

The Class of 2015:

20 leaders under the age of 30

By THE DIAPASON staff

Joe Balistreri



photo credit: Ryan Southern
(ryansouthern.com)

Joe Balistreri, 28, a proud citizen of Detroit, Michigan, earned bachelor's and master's degrees in organ performance at the University of Michigan, studying with James Kibbie. His organ performances include an AGO convention, university conferences, and orchestral collaborations.

Since 2011, Balistreri has been the director of music for the Archdiocese of Detroit, serving as a resource and community facilitator for parish musicians and clergy. He created an annual "Chant Bootcamp," a down-to-earth crash course week that enables parish musicians to read, understand, and enjoy plainchant, and developed an annual marathon organ recital, showcasing parish organists from across Southeast Michigan in a whirlwind series of 25-minute recitals. The marathon also

includes a fundraising competition, supporting the music ministries of each organist.

As Episcopal Music Director at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Balistreri co-directs the parish adult choir, directs the Archdiocesan Chorus, and leads the Cathedral Cultural Series (CCS), a non-profit concert series of organ and choral music, which features music for two organs at least annually, showcasing the cathedral's 1925 Casavant and 2005 Austin organs.

In his spare time, Joe Balistreri enjoys cycling, cooking, surveying architecture, Detroit politics, and composing. He is particularly proud of starting a choral program at Detroit's Loyola High School, a school serving at-risk inner-city youth.

Interesting fact: Seven years ago, infamously scandalous Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick planted a maple tree in front of my house before he went away to prison.

Proudest achievement: I'm most proud of restoring the Archdiocesan Chorus of Detroit as a permanent resident ensemble for the archdiocese three years ago. In early March, the chorus received an invitation to sing for Epiphany Mass in St. Peter's Basilica with Pope Francis! Most importantly, the chorus has fostered a wonderful network of friendships and professional connections.

Goals and aspirations: I'm interested in making and promoting passionate, beautiful, spirit-lifting sacred music and have a strong interest in promoting the Gregorian propers as a transcendent pathway to God. I'd like to explore the relationship between centonization in the Gregorian repertoire (especially in graduals and alleluias) and newer African-American improvisatory idioms . . . possibilities exist for creative fusion of the two traditions in Catholic music programs. Finally, I'm very interested in developing a small choral ensemble/composer forum that focuses on early sacred music and new sacred writing.

Thomas Bowers



photo credit: Alyssa Lund
(alysalundphotography.com)

Thomas Bowers, 26, received his bachelor's degree in music and philosophy from Florida State University. While studying piano at FSU, he developed an interest in the harpsichord and organ and in instrument construction. In 2008, he took time away from school to complete an internship in harpsichord building at Zuckermann Harpsichords, where he focused on voicing and regulation, completing the construction of his first instrument, a copy of an Italian harpsichord originally built in 1665, in 2009.

Bowers earned a master's degree in harpsichord performance from the Longy School of Music, where he studied with Avi Stein and participated in masterclasses with Vivian Montgomery, Martin Pearlman, David Schemer, and others. He currently

serves as organist and choir director for St. Chrysostom's Church in Quincy, Massachusetts. With artist Kendyll Hillegas, he organizes the Hive Gallery at St. Chrysostom's, a seasonal art opening and early music concert to promote the work of young artists and musicians in the Boston area.

Thomas Bowers performs regularly in Boston as a chamber musician and soloist and works as a technician for the Harpsichord Clearing House; a founding member of the Baroque ensemble Incendium Novum, he seeks to bring early music repertoire to new audiences.

Interesting fact: I am an avid rock climber. I find this a compelling sport because it challenges both the physical and problem-solving abilities of the climber.

Proudest achievement: My greatest achievement thus far is convincing my wife, Kellie, to marry me!

Goals and aspirations: I have been working to build a career that combines performance, teaching, and instrument work. I plan to pursue a doctorate, and am interested in conducting research on the historical building practices of harpsichord and organ makers.

Joey Brink



photo credit: Bok Tower Gardens
(www.boktowergardens.org)

Joey Brink, 26, a carillonneur and engineer, began carillon studies at Yale University in 2007 with Ellen Dickinson, receiving a B.S. in mechanical engineering with a thesis on the design of realistic-touch practice carillon keyboards. He received a Belgian-American Educational Foundation (BAEF) fellowship to study with Eddy Marien, Koen Cosaert, and Geert D'hollander at the Royal Carillon School in Mechelen, Belgium, where he graduated with "greatest distinction" in June 2012. Brink went on to win first prize and audience prize at the 7th International Queen Fabiola Carillon Competition in Mechelen in 2014.

