



# PIPELINE

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 7

APRIL, 2002

## PHILADELPHIA

2002



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Philadelphia 2002  
The American Guild of Organists

### THE SHORTAGE OF ORGANISTS IN AMERICA

An Official Position Statement by the  
American Guild of Organists

As American organists and choir directors reach retirement age, will there be qualified individuals to fill their vacancies? This question has been a popular topic for many religious institutions since news of a shortage of organists in the U.S. began to appear in the press in the early 80's. Religious institutions that offer professional salaries for professional services rendered, in general, have not suffered from the short

-age of organists. However, those institutions that are unable or unwilling to offer attractive salary packages have most often experienced difficulty in finding and retaining competent organists.

Statistics collected and published by the National Association of Schools of Music indicate that the number of degree-pursuing organ majors, relatively stable during the 1990s, is now once again in decline. During the 1985-86 academic year, 728 students were enrolled as organ majors, 608 in 1993-1994 and 527 in 99-2000. The AGO has responded to this trend in declining enrollments in organ and sacred music programs in colleges, conservatories, seminaries, and universities through the U.S., and is committed to addressing the need for more organists and supporting these individuals with programs in education, certification, and professional development.

The organ plays a vital role in musical experiences in religious institutions and concert halls all around the world. There is no shortage of instruments for organist to play. The Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America reports that the organ building industry is healthy, with a backlog of orders for new and renewed pipe organs.

In 1988 the AGO initiated an aggressive campaign to regenerate interest in the organ and careers in sacred music. Without the AGO's exhaustive efforts to reverse this trend, many religious institutions would find themselves unable to employ competent organists. They would be forced either to turn to less qualified individuals to play their organs, or would have to use instruments other than the organ to provide music for worship. Ultimately, the entire future of the organ would be jeopardized.



## Upcoming Events

April 14, 2002, Pedals, Pipes & Pizza  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
1000 14th St. So. Moorhead, MN, 4:00 p.m.

April 21, 2002  
Jamestown College Chapel  
Jamestown, ND, 3:00 p.m.  
Dr. Bill Wojnar organ recital

May 29, 2002  
First Lutheran Church  
Broadway and 7th  
Fargo, ND 12:45-1:15 p.m.

### BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THE LORD!

By Pastor Corey Fuhrman  
First Lutheran Church, Fargo

I must admit that the Easter tradition I truly love is the singing of "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" with brass accompaniment. This past Sunday several of the Contemporary Easter Worship Leaders, including myself, snuck over to the Traditional worship to hear the brass and to sing the traditional hymns. The grandeur of the triumphant endings is the way that I like to enjoy my new beginnings in Christ on Easter Sunday. I do not believe that it is the traditional hymns that I am drawn to, but it is the magnificent Easter tunes which draw me in. The composers captured the emotions of Easter in their music better than I have found thus far in contemporary music. Music today focuses more on meanings of lyrics rather than emotions brought on by composition. We are all drawn to different forms of worship and music. Thanks be to God that we are able to praise our Lord in the many and various ways which speak differently to every individual. If you have not found the worship which moves your soul, then start looking. God did not intend worship to kill the soul, but to move the soul into a loving relationship between creation and its creator. Sometimes it may even be a matter of rediscovering what you already have in worship. Let us be about a new spirit in this Easter season, a spirit of rejoicing in worship.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE ND CONVENER

(Michael Olson, ND Convener)

As convener for the four North Dakota Chapters in AGO, I will be traveling to Bismarck, Minot and Grand Forks in the next several months to see what is going on with the other three chapters in our state. Being on the board here gives me quite a good idea as to what is happening locally. If you know of any organists, choir directors or pipe organ enthusiasts let them know that they need AGO and we need them. Please send their e-mail addresses or other information to me and I will direct them to their nearest chapter. With our chapter having hosted a most successful Regional Convention we need to keep AGO "on the map in ND!"

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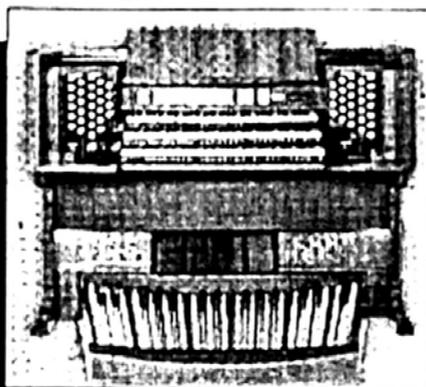
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(continued from page one)

Three of the AGO's flagship programs are designed to attract and introduce non-organists to the organ, the "King of Instruments," through instruction in organ playing, design and construction, history and repertoire. Informational videos and brochures are available.

PipeWorks is a two-week school curriculum designed for intermediate-grade students with little or no music background. It integrates science, social studies, and music using a small, portable pipe organ as the medium for activity-based instruction, and provides opportunities for exploration of the musical instrument.

Pipe Organ Encounters are regional summer organ institutes designed to introduce teenagers to the organ and the sacred music profession. They provide individual and group instruction, opportunities for ecumenical worship, and a chance for young musicians to meet others with similar interests. More than 1,000 young people have participated since its inception. An outgrowth of the POE program has

been the formation of the Association of Young Organists.

Pipe Organ Encounters + is another regional summer program, designed for adults who have a music background but who have not previously studied the organ. Participants receive individual and group instruction that introduces them to the organ and organ playing.

In 1996, in another effort to promote interest in the organ and organ playing, the AGO in cooperation with the American Institute of Organbuilders, the American Theatre Organ Society, the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America, and the organ Historical Society, produced *Pulling Out All The Stops*, a 56-minute documentary on the pipe organ in America that has been broadcast nationwide on PBS and is available on VHS cassette from AGO National HQ. In addition, *A Young Persons Guide to the Pipe Organ*, published by the AGO, appeals especially to young readers. The book is available from AGO Natio-

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