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American Guild of Organists District of Columbia Chapter

THE COUPLER

June 2026

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Stefan Donner masterclass

The DC AGO, in partnership with the Austrian Embassy, is pleased to announce a masterclass featuring acclaimed Austrian organist Stefan Donner on Saturday, June 27 at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, 1725 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Please RSVP to



dcagochapter@gmail.com to play for Stefan.

9:30 am: Coffee & bagels

10–11:30: Masterclass

<https://www.stefandonner.at/en/BIO/>

Juneteenth event postponed

We have had to postpone our chapter's Juneteenth event, planned for June 20, because of a scheduling conflict at the host church. We hope to present the event later this fall.

Chapter elects 2026-27 board

Our chapter in May elected board members for 2026-27. Terms start July 1.

Robert Baird will be our new dean. Kevin Biggins will be the membership secretary, Rob Church the treasurer, and Eric McAfee the assistant treasurer.

At-large board members will be Caleb Bates Justin Connors, Sarah DeLacy, Paul Hersey, Patrick Merrill, Eleanor Simpson-Curenton, and Anna Elise Smith. Justin will handle social media. Anna Elise will head



up the chapter's young organists program. Paul will be education coordinator.

Robert Baird

The chapter thanks outgoing dean John Nothafft, subdean Trey Walton, and at-large members Patrick Walker and Lyn Loewi for their service on the 2025-26 board.

Organ events

Sunday, June 14, 3 pm: Alcee Chris plays a recital at St. Ann's Catholic Church, Tenley Circle NW.

Sunday, June 14, 4 pm: Todd Fickley, organist at National Presbyterian Church, plays a recital at St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill, 313 Second St. NE.

Sunday, July 12, 4 pm: Kevin Birch plays a recital at St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill, 313 2nd St. NE.

Music at Midday



Viktor Billa, left, and Sol M. Rizzato perform at National City Christian Church.

National City Christian Church offers Music at Midday programs most Fridays from 12:15-1 pm. The church is at 5 Thomas Circle NW in DC.

June 5: Ukrainian organist Viktor Billa and soprano Yuliia Billa perform organ works by J.S. Bach, César Franck, and Louis Vierne as well as pieces for voice and organ by Gustav Mahler, Gabriel Fauré, and Klement Slavický.

June 12: The annual Pride Recital features Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, transcribed for organ and performed by organist Sol M. Rizzato, assisted by Carolyn Hoff.

June 19: Howard University organ professor Mickey Thomas Terry performs a special one-hour Juneteenth Concert, co-sponsored by The African Heritage and Cultural Institute. The program includes works of Charles Tournemire, Noel Da Costa, Thomas H. Kerr, J.S. Bach, and Franz Liszt.

June 26: The spring season of Music at Midday concludes with a performance by Austrian organist Stefan Donner. The program includes music by J.S. Bach, Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn, Pjotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Marcel Dupré.

Summer series at Basilica

Recitals are offered at 6 pm each Sunday in July and August at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, 400 Michigan Ave. NE.

July 5: David Ball and Emma Whitten of Orange, CA

July 12: Iris Lan of Washington, DC

July 19: Woosug Kang of Nashville

July 26: Gabriele Studer of Alba, Italy

Aug. 2: Lynn Trapp of Baltimore

Aug. 9: John Mitchell of Reston, VA

Aug. 16: Andy Brown of Philadelphia

Aug, 23: Peter Latona of Washington, DC

Aug. 30: Adam Chlebek of Washington, DC





Paul on a trek to the ancient cedars of Yakusima, Japan, with son Nicholas.

Member spotlight: Paul Hersey



How did you become interested in the organ?

I had noticed classical hymn singing losing ground. In 2018 I did a web search on the instrument most associated with it, happened on the Potomac Organ Institute site, and enrolled soon thereafter.

In 2019 my son became a chorister at St Paul's Parish, K Street; then-music director Jeffrey Smith's pedagogy and artistry heightened my interest.

What is your educational and professional background?

I did a five-year double degree program (BA in physics, BMus in piano) at Northwestern University. I briefly worked as a programmer and translator in industry, then studied ancient and medieval history for a year and earned an advanced degree in conference interpreting over three years at universities in France. I have worked ever since as a conference interpreter, making recordings for OGREGRESS on the side.

What do you like to do when you are not making music?

My current “fun” project is studying German. In January I did a two-week C1.2 course at the Goethe-Institut in Munich.

What's an interesting fact about you?

I was attracted to conference interpreting partly because of its flexibility. Work comes in waves and leaves plenty of time for other pursuits.

Tell us an odd thing that happened while you were on an organ bench.

When I started this line of work, I did not expect to need to sing from the bench when my choir ranks are thin.

*The Potomac Organ Institute is an initiative of the DC, Northern Virginia, and Potomac chapters to encourage pianists to take organ lessons.