Brink received a master's degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Utah in collaboration with NASA in December 2014. Since January 2015, he has been studying carillon performance and composition with Geert D'hollander at Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales, Florida, as a Bok Tower Carillon Fellow. Brink currently lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, with his wife, carillonneur Vera Brink. The Brinks spend much of their free time immersed in the nearby Wasatch Mountains hiking, mountain biking, camping, and skiing.

An active member of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America and the World Carillon Federation, Joey Brink will play more than 30 carillon concerts in seven countries in 2015; he also composes for carillon. As a mechanical engineer, he has presented research on carillons at a 2012 symposium.

Interesting fact: Each fall I coach a FIRST Lego League team of boys that build Lego robots and compete in Lego tournaments.

Proudest achievement: I am most proud of receiving first prize at the 7th International Queen Fabiola Competition for Carillon Performance in Mechelen, Belgium. The competition hosts the highest-level upcoming carillonneurs, and in June 2014 I became the first North American to ever take the first prize.

Goals and aspirations: I aspire to continue performing worldwide on the carillon and compose for the instrument. I hope to devote much of my career to teaching carillon, as well as apply my engineering background to influence the design of future carillons and practice carillons.

Nicholas Capozzoli



Nicholas Capozzoli, 22, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a fourth-year student at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, studying organ with James David Christie and harpsichord with Webb Wiggins. A first-place winner in several competitions, most recently the 2013 Region III American Guild of Organists/Quimby Competition, he has performed in venues including St. Paul Cathedral, Pittsburgh; St. Patrick Catholic Church, Washington, D.C.; Church of the Covenant, Cleveland; Old South Church, Boston; and the Musée des

Augustins, Toulouse, France. Capozzoli presented recitals at the 2013 National Association of Pastoral Musicians Convention in Washington, the 2014 AGO National Convention as a "Rising Star," and at the 2014 Piccolo Spoleto Festival "L'Organo Series" in Charleston, South Carolina. He has served as a sacred music intern at New York City's Brick Presbyterian Church and Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Naperville, Illinois, working under the direction of Keith Tóth and Matthew Sprinkle, respectively. He currently serves as organist at Bethesda-on-the-Bay Lutheran Church in Bay Village, Ohio. Nicholas Capozzoli is also an active solo harpsichordist and continuo player, and in his fifth year at Oberlin, he will pursue a master's degree in historical performance.

Proudest achievement: Presenting a "Rising Star" recital at the 2014 AGO Convention in Boston for a full capacity audience of organists.

Career goals: In addition to working in the field of church music, I hope to have an active performance career in both organ and harpsichord—including continuo, working with many instrumental early music ensembles.

An interesting fact: When I was little, I really wanted to be either a priest or a pirate . . . but who knows, maybe one of those career paths can still happen!

THE DIAPASON's inaugural "20 under 30" selections came from a field that included over 100 nominations, a response that surprised and delighted us. The nominees were evaluated based upon information provided in the nominations; we selected only from those who had been nominated. We looked for evidence of such things as career advancement, technical skills, and creativity and innovation; we considered a nominee's awards and competition prizes, publications and compositions, and significant positions in the mix. Our selections were not limited merely to organists but reflect the breadth of our editorial scope, which includes the organ, harpsichord, carillon, and church music. Here we present the winners' backgrounds and accomplishments, and then have them tell us something interesting about themselves, and about their achievements, goals, and aspirations.

Since we had to decline multiple nominees for each one we chose, selecting only 20 from a field of very worthy nominees was quite a challenge. We do urge you to participate in the "20 under 30" awards next year—a person must be nominated in order to be selected.

20 UNDER 30

Katelyn Emerson



Katelyn Emerson, 23, presents concerts and masterclasses throughout the United States on interpretation, repertoire, and sacred music. She has received top prizes in such organ competitions as the 2011 Region 5 AGO/Quimby Regional Competition, the Fifth International Organ Competition "Pierre de Manchicourt" in Béthune and Saint-

Omer, France, and the VIII Mikael Tariverdiev International Organ Competition in Kaliningrad, Russia, and will make her Russian and French concert debuts in the 2015–16 season.

