

# THE COUPLER

## THE SUBDEAN'S MESSAGE

By Trey Walton



### Tri-Chapter recital on March 9

As we welcome the warmth of spring, I hope this message finds you all in great spirits!

I'm excited to remind you about the upcoming Tri-Chapter Recital at 4 pm March 9 at the Franciscan Monastery, 1400 Quincy St. NE. This is a fantastic opportunity for the DC, Potomac and Northern Virginia chapters to showcase our talented performers.

Each chapter will feature two performers, and we're looking for one more participant from our chapter. If you're interested in sharing your talent and representing us, please reach out to me ASAP at [treywaltonn@gmail.com](mailto:treywaltonn@gmail.com) to sign up and arrange practice times.

Also, don't forget to keep an eye on your email and read through this issue for a plethora of wonderful events happening this month. We have some exciting activities lined up to kick off the spring season with joy and creativity. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the recital and at our upcoming events!

## MARCH 2025 IN THIS ISSUE



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Dr. Lloyd Mallory will co-lead a March 29 improvisation workshop at the Daffer Organ Co. in Jessup, MD. 2



Act quickly to sign up for a tour of the Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia. 3



The Member Spotlight shines on Timothy Jones. 4

### Save the date!

Join chapter members for an improvisation workshop on Saturday, March 29 at the Daffer Co. organ showroom.

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## CHAPTER NEWS

### Members' recital March 16 at Mt. Zion

We are looking for more players for our members' recital at 4 pm Sunday, March 16 at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, 1334 29<sup>th</sup> St. NW in Georgetown. The event will celebrate Women's History Month.

Trey Walton will host the event and coordinate practice times. The organ is a three-manual Allen Protege with 150 stops. Each player will be allotted five to 10 minutes. To sign up, send an email to [treywaltonn@gmail.com](mailto:treywaltonn@gmail.com).

Not sure what to play? Consider five new works from the AGO Task Force for Gender Equity competition. These are free downloads for anyone to perform.

Concert work – **Brenda Portman**, "[Diptych for Organ](#)"

Short work (1<sup>st</sup> place) – **Maureen Howell**, "[Reflection on Kingsfold](#)"

Short work (2<sup>nd</sup> place) – **Evelyn Larter**, "[Here's One](#)"

Short work (3<sup>rd</sup> place) – **Miriam Reveley**, "[Adagio in C Minor](#)"

Young composer prize – **Celina Kobetitsch**, "[Fantasy on Noël Nouvelet](#)"

In honor of Mt. Zion, the oldest Black church in the District, how about a composition by Florence Price? The five volumes of her organ music can be purchased [here](#).

Remember, Woman Composer Sunday is March 9. Organists are encouraged to include works by women in their service playing on that day.

### Improvisation workshop now March 29



Dr. Lloyd Mallory and Evelyn Simpson-Curenton will lead an improvisation workshop for chapter members on March 29 at the R.A. Daffer Organ Co. showroom, 10545 Guilford Road, Suite 106, Jessup, Md. The

workshop was postponed because of bad weather in February.

The workshop will start with refreshments at 11 am and conclude with a lunch to be provided at 12:30 pm.

A booklet of Ms. Simpson-Curenton's scores will be available for \$10.

A maximum of 30 people can register. Please send an email to [dcagochapter@gmail.com](mailto:dcagochapter@gmail.com) to sign up.



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Send submissions to  
[dcagochapter@gmail.com](mailto:dcagochapter@gmail.com).

## Hear the Wanamaker Organ before it goes into limbo

By Eric McAfee



The largest instrument in the world, the **Wanamaker Grand Court Organ in Philadelphia**, will soon be in a state of limbo. Macy's Department Store, the primary tenant at the historic Wanamaker Building since 2006, is closing its operations there and shuttering the organ until a new use for the building emerges.

Talented organists from across the Philadelphia region play the mighty instrument twice daily (except Sundays) and will continue to do so up to the slated closure date of March 23. We have a chance to see one of these performances, and, under the banner of the AGO, to receive a tour of the instrument. Depending on the timing, this tour might be complimentary!

