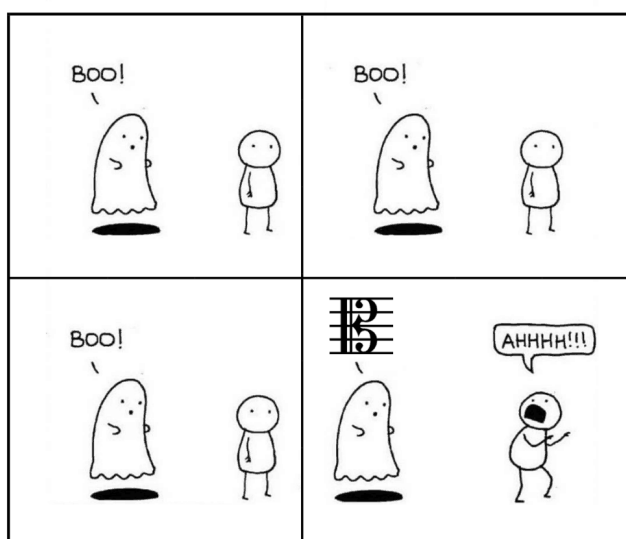
For Sale

Allen CF15DK in excellent condition. Located in Greeneville TN. Contact us for information!

Save the Date!

The Linda Lassiter Hill Organ Recital Series presents **Nathan Laube, Organist**
Thursday May 14, 2026; 7:00 p.m.
St. James Episcopal Church, Hendersonville

From AGO National Headquarters:
Important Announcement Regarding Dues
Beginning with renewals effective on July 1, annual dues across all membership categories (Regular, Special, and Young Organist) will increase by \$7, with \$2 being distributed to chapters. This modest increase, approved by the National Council, will allow the AGO to continue offering high quality programs and services to our members, while providing additional financial support to chapters.



Is your membership current?

In addition to the great programming you enjoy from the Blue Ridge chapter, your membership includes a subscription to *The American Organist*, the glossiest magazine in North America. Please visit agohq.org to check on the status of your membership, or contact chapter registrar Tom Bernard: tbernardjr1949@gmail.com

Update on our Student AGO member John Bayne

from Gayle Stepp



Our members first heard John Bayne play Bach's "Prelude in F" at the Pedal, Pipes, and Pizza Event at First United Methodist Church Brevard as a youth. Since then, John graduated from Furman University *Summa Cum Laude*, where he performed recitals and regularly for Sunday Mass on the Daniel Chapel pipe organ. John is in his third year in the PHD Music Theory program at Washington University in St. Louis. Along with his course work, John teaches Music Theory classes to undergraduates and serves as a private Music Theory tutor. Let's keep encouraging our youth! It is so important!

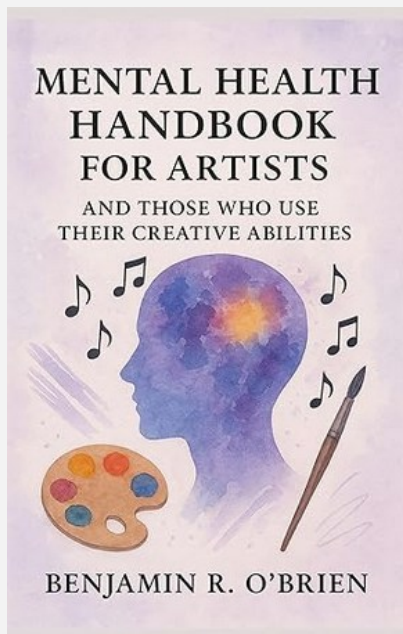
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Book Review

Thanks to Blue Ridge AGO member Howard Bakken for submitting the following book review. If you have a book or other resource that would be of interest to our members and friends, please consider sharing it with us!

Mental Health Handbook for Artists and Those Who Use Their Creative Abilities

Benjamin R. O'Brien



We have all read secretly, or openly, many articles about the importance of understanding our own mental health, our attitudes toward others, and our jobs. What we have perhaps not read deals with our lives as artists, be it visual art, performance, composition, conducting, writing, religious leadership, or creating in any number of areas.