Emerson graduates with high distinction this May from Oberlin College and Conservatory with double bachelor's degrees in organ performance and French as well as minors in historical performance and music history. Her teachers have included James David Christie, Olivier Latry, Marie-Louise Langlais, Ray Cornils, and Abbey Hallberg-Siegfried. She has been sacred music intern at the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City and the Church of the Advent in Boston. The recipient of a J. William Fulbright Study/Research Grant, she will study at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional in Toulouse, France in 2015–16 with Michel Bouvard, Jan Willem Jansen, and Yasuko Uyama-Bouvard. For more information, visit www.katelynemerson.com.

Interesting fact: A challenge I've had to work with is my rather small hands and short stature. Playing Franck, I constantly thumb between manuals in order to get the perfect legato. When competing and performing, I frequently struggle to reach the pedals or top manuals. While competing on the beautiful 1855 Cavaillé-Coll organ in Saint-Omer, France, I remember having to write "scoot back" in several places in my score so I would not slide forward off the bench while playing Vierne's *Impromptu* on the highest manual!

Proudest achievement: One of my fondest achievements was playing the 1791 François-Henri Clicquot organ in Poitiers. Truly, French Classical music, which had never sounded terribly fascinating to me before, came to life when reunited with this instrument.

Goals and aspirations: I have always dreamed of living abroad and experiencing diverse cultures through immersion. It is through the small moments of enjoying an espresso in a corner cafe while watching passersby that I feel the true spirit of an unfamiliar surrounding. I most appreciate forging connections with people and this will comprise a large part of my future career, as I love teaching and communicating with others, be it on the subjects of church music, performance, and musicology, or even French literature, psychology, and philosophy.

Jillian Gardner



photo credit:
Lana Gardner-Downs at
LanaDownsPhotography

Jillian Gardner, 22, is working towards her bachelor of music degree in organ at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, studying organ with James David Christie, as well as receiving instruction from Jack Mitchener and Marie-Louise Langlais. In Oberlin, Ohio, she serves as organist for Grace Lutheran Church.

Gardner began her study of organ at age fourteen with Stephen Best of Utica, New York.

As part of her studies at Oberlin, she was able to tour the magnificent instruments in Bordeaux, Toulouse, Versailles, and Paris, France. She won the first place award in the Buffalo, New York, AGO/Quimby chapter-level competition in 2013, and first place in the 2014 Tuesday Music Club Association Scholarship competition in Akron, Ohio.

Jillian Gardner recently lived in New York City for a month, working as an organ scholar at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, gaining experience in choral accompaniment and direction, improvisation, and general service playing. She has presented recitals in such venues as Grace Episcopal Church, Utica, St. Joseph Cathedral, Buffalo, and the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, Connecticut, and at the 2014 Organ Historical Society Convention in Syracuse, New York. She looks forward to a 2016 UK concert tour.

Interesting fact: Jillian's dress sense reflects her colorful personality—her organ shoes are bright pink. Outside of the organ loft, Jillian enjoys daily sessions in the gym, and arts and crafts.

Proudest achievement: Jillian originates from Lee Center, New York, population 2,500. She is proudest of getting to where she is today purely by hard work and a determination to soak up knowledge from every possible source, while still remaining a well-rounded person outside of the organ world. Through all of this, she has been encouraged by an extremely supportive family of non-musicians.

Goals and aspirations: My goal as a performer is to make the organ accessible to people without compromising musical standards or watering down programs. I am passionate about presenting interesting concerts that are performed musically to take away the bad name the organ has inherited as being dull and mechanical, in the hope of increasing audiences and attracting younger listeners.

In my career, I would like to balance my time between a good church position and performing as a freelance recitalist. I next wish to develop my experience in choral accompaniment, which I hope my move to Baylor University will enable.

Christopher Houlihan



Christopher Houlihan, 27, has performed in major cities across North America and Europe, as well as at numerous conventions of the American Guild of Organists and the

Organ Historical Society. In 2014, he made his Disney Hall debut, performing with the principal brass of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the 2015–16 season will see his debut at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the release of a new all-Bach organ CD. Houlihan's "Vierne2012" tour—marathon performances of Louis Vierne's six organ symphonies—attracted international attention and critical acclaim.