Performances are at **noon and 5 pm each day**, and tours usually run immediately before or after. It would be great to make a day trip, see a performance, learn about the instrument, and sneak a visit to the equally renowned Wurlitzer Theater Organ in Greek Hall on the upper floor of Wanamaker/Macy's, perhaps have a meal or drink with an organist up there, then return home.

I am coordinating this and am willing to work with four others (in my Subaru Outback) or nine others (if we have multiple cars) to lead a group up there.

The popularity during these final days of Macy's means many tours are already full. Saturdays are toughest. If you are interested, **please complete this Doodle Poll by Monday, March 3 at 7 pm.**

<https://doodle.com/meeting/organize/id/aOL3YJgb>

I will determine the most desirable time and push for the complementary tour with an organist who works there. If he cannot make it, we have a docent from Friends of the Wanamaker Organ who will be able to offer a longer, more thorough tour, but it will cost the "Private Tour" rate of \$22 listed here (<https://www.store.wanamakerorgan.com/tours/private-tour>), plus a docent fee of about \$45. I hope we can split the costs for parking and gas/tolls among us.

Please indicate on the Doodle poll if you can only consider the complementary tour--i.e., the paid tour is too expensive.

Space is limited because it can get cramped: 10 is the max they can work with, and even that I can only manage if there's another driver (or two). Otherwise, this is definitely going to happen and we have to think fast! March 23 is **ONLY** the last day if the Macy's still has inventory to sell; if we try one of these final days (after, say, the 18th) we run the risk that the Macy's will have already closed.

Come join this fleeting and memorable opportunity!

--Eric McAfee, music director, All Saints' Woodbridge

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON TIMOTHY JONES

To nominate yourself or others for a Member Spotlight article, send an email to [dcagochapter@gmail.com](mailto:dcagochapter@gmail.com).

### How did you become interested in the organ?

I became interested in music when I was very little. My parents constantly played music at home, mostly recordings. One of their favorites was Twila Paris, then a popular contemporary Christian musician. According to my mother, I managed to pick out her tune "Lamb of God" with two fingers on our piano. I was about 2 at that time. My mother rushed to the phone to call a friend who I



believe was an organist and asked if this was normal. Her friend said, "No! Get him a teacher."

I was born blind due to a genetic condition known as Leber congenital amaurosis. As a result, my parents had some difficulty finding a teacher and enrolled me in their church's Kindermusik program. When I aged out of that, circumstances led my parents to change churches, where they met Miss Patti Bennett, pianist of Norcross Baptist Church in Norcross, GA. They asked her if she would take me on. Informed that I was blind, she replied, "Well, you teach a blind child the same way as a sighted child. Bring him to the studio and we'll see how it goes." I ended up studying piano with her for 14 years.

In addition to the piano, my mother had a pump organ. She played it often. When I was in preschool, she taught me some basics and it became one of my favorite things to do outside of piano.

The church where I attended Kindermusik is now Norcross First Global Methodist Church. They have a four-manual Allen organ that I heard played at least once a week. The staff were hesitant to let me near it due to my blindness, but I did get to see it on Christmas Eve 2024.

I did see some other organs in my childhood, which inspired me to study. But I didn't have a way to practice organ easily at that time.

In 2007, my family acquired an old Lowrey that a church was giving away. I studied organ first with Miss Patti and then with various other teachers in the Atlanta area. By high school graduation, I had taken 14 years of piano lessons and seven years of organ lessons, and won numerous awards and scholarships for my playing of both instruments. I then had to decide which instrument to study in college.

I chose to major in organ performance at Mercer University. I spent four years under the tutelage of  
*Continued on Page 5*

## Member spotlight

*From Page 4*

Dr. Jack Mitchener and continued piano as an applied study under Dr. Ian Altman.



After finishing my undergraduate studies, I had planned to go for a church music degree but soon discovered that advanced choral conducting is one of the requirements for church music majors. So I chose to do piano pedagogy instead. At Georgia State I studied under Geoffrey Haydon. As at Mercer, I did some applied studies, this time in organ under Dr. Jens Korndoerfer.

Everything seemed to fall into line until

spring 2020 when Covid struck. Suddenly my classes at graduate school went from in-person to virtual, and the prospect of teaching piano to children looked grim. Four months before graduating, I thought to myself, "Lord, I guess I am going to end up bagging groceries because who's going to take piano lessons in a pandemic?" The moment I thought that, it was like God said, "Go check your email." To my astonishment, there was an email advertising an internship with the National Library Service for the Blind here in DC. They are a division of the Library of Congress. The internship was remote. They needed someone to check scanned Braille music for errors.

