

American Guild of Organists

Las Cruces Chapter

Members' Recital

February 25, 2024

First Presbyterian Church

Las Cruces, New Mexico



About the Guild

The American Guild of Organists is the national professional association serving the organ and choral music fields. Founded in 1896 as both an educational and a service organization, the Guild seeks to set and maintain high musical standards and to promote understanding and appreciation of all aspects of organ and choral music. The mission of the American Guild of Organists is to foster a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ.

If you wish to be informed about upcoming events, but are not currently on the Chapter mailing list, please fill out one of the pink comment cards and leave it in the basket or offering plate as you depart.

Support Our Work

A free-will offering will be accepted at the end of the program to defray expenses. The Las Cruces Chapter also accepts donations electronically. Please visit our website (www.lascrucesago.org) or use the PayPal QR code to the right.

The Las Cruces Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization under IRS Code Section 170.





About the Music

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a prolific German composer of the late Baroque period. Widely renowned as a keyboard player, it is believed that much of his organ playing during church services was improvised; those compositions that were preserved in notated form were intended primarily as teaching pieces. Very little of his music was published during his lifetime; the work of authenticating and editing his published works from manuscripts continues to challenge scholars.

The Lutheran hymn **Vater unser im Himmelreich** (Our Father in Heaven – the Lord's Prayer) dates to 1537. Bach set the tune many times to suit a wide variety of moods and prayerfulness, from grand full organ to meditative calmness. The Chorale Prelude (BWV 683) is set in the key of D Minor. Its many scalar patterns suggest an ascent to the heavens, as does the final "Picardy" chord in D Major. The preceding chorale, also in D Minor, is the harmonization included in Bach's St. John Passion (BWV 245).

The arrangement of **Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn** is based on Versus 3 of Bach's Cantata "Christ lag in Todes Banden" (BWV 4). Originally a tenor aria, it was arranged for trumpet and organ duet by Friedrich Kircheis (b. 1940), an East German organist and harpsichordist who was a pioneer in the early music movement and gained international recognition for his performances with trumpeter Ludwig Güttler.

Joyce G. Jones, FAGO, DMA (1933-2022) was the Joyce Oliver Bowden Professor of Organ and Organist-in-Residence at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, from 1969 until her retirement in 2012. She earned the Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree from the University of Texas and a Master of Sacred Music (MSM) degree in composition from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Jones was certified as a Fellow of the American Guild of Organists (FAGO); she has composed numerous published works and is especially remembered for her pedal technique. She devoted her professional life to making friends for the organ through community concerts, organ dedications, children's concerts, and "Access to Music" programs; her performance career spanned seven decades.

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707), a German/Danish organist and composer, is considered by many to be the "father" of the North German school of organ playing. His renown was so widespread that, in 1705, the young J.S. Bach walked more than 200 miles to meet and hear him in Lübeck, where he served as organist of St. Mary's Church for 38 years, a post he obtained by agreeing to marry his predecessor's daughter. In addition to a substantial amount of choral and instrumental music, his most influential compositions were for the organ. His surviving organ works include 49 liturgical pieces and 41 "free form" works, which include the **Prelude, Fugue, and Chaconne** (BuxWV 137).

Tibor Pikéthy (1884-1972) was born in Komárom, Hungary (now Slovakia). In addition to being a journal editor and a professor in Budapest, he served as cathedral organist in the small town of Vác, just north of Budapest. His compositions, noted for their late-romantic style, are sometimes dramatic and often reflect his Hungarian national heritage.

Michael Burkhardt, DMA (b. 1957), received his Doctorate in Musical Arts from Arizona State University. He also holds a Master's degree in Music from Southern Methodist University and is a graduate of Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. A prolific composer, he is highly regarded for his hymn-based organ settings and for his works for children's choirs. He is well-known for his organ recitals and hymn festivals, and his children's workshops are highly renowned.



Richard Keys Biggs (1886-1962) was born in Glendale, Ohio. He studied with Sir Richard Terry in London and was organist of churches in the New York area and the founder of several boy choirs. Near the end of his career, he was the long-time organist at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament in Hollywood, California, where he died.

Rebecca Groom te Velde, AAGO (b. 1956) is a third-generation professional organist. She holds a Master of Music degree in organ literature and performance from the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario; she is a graduate of Seattle Pacific University and received advanced training at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Cologne, Germany. She lives in Stillwater, Oklahoma, where she has served the First Presbyterian Church as Organist since 1991; prior to her appointment as Director of Music in 2015, she served as an adjunct instructor at Oklahoma State University for 15 years. She is certified as an Associate of the American Guild of Organists (AAGO) and is an active performer, composer, and clinician. The **Reflections Suite** was commissioned by Dr. Sheryl Sebo and the Lover's Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, in honor of the church's 75th anniversary. It was originally conceived as a suite representing the church sanctuary's unique stained-glass windows and the church's African Fellowship; it is not yet published.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681 – 1767), a German Baroque composer, is often compared to J.S. Bach and George Frideric Handel. A prolific composer, he was self-taught in music and, after studying law at the University of Leipzig, he pursued a career in music against his family's wishes. He is a very important link between the late Baroque and the early Classical styles. The recording of **Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott**, by Monte Coleman, was recorded by Las Cruces Chapter Member Lynn Moorner at Peace Lutheran Church on April 9, 2021. It remains one of the Chapter's most-viewed video recordings.