Houlihan studied with Paul Jacobs (Julliard), John Rose (Trinity College), and Jean-Baptiste Robin (Versailles Conservatoire). His recordings on the Towerhill label include music of Duruflé, Alain, Widor, and Vierne (*Symphony No. 2*). He lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is artist-in-residence at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. More information can be found at christopherhoulihan.com.

An interesting fact: My biggest passion outside of music is for cooking, and in my free time I'm usually busy preparing for a dinner party. My Instagram feed is filled with a unique combination of organs and food (@houliorganist).

Proudest achievement: I'm especially proud of my "Vierne2012" project. My goal in organizing the marathon tour was to bring some attention to the Vierne symphonies, which are obviously some of the most important compositions in the organ repertoire but are virtually unknown beyond the organ world, and even unfamiliar to some organists. It was an exhausting summer, but ultimately incredibly satisfying to see audiences and critics respond so positively to Vierne's music.

Career aspirations and goals: I want to continue to perform, and hope to find ways to broaden the organ's position in the world of classical music.

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Simon Thomas Jacobs



Simon Thomas Jacobs, 28, read music as organ scholar at Clare College, University of Cambridge. Following graduation, he moved to the United States to take up the post of associate director of music at Christ Church, Greenwich, Connecticut, and

in 2011 became associate organist and choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis. He was awarded a full scholarship to the artist diploma program at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he studied with James David Christie and was a teaching assistant for the organ department.

In 2013, Jacobs won first prize and audience prize at the St. Albans International Organ Competition, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary that same year. Under the management of Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists, Jacobs has performed at venues throughout the United States and this summer will return to Europe to perform concerts in the UK and France. He will also record his debut CD on the new Richards, Fowkes and Co. instrument (Opus 18) at St. George's, Hanover Square, London—one of only a handful of American-built organs in England, and the first by an American builder in London. His website is www.simonthomasjacobs.com.

Interesting fact: During my final semester at university I spent my Saturday mornings learning to ride a motorcycle. I passed my test and am licensed to ride any motorcycle in the UK.

Proudest achievement: Winning St. Albans. The city is not far from where I grew up, and so I was always familiar with the magnificent cathedral and the summer organ festival, not to mention the many organists I admire who were previous laureates. It had always been an ambition of mine to enter the competition but I could never have imagined that I'd actually win!

Goals and aspirations: My work as a church musician is incredibly important to me, and having taken a year to focus on my playing and work as a soloist, I would now like to lead my own music program in a large parish. As a parish musician, a great deal of one's work is as a teacher, and this too is something I wish to build on, as well as continuing to promote the organ and its music through concerts and recordings.

Dexter Kennedy



Dexter Kennedy, 24, won the Grand Prix d'Interprétation at the 24th Concours International d'Orgue de Chartres. Kennedy has also won other prizes and awards, including first prize in the 2009 AGO region V Quimby competition. He is instructor of organ and harpsichord at the

College of Wooster. As a result of winning the Grand Prix de Chartres, he will perform over 30 concerts in Europe, including stops in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, England, Slovakia, Luxembourg, Russia, and Iceland. He is also the assistant organist at Christ Church (Episcopal), Grosse Pointe, Michigan, where he serves as principal organist for all choral services and concerts. This summer he will perform at two regional AGO conventions and in Europe.

Kennedy has presented recitals at such venues as Washington National Cathedral, St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York City, and the University of Calgary. He holds a master's degree from the Yale University School of Music and is currently pursuing an artist diploma at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music under the guidance of James David Christie. Additional studies have been with Martin Jean, Olivier Latry, and Jeffrey Brillhart (improvisation). More information can be found at his website, www.dexterkennedy.com.

Interesting fact: I enjoy golfing and am an avid fan of the professional sports teams in Detroit, particularly the Detroit Tigers.

Proudest achievement: Being the first American organist to win the Grand Prix de Chartres since 1996. This competition has a great history of American winners during its early years in the 1970s that have gone on to have remarkably successful careers, and I hope that it is the start of similar success in my own career. It is such an honor to be distinguished on an international scale of over 60 organists from 20 different countries. I have been invited to play recitals in great venues throughout Europe, many in countries that I would never have dreamed of visiting. I'm particularly excited to visit Reykjavik, Iceland, this summer!