I applied and was accepted. When the program concluded in 2021, my supervisor informed me of a permanent position that involved doing more advanced work in Washington. I got the job and am now a Washingtonian.

I have not given up the idea of teaching. In fact, Covid has shown me it is possible to do some virtual teaching, at least for older students who already know how to read music. I am even teaching a blind lady how to read Braille music from a distance.

### **Why are you an AGO member?**

I had let my AGO membership lapse during the pandemic, since the Atlanta chapter went dormant  
*Continued on Page 6*

## Member spotlight

*From Page 5*

for a while, but I have joined the DC chapter. I don't get to perform as much as in my school years, but I keep up my skills by playing piano and organ for Lighthouse Baptist Church in Alexandria and taking advantage of working in the world's largest Braille music library by learning new piano music for fun.

My main reason for rejoining the AGO is in hopes of finding a church with a decent instrument to practice on. Lighthouse has a Hammond, which is OK but not the greatest. Because of my blindness, I can go only to churches that are near a Metro train or bus stop unless carpooling is arranged. I currently live on 13<sup>th</sup> Street NW but I am looking to relocate to Arlington.

### **Tell us a funny story from your time on the organ bench.**

I have a good one for you. In each of my high school and undergraduate years, I entered an organ scholarship competition hosted by the Atlanta AGO. One year it seemed like the odds were stacked against me. First, there was a problem with the organ bench. Its height adjustment was out of whack because it was leaning to one side. I was wearing a suit for the competition and kept sliding to the left on the bench while trying to play. To make matters worse, the church organist had left his phone on the organ console in vibrate mode and could not remember where it was. So he kept calling it, trying to find it while I was playing.

These two factors caused me to nearly break down while playing Bach's 9/8 Prelude in C, BWV 547. I was literally hanging by my fingers to those keys. By the time I finished the performance, I turned to my organ teacher in tears and said, "Let's get out of here," thinking I was surely going to fail that competition. My teacher reminded me it was customary to meet the judges for a short talk after the performance, so I went out with a brave face to meet them.

To my surprise, they were amazed given the circumstances that I hadn't broken down. About that time, the organist of the church remembered where his phone had been left and was apologizing profusely for the disruptions. In the end, I managed to somehow win a \$1,000 scholarship. That day, I learned that God can turn what seems like a tragedy into a blessing. I can laugh about that situation now and tell other musicians to prepare for the unexpected.

Anyway, that's my story in a nutshell. You can read more about my accomplishments on my website, [www.byfaithnotbysight.net](http://www.byfaithnotbysight.net).

My senior and graduate recitals are available for watching on my YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCo1FjEsXMB8kbiJc87rLGQ/videos%EF%BB%BF>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, March 4, 12:10 pm: Washington Bach Consort performs the cantata Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn, BWV 23. Organ prelude performed by Tom Sheehan. Church of the Epiphany, 1317 G St. NW.

Sunday, March 9, 4 pm: AGO Tri-Chapter member recital. Franciscan Monastery, 1400 Quincy St. NE., Washington, DC.



Tuesday, March 11, 12:10 pm: Organist Jinsun Cho, shown at left, performs Bruhns' Praeludium in G, J.S. Bach's Concerto in G BWV 592, and Reubke's Sonata on the 94th Psalm. Church of the Epiphany, 1317 G St. NW.

Sunday, March 16, 1:30-7 pm: Chevy Chase Concerts presents the 48th Annual Bach Marathon featuring international trumpet soloist Andrew Balio at 1:30 pm with organist Julie Vidrick Evans. Performers beginning at 3 pm include Kitty Yang, Wendy Johnston, David Beatty, Jinsun Cho, Tyler Canonico-Dilley, Cheryl Van Ornam, and Bethany Dame. Three-manual, 50-rank Rieger tracker organ. Come when you can, leave when you must.

Sunday, March 23, 3 pm: Randy Sheets plays a recital to rededicate the organ at Old Post Chapel, Arlington Cemetery. Co-hosted by the NOVA chapter.