Marius Monnikendam (1896-1977) was a Dutch composer, organist, and music critic. He studied in Amsterdam and Paris. He taught at the Rotterdam Conservatory and the Amsterdam Music Lyceum. He composed religious and secular works for piano, orchestra, and chorus. His Lamentations of Jeremiah for chorus and orchestra, written in 1956, was broadcast on Radio Holland during the funeral services for Queen Wilhelmina (1962) and John F Kennedy (1963). The **Toccata**, one of his most popular organ works, was written in 1936.

About the Musicians

Stephen Adams was born in 1939 and raised in San Francisco, California. He divides his time between Enterprise, Oregon, and Silver City, New Mexico, where he studies with Adele Giusto. He began his keyboard studies in Portland, Oregon with Walter Krueger, FAGO, and has also studied with Gavin Black of the Princeton, New Jersey, Early Keyboard Center. He is a member of the Portland, Central New Jersey, and Las Cruces AGO Chapters. His home organ is Casavant Frères Opus 3436 (1979, 14 ranks).

Karen Billings, a resident of Las Cruces, New Mexico, since 2007, was an engineer and mathematician with AT&T Bell Laboratories for 20 years. She has degrees in Mathematics from Hendrix College (Conway, Arkansas) and Oklahoma State University. She studied organ while at Hendrix and continued her studies at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. Karen is certified as a Colleague of the American Guild of Organists (CAGO).

Adele Giusto is a retired elementary school music teacher from Silver City, New Mexico, where she has lived since 1976. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota and a Master's degree in Keyboard and Psychology from Western New Mexico University. For the last several years,



she has been the Music Director at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Silver City, New Mexico. In this capacity, she serves as organist/pianist and directs the church choir and handbell choir.

Howard Smolleck is a Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering at NMSU. He also taught at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and was the founding sponsor of the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society chapters at both of these schools. He holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington and is a licensed Professional Engineer (PE). Howard has served as organist at a number of churches in Texas, Virginia, and New Mexico. He has been organist at First Presbyterian Church in Las Cruces, New Mexico, since 1998.

Sheryl Sebo, from Leander, Texas, is the American Guild of Organists Regional Councillor for the Southwest Region, which includes 26 chapters in the states of Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. She received her Doctorate in Musical Arts (DMA) from Rutgers University (The State University of New Jersey) in 1996. She served as Organist, Associate Music Director, and Handbell Choir Director at Lover's Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, a position she held until retiring at the end of 2022. She is a member of the Austin, Texas, chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Monte Coleman was born and raised in northern California. He studied at the University of Iowa and became an Army mathematician at the Ballistics Research Laboratory, now part of the Army Research Laboratory, in Aberdeen, Maryland. He and his wife retired to Las Cruces in 1995, where he served various lengths of time at numerous churches in the Las Cruces area. Monte continued to be active as an "itinerant organist" in the area through early 2020. He also played regularly for services at his home church, Peace Lutheran Church, and was instrumental in the funding, acquisition, and installation of the new Rodgers organ console at the church. Monte has been a member of the Las Cruces Chapter of the American Guild of Organists for almost 30 years, during which he served in a number of capacities. He shepherded two Chapter members through the Service Playing and Colleague Certification exams and shared in the fun of numerous Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza events hosted by the Chapter in past years. He most recently served as Chapter Registrar.

Laurel Benson Brown received a Bachelor of Music at Colorado State University and a Master of Sacred Music at Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio. She worked for 44 years as a Lutheran church musician in Colorado, Ohio, Florida, South Carolina, and northern Virginia, where she also taught music at Northern Virginia Community College. She and her husband, an amateur astronomer, live north of Deming, New Mexico, where she stays busy accompanying and subbing in Silver City, traveling, and looking at the night sky.

Jieun Kim Newland is an organist and harpsichordist currently living in El Paso, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and holds a Master's degree in Organ Performance from Yale University. She is currently pursuing a Specialist Certificate in Medieval Music Research and Performance from Medieval Music Besalú in Spain. Jieun is active as a church organist and has collaborated with early music and choral ensembles in Hawaii, Washington, and Colorado. Jieun currently serves as Music Minister and Organist at Peace Lutheran Church in Las Cruces and plays with Fellowship of the Melody, a Medieval music ensemble. Jieun is a member of American Guild of Organists' National Committee on Professional Education.

Flora Newberry started playing trumpet in an elementary school band program at the age of 8. She went on to study privately at Montclair State College (Montclair, New Jersey), and expanded her studies to include classical and jazz piano. She received a Bachelor's Degree in orchestral trumpet from the Juilliard School, after which she performed as Principal Trumpet of the Orquesta Sinfónica de la Universidad de Guanajuato, México. Following three years of jazz studies at William Paterson College (Wayne, New Jersey) and 20 years of teaching and freelancing in the New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia area, she moved to El Paso, Texas, where she obtained a Master's Degree in Music Education. She currently teaches Elementary Music at Montana Vista Elementary in the Clint Independent School District (Texas).