Goals and aspirations: I hope to have a diverse career consisting of university teaching and as much solo performing as possible. I also love high-caliber church music, and if the opportunity to serve at one of the country's elite church programs was presented to me, I could be very happy in such a scenario.

Colin Knapp



Colin Knapp, 23, a native of Battle Creek, Michigan, is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan, where he studied organ performance, music theory, and performing arts management. His primary organ teachers have been Jacqueline Stilger in Battle

Creek, Thomas Bara at Interlochen Arts Academy, and James Kibbie at the University of Michigan. Currently serving as director of music and organist at First Presbyterian Church of Ypsilanti, he is also director of the Ypsilanti Pipe Organ Festival, staff coordinator for the University of Michigan's Annual Conference on Organ Music, and is co-sub dean of the Ann Arbor Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Knapp recently moved to the downtown Detroit riverfront and is enjoying all that the city has to offer.

As director of the Ypsilanti Pipe Organ Festival, he has established himself in arts management, audience development, fund raising, and community engagement. For the festival, he has created theme programs such as for St. Patrick's Day and Halloween, and has presented artists such as Daniel Roth and Vincent Dubois. The sponsorships and partnerships with other organizations that he has developed have underwritten the total costs of the series and generated a surplus, so that all the festival's concerts will remain free of charge.

Interesting fact: I love the art of collaboration. For part of my senior recital, I presented Jean Langlais' *Suite Médiévale* with modern dance, choreographed by Maddy Rager.

Proudest achievement: I am most proud of my work as director of the Ypsilanti Pipe Organ Festival. Through strategic fundraising, innovative programming, and partnering with area organizations such as the Ann Arbor AGO chapter and the organ department at the University of Michigan, the Ypsilanti Pipe Organ Festival has become one of the most successful and accessible free organ series in Michigan.

Goals and aspirations: I plan to continue my work in both church music and arts administration to share my passion and commitment to classical music, especially organ and sacred music, with the community. I plan to return to graduate school to study business and hope to one day become executive director of a large arts organization.

Congratulations to our Oberlin students honored in *The Diapason* "Class of 2015: 20 under 30" — setting the pace for the future of the pipe organ, harpsichord, carillon, and church music.

Nicholas Capozzoli, BM/MM '16

Katelyn Emerson, BM/BA '15

Jillian Gardner, BM '15

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Nathan Laube



photo credit: Adam Fenster

Nathan Laube, 26, assistant professor of organ at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, has performed on many historic European instruments, at such festivals as the Smarano Organ Academy and Torino Festival Organistico Internazionale di S. Rita (Italy); Naumburg Orgelsommer, 300th Anniversary Festival of the Silbermann organ in Freiberg Cathedral, and Dresden Music Festival (Germany); Orléans (France), and Lahti and Lapua (Finland) and at many UK cathedrals, including York, Canterbury, Exeter, Ely, Hereford, Truro, Southwark, and Southwell. Recent performances include such major venues as Vienna Konzerthaus, Berlin Philharmonie, Dortmund Konzerthaus, Walt Disney Concert Hall (CA), Verizon Hall (PA), and the Sejong Center, Seoul (Korea).

A featured performer at numerous conventions of the OHS and AGO, Laube has recorded two new CDs: Stephen Paulus's *Grand Concerto* with the Nashville Symphony under Giancarlo Guerrero (NAXOS) and a solo recording made at the Stadtkirche in Nagold, Germany (Ambiente).

Nathan Laube earned a bachelor of music degree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying organ with Alan Morrison and piano with Susan Starr, and a master's degree in organ from the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart, Germany, studying with Ludger Lohmann. A William Fulbright scholar, Laube studied with Michel Bouvard and Jan Willem Jansen at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Toulouse where he earned Prix de Spécialisé. From 2011–13, he served as artist-in-residence at the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Paris, France.

Interesting fact: I was born with a sixth finger on my right hand, one that was removed just shortly before I turned one year old. It was not, however, fully formed, but it certainly invites some wishful thinking of “what if?!” With relatively small hands (I can only reach a minor tenth on a good day with my right hand), each moment spent with Franck's *Prière* reminds me of this long-lost digit!