Benjamin O'Brien has addressed this in his new book MENTAL HEALTH HANDBOOK FOR ARTISTS And Those Who Use Their Creative Abilities. In his private counseling practice in Asheville, he has focused on real-world struggles among artists that can lead to burnout, isolation, perfectionism, depression, and in the worst situations, abandonment of a life in the arts.

This book has no checklists of things to do to handle difficult situations. There are no sentimental bromides. Rather, there are discussions of creativity, confidence, pressures to excel, acknowledgment of occasional struggles and failure, and acceptance of the fact that creative personalities view their world "with heightened sensitivity, intuition, and emotional depth."

As a dividend to the reader, O'Brien opens each chapter with an incisive quote from someone who understands us as artists. All are fresh and to the point. My favorite is from Mark Twain: *The worst loneliness is to not be comfortable with yourself.*

This 67-page paperback is available from www.bookshop.org or other online sources for \$11.99. ©2025

Howard N. Bakken, Blue Ridge AGO

***Benjamin O'Brien is a mental health therapist who offers in-person counseling as well as virtual. He holds a master's degree in counseling from Western Carolina University. He may be reached at benjaminobrientherapy@gmail.com.



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Open Positions

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Brevard NC

St Philip's Episcopal Church in Brevard, North Carolina is seeking an Organist and Collaborator to nurture music ministry.

St. Philip's is the only Episcopal Church in our county and is composed of a wonderful mix of retirees and families who bring a great diversity in musical tastes and sensibilities. The Organist will be adept at employing music in liturgy. This person will work in tandem with the Director of Music Ministry. Important to the position is a well-versed background in the literature of choral music and the ability and willingness to accompany and rehearse church music of various styles from the Anglican tradition and beyond.

We seek a creative and professional musician with inclusive tastes and a passion for encouraging active participation in the liturgical life of the congregation.

As a partner in ministry, the Organist of Music Ministry will promote the Vision and Mission of St Philip's Episcopal Church and strive to embody Christian values and be a friendly, welcoming presence to all who come in contact with St. Philip's Church. The Organist is charged with assisting the Director of Music Ministry in the planning and implementation of music in worship programming at St. Philip's Episcopal Church. This collaboration will facilitate active participation of the congregation in the liturgical life of the church and to encompass the wide tradition of sacred music.

Reports to the Director of Music Ministry . 15-18 hrs /week. Salary: in the range of \$27,000 annually

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 or contact Karen Barfield at rectorstandrewscanton@gmail.com



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

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.

WE ARE HIRING

**Black Mountain
United Methodist
Church**



Director of Music / Organist

BMUMC is seeking gifted and passionate musicians to lead our music ministry following the retirement of our longtime music director.

We are open to either hiring one person to serve as Director of Music & Organist, or hiring two people to divide responsibilities. We encourage applicants to apply for any or all parts of the role, depending on gifts and experience.

Roles:

- Chancel Choir Director
- Handbell Choir Director
- Organist

Qualifications:

- Proficiency in organ (for Organist applicants).
- Experience directing choirs and/or handbells (for Director applicants).
- A heart for worship and ability to work collaboratively with staff and congregation.

Compensation:

- Compensation is commensurate with experience and will depend on which responsibilities are assumed (organist only, director only, or combined). This is a part-time position (hours negotiable).

To Apply:

- Please send a resume and cover letter indicating which role(s) you are applying for (Organist, Choir Director, Handbell Director, or a combination) to: Jay Moynahan, Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee, at jaymoynahan@gmail.com.

Blue Ridge AGO Chapter

www.blueridgeago.org

Founded
August 15, 2013

OFFICERS

Timothy Shepard
Dean

Brennan Szafron
Sub Dean

Thomas Bernard
Treasurer and Registrar

JC Cecconi
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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



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

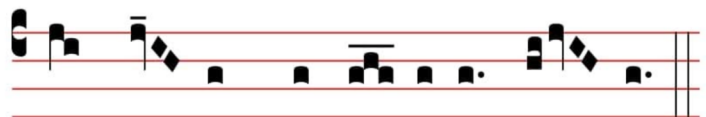


Holtkamp Organ Co.
Opus 2110, 2014

4 Manuals · 57 Ranks
3,380 Pipes

First Presbyterian
Church, Asheville

Join us for the organ
crawl on 10/11 to hear
and see this instrument
up close!



t's been in the bul-le-tin for weeks.

@GregorianSwears