Tuesday, April 1, 12:10 pm: Washington Bach Consort's Noontime Cantata Series. Organist Paul Byssainthe, Jr., shown at left, plays O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross, BWV 622, and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 578. Cantata: Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats, BWV 42.

Sunday, April 6: Todd Fickley, shown at right, of National Presbyterian Church plays a recital at the Franciscan Monastery, 1400 Quincy St. NE., Washington, DC.



Sunday, April 6, 5 pm, Christ Church, Alexandria. Choral Evensong with guest organist J.J. Mitchell, dean of the NOVA AGO chapter and director of music at St. John Neumann Church in Reston, VA. Mitchell will play an extended prelude beginning at 4:40 and then accompany the choir in works by Philip Moore and William Bradley Roberts. 118 N. Washington St. [www.ccalex.org](http://www.ccalex.org)

## Music at Midday at National City Christian Church

National City Christian Church presents Music at Midday most Fridays from 12:15-1 pm. The church is at 5 Thomas Circle NW in DC. Donations are gratefully accepted.

March 7: Classical guitarist Scott Schwertfeger (Washington, DC) performs works of John Dowland, J.S. Bach, Mauro Giuliani, Johann Kaspar Mertz, and David Cullen, along with one of his own compositions.



March 14: Kansas City organist Thomas R. Vozzella, shown at left, performs music from four centuries, including works by J.S. Bach, Gustav Mahler, John E. West, Daniel Pinkham, Emma Lou Diemer, and Carson Cooman.

March 21: Taiwanese pianist Lin Ching-Yi (Chevy Chase, MD) performs works of Domenico Scarlatti, J.S. Bach, Robert Schumann, and Maurice Ravel.

March 28: New York City organist James D. Wetzel performs music of European composers Johann Jakob Froberger, Dietrich Buxtehude, and Felix Mendelssohn.

April 4: Organist James D. Hicks (Califon, NJ) perform "Nordic Journey -- Music from the North,"

a recital filled with short works, many of them in a lighter, rather entertaining mode. The program will include music by Peeter Süda, Páll Isolfsson, Aaron David Miller, Andreas Wilscher, Mons Leidvin Takle, and Oscar Peterson.

April 11: Organist Christoph Hintermüller (Austin, TX) performs colorful works, including music by Charles-Marie Widor, Howard Shore, and Pietro A. Yon.

April 18: No recital (Good Friday)

April 25: Spanish organist Loreto Aramendi (San Sebastian, Basque Country), shown at right, plays music by Karen Tanaka, Louis Vierne, Gabriel Fauré, and Olivier Messiaen.





## JOB OPENINGS

*For the latest postings, go to [dcago.org](http://dcago.org) and click on the Member tab.*

### **District of Columbia**

Music director: New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. 30 hours per week. \$57,000-65,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Interim organist: St. Luke's Episcopal Church. \$300 per rehearsal and service. Contact Susan Saunders McKenzie at [susansaunders10@yahoo.com](mailto:susansaunders10@yahoo.com).

Interim music director: St. George's Episcopal Church. \$20,000-25,000 annually. Click [here](#).

### **Maryland**

Music director: Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring. \$39,500-51,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Director of music: Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal), Bethesda. \$55,000-62,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Minister of music: National Ministries, Fort Washington. \$55,000-65,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Director of music ministry: Gloria Dei! Lutheran Church, Arnold. \$25,000-30,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Director of music: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Waldorf. \$21,000-24,000 annually. Three-manual Rodgers Trillium 927 organ. Click [here](#).

Director of music: Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, College Park. Full-time. From \$50,000 annually. Click [here](#).

### **Virginia**

Minister of music: St. Andrew's Episcopal, Burke. \$40,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Church musician: Hope United Church of Christ, Alexandria. \$25-30 per hour. Click [here](#).

Organist: The Falls Church, Falls Church. Click [here](#).

Choir director: Central United Methodist Church, Arlington. \$10,400 annually. Click [here](#).

Music director: Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Norfolk. Full-time. \$52,000-68,000 annually. Click [here](#).

Church musician/pianist: Hope United Church of Christ, Alexandria. Part-time, \$25 to \$30 per hour. Click [here](#).

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