Organ crawl at St. Dominic's



The chapter met at St. Dominic's Catholic Church in Southwest DC on May 4 to see the newly restored Roosevelt Op. 290. At right is Michael Hart, who discussed the Di Gennaro-Hart Co.'s renovation of the instrument.

Job openings

Listings are continuously updated on our website, dcago.org. Click on the Membership tab. To submit a listing, send an email to dcagochapter@gmail.com.



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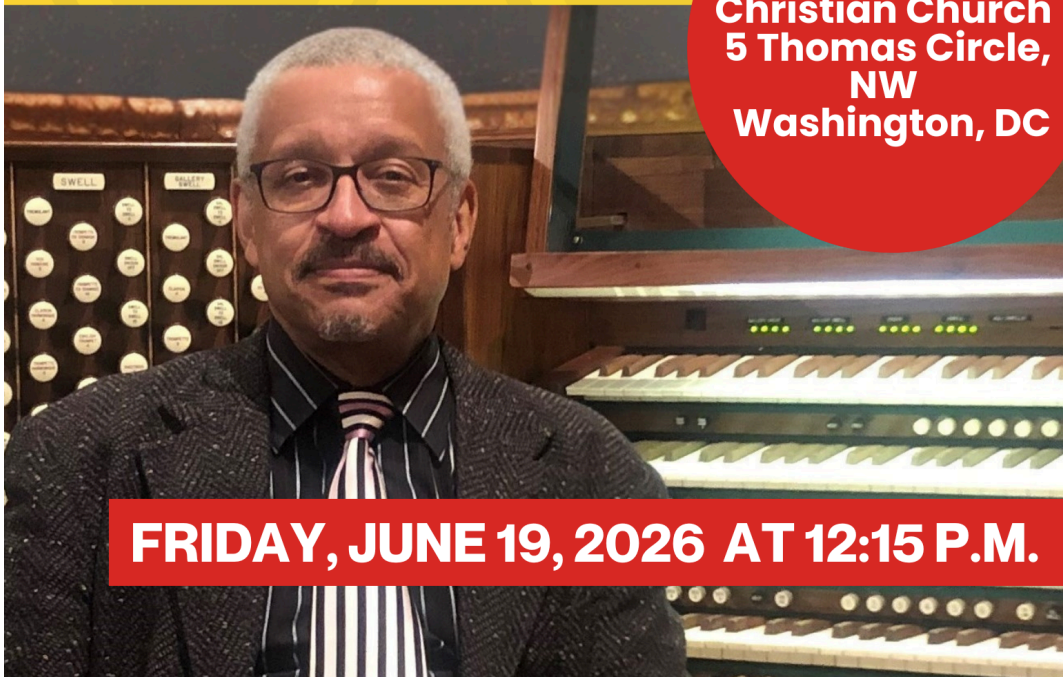
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MUSIC AT MIDDAY PRESENTS

JUNETEENTH

Dr. Mickey Thomas Terry
in a Special Juneteenth Concert
Cosponsored by the
African Heritage and Cultural Institute

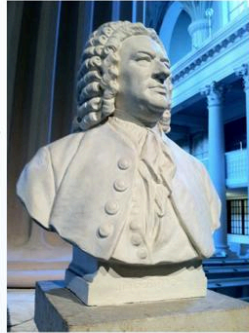
**National City
Christian Church
5 Thomas Circle,
NW
Washington, DC**



FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2026 AT 12:15 P.M.

31st Bach Festival

Grace Episcopal Church,
Georgetown
Washington, DC



1041 Wisconsin Ave NW
www.gracedc.org
(202) 333-7100

Sunday, July 5th, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Regino Madrid, Violin Charlie Powers, Cello
Foster Wang, Violin Trevor Mowry, Oboe and Oboe d'amore
Derek Smith, Viola Soo Young Chrisfield, Soprano
Shouvik Mondle, Baritone

& Francine Máté, Harpsichord, and Director of the Bach Festival

Works include *Cantata No. 82*, a soprano solo from *Cantata No. 49*, and *Cello Suite BWV 1009*.

Friday, July 10th, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Charlie Powers, Cello

The Program will be *Johann Sebastian Bach's Cello Suites BWV 1007, BWV 1008, and BWV 1009*.

Sunday, July 12th, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Piotr Pakhomkin, Guitar

Works include the *Chaconne from the d minor Partita, BWV 1004*, and the *Vivaldi D Major Concerto RV 230 arranged for the organ by JS Bach*.

Friday, July 17th, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Dr. David Bond, Organ

Works include music by *JS Bach* contemporaries *Frescobaldi, Buxtehude, Clermabault, Scarlatti*, and music by *JS Bach*.

For more information scan the QR code or contact **Francine Máté**,
Director of the Bach Festival, at bach@gracedc.org

Admission: \$35

Student: \$15

Purchase tickets here



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Justin Connors, member-at-large

Lyn Loewi, member-at-large

Adam Perry, member-at-large

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Visit our website at dcago.org.

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American Guild of Organists
District of Columbia Chapter



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