Proudest achievement: I have tried to “get inside” of as many of the great traditions of instruments and repertoire-playing as possible, so as to feel equally “at home” at any instrument (be it Schnitger, Skinner, Cavaillé-Coll, or Willis), and to learn the “dialect” of each. Having started this in Philadelphia, with its early 20th-century American-Symphonic pipe organs, the next step was to go to France and Germany and surrounding countries. After much immersion in these sounds and sensations, aided by some of the great pedagogues of our time, I feel that I trust myself to get the best out of any instrument by bringing together amassed knowledge of instrument building and first-hand experience on many different historic instruments. I feel particularly blessed to work at a place like Eastman, where these questions of sound, style, and related technique are always at the front of the mind, whether we are sitting at an 18th-century Italian organ or a 1920s Skinner!

Goals and aspirations: I had always aspired to become a church musician, and I do miss this immensely in my musical life: accompanying psalms, playing hymns, working out elaborate oratorio reductions, etc. I also look forward to increasing my teaching—a part of my musical life that brings me immense joy and ever-broader perspective. Performing and traveling is one thing, but those wonderful “epiphany moments” that occur in lessons (or in an ecstatic text message from a student who has finally “gotten it!”), are really what it's all about!

Katie Minion



Katie Minion, 24, won the Poister Competition in 2012 and received a Jacobs Scholar award (the highest honor given to an undergraduate in the school of music from Indiana University) in 2011. Winner of the Fox Valley AGO RCYO competition in 2013, the Indianapolis AGO Chapter RCYO in 2011, and second in the Region V competition in 2013, she has performed on Chicago classical radio station WFMT's program, *Introductions*, and received the Music Institute of Chicago's highest level certificate in organ playing, with honors, in 2010. She has been presented in recital at Central Synagogue

in New York City, and at Loyola University's Madonna Della Strada Chapel, Chicago. Minion recently received a Fulbright research grant through the Marillonet Foundation to study organ in Toulouse in 2016 with Michel Bouvard.

Interesting fact: I joined the fencing club at IU and competed nationally on the women's épée team.

Proudest achievement: Winning the Arthur Poister Scholarship Competition during my first year as an undergraduate at Indiana University.

Goals and aspirations: I want to combine research and performance interests as I work towards earning a master's and a doctorate in organ performance. After spending more time studying in both Europe and in the United States, I'm planning on a career that combines teaching and performing.

Tom Mueller



photo credit: Sage Kirkpatrick

Tom Mueller, 29, is assistant professor of church music and university organist at Concordia University in Irvine, California, where he teaches organ, jazz, and composition. Mueller also serves as assistant organist at St. James' Church in Los Angeles, where he accompanies the Choir of St. James' under the direction of James Buonemani. In 2014, Mueller won first place in the Schoenstein Competition in Hymn-Playing, held in conjunction with the national convention of the American Guild of Organists in Boston, Massachusetts.

Mueller maintains an active performance schedule. In 2010, he performed the complete organ works of J. S. Bach in his native state of Maine. An avid composer, he has received numerous commissions for new liturgical works. He is also an accomplished guitarist and toured the country as a member of The Muellers, a family bluegrass band.

He has presented workshops, masterclasses, and lectures for numerous organizations, including several chapters of the American Guild of Organists, and has served as a faculty member for the AGO's Pipe Organ Encounters program.

Mueller holds degrees from the University of Notre Dame (organ), and the University of Maine at Augusta (jazz composition), and earned the DMA degree at the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with David Higgs. His former teachers include Craig Cramer and Alan Wingard.

Interesting fact: I was born into a family of traditional bluegrass musicians and learned several stringed instruments by ear. This is a great experience—everyone should try it!

Proudest achievement: As a young teacher, I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to train a new generation of organists and church musicians. I am grateful to all of the fine teachers and musicians who have influenced me over the years, and I strive to be a good musical role model for my own students.

Career aspirations and goals: I love everything that I do—teaching and playing organ, playing jazz, composing, and doing research—and I hope that I can keep doing it all for as long as I possibly can.

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and especially our distinguished alumni:

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in Organ Performance, 2011

Colin Knapp
Director, Ypsilanti Pipe Organ Festival
Bachelor of Music
in Organ and Sacred Music, 2014

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Raymond Nagem



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Raymond Nagem, 28, is associate organist at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York, and a C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow at the Juilliard School, where he is a student of Paul Jacobs. Winner of the AGO/Quimby Competition in 2007, he gave a Rising Star recital at the 2008 AGO national convention in Minneapolis. His first CD, *Divine Splendor* (2014, Pro Organo), includes his own transcription of excerpts from Prokofiev's *Music for Children*. At St. John the Divine, he has primary responsibility for service playing, and works regularly with the cathedral's several choral ensembles. He teaches courses in organ literature at Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music.

A native of Medford, Massachusetts, Nagem began organ lessons with John Dunn while attending the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School. As the recipient of the first American Friends of Eton College Scholarship, he spent a year studying music in England with Alastair Sampson. He earned a bachelor's degree from Yale University, where he studied with Thomas Murray, and a master of music degree from Juilliard. He has served as assistant organist at the Parish of All Saints, Ashmont, Massachusetts, organ scholar at Trinity Church, Southport, Connecticut, and organ scholar at Christ Church, New Haven. At St. John the Divine, Nagem presented recitals devoted to works of Olivier Messiaen.

Interesting fact: My last name (from the Lebanese side of my family) is Arabic for "star."

Proudest achievement: Performing Messiaen's *La Nativité* this past fall was a highlight, as was recording a CD at St. John the Divine in 2013, but music doesn't let you stand still—it pushes you to go further. That's what's exciting about it!

Career aspirations and goals: My first reaction is: to have a job in 20 years! I say that with a laugh, but it needs to be said, since artists and academics can't necessarily make a living wage in our society, and organists our age know that we can't take the survival of the instrument for granted. Selfish considerations aside, I'd like to increase the number of people who appreciate the organ, to show that the instrument and its repertoire are capable of real excellence in both service and recital, and to teach what I've learned to another generation after me.

Stephen Price



Stephen Price, 27, is a native of Buffalo, New York, where he was appointed organ scholar at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral during his senior year of high school. He graduated from Western Connecticut State University with a bachelor of music degree in organ performance in 2009, after which he received a Fulbright grant to France and studied organ at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Toulouse where he earned the Diplôme d'Études Musicales, in addition to the Prix François Vidal from the city of Toulouse.

In 2012, Stephen Price earned a master of music degree in organ performance from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music; he is currently enrolled in the DMA program, in the studio of Janette Fishell. He has also studied with Andrew Scanlon, Stephen Roberts, Michel Bouvard, and Jan Willem Jansen. Price was awarded the Robert Fuchs Prize in the Franz Schmidt 4th International Organ Competition (Austria) and advanced to the final round in the André Marchal 14th International Organ Competition (France). He will serve as a faculty member at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music's 2015 Sacred Music Intensive Workshop.

Interesting fact: In my spare time, I assist Great Dane owners with new litters and puppy sales.

Proudest achievement: My proudest achievement is being awarded a Fulbright Grant.

Career aspirations and goals: I aspire to become an active church musician, teacher, and performer.

Andrew Schaeffer



Andrew Schaeffer, 26, a Chicago native, holds degrees from St. Olaf College and Yale University where he studied with John Ferguson and Thomas Murray, respectively. He is currently working on a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance at the University of Oklahoma, studying with John Schwandt. In addition to his academic studies, Schaeffer is director of music at the 2,300-member First United Methodist Church of Edmond, Oklahoma, where he conducts their 40-voice choir, serves as principal organist, and plans three liturgies each Sunday. Active as a recitalist and hymn festival leader, he has presented programs throughout the United States and appeared as an accompanist for the National Lutheran Choir. In 2011 he was presented with the "Officium ad Ducere" (Leadership By Service) Alumnus of the Year award from his alma mater, Luther North College Prep in Chicago, for his contributions to Lutheran church music.

Proudest achievement: A 2014 holiday Christmas CD recorded on the 1926 Casavant (Opus 1130) at St. John Cantius Church in Chicago, which included a complete performance of Fred Hohman's transcription of *The Nutcracker*.

Interesting fact: I'm an avid collector of all things Alfred Hitchcock.

Career goals and aspirations: Many of us in this profession lament the apparent decline of the importance of the pipe organ, particularly within religious contexts. While it is important to educate people on the great body of literature the organ affords and its complex and beautiful construction, I don't think we can underestimate the power of renewed congregational song in raising awareness of the need for pipe organs.

Therefore, while I hope to maintain an active career as a performer, my primary musical passion lies in promoting and engaging people in congregational song. Following in the footsteps of two of my mentors, Paul Manz and John Ferguson, I aim to continue to develop and promote hymn festivals around the country. I also desire to be involved in developing resources for congregational song at the denominational level, all while serving as a full-time church musician.

Benjamin Straley



Benjamin Straley, 29, is organist and associate director of music at Washington National Cathedral. He previously served as organ scholar at Trinity Church (Episcopal), New Haven, Connecticut, and as director of music for the Episcopal Church at Yale. After completing his undergraduate studies with Marilyn Keiser at Indiana University, he entered the Yale Institute of Sacred Music in 2008, where he studied with Martin Jean and Jeffrey Brillhart. In 2010, he became one of the few Americans in the history of the Haarlem Organ Festival invited to compete in its world-renowned contest in improvisation. He holds master's

degrees in music and divinity from Yale, as well as a certificate in Anglican studies from Berkeley Divinity School, and is now a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church.

Interesting fact: I really enjoy cooking, and am an avid chef and baker at home—in fact, the cathedral music staff have grown quite fond of my cranberry orange scones.

What I am most proud of achieving: I suppose I hope it is yet to come! But I will say that when the Cathedral Choristers have a particularly good Evensong, when perhaps the path there in rehearsals was a bit rocky (particularly for the younger boy choristers), then I am very proud. And any time I hear the fervor of hymn singing intensify in tandem with what I'm doing at the console, there is a deep sense of gratification.

Career aspirations and goals: I hope that I can contribute to the field of church music, and to the church in general, in some small but lasting way. When I think about what Gerre Hancock meant for church music in America, or what Erik Routley did for hymnody, I am awed by the legacy left to us, and yet am keenly aware that it is imperative that we carry on that work into the future.

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Andrew Szymanski



Andrew Szymanski, 26, a Chicago native with a bachelor's degree in culinary arts, works in organ restoration. His first project was the restoration of a Kimball organ he rescued from a condemned church building, which he installed in his home. He was an E. Power Biggs Fellow for the 2011 convention of the Organ Historical Society, which afforded him exposure to a number of historic instruments of various vintages and builders in the Washington, D.C., area.

Szymanski's interest in the historic organ has led to fruitful work throughout the Chicago area. He has rediscovered several long-silent Kimball organs (built in Chicago), and has dedicated much of his time bringing them back to life. Several of these projects have won the praise of metropolitan architectural groups.

As a co-founder of City Organ Works, LLC (website: CityOrganWorks.com), he has been a leader in projects of ongoing restoration of some of the region's notable organs, including the four-manual Wiener Bros. organ at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in Techny, Illinois, featured at the 2012 OHS Convention, and a 1924 Skinner Organ Company four-manual instrument at United Church of Hyde Park. Szymanski's second organ purchase, a Kimball tubular-pneumatic player organ, will be brought to the Chicago region this spring, likely a one-of-a-kind extant instrument.

Interesting fact: For my twentieth birthday, I purchased my first pipe organ, a historic 1938 W. W. Kimball of six ranks. For my twenty-first birthday, I bought my first 1928 Ford Model A.

Proudest achievement: Being able to travel, repair, and restore so many historic organs that were previously unplayable. Giving derelict organs a new life is something that not many people are willing to put the effort into, yet I find to be incredibly rewarding.

Aspirations and goals: To continue to make my mark in the organ world and inspire other young people to pursue their passion as their career.

Nicholas Wallace



photo credit: Seth Doyle

Nicholas Wallace, 28, holds a bachelor's degree in classical guitar performance graduating magna cum laude from the University of Southern Maine School of Music. He is currently an organ student of Harold Stover. While in college, he worked with C. B. Fisk, Inc., in Gloucester, Massachusetts, both in the shop and on the road for the installation of their Opus 130 in Costa Mesa, California.

After graduating from college, Wallace joined his father's pipe organ building and restoration company, David E. Wallace & Co., LLC, full time. He assumed more responsibilities during the restoration and installation of the three-manual 1854 E. & G. G. Hook organ at the Church of Our Lady and St. Rochus in Boom, Belgium. He completed the major work on the three-manual 1893 Hook & Hastings organ for the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Nicholas Wallace's work also includes the construction of new mechanical-action pipe organs for St. Paul's Anglican Parish in Brockton, Massachusetts, and for Holy Innocents Episcopal Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He recently designed and built a traditional-style portable organ that was first displayed at the 2014 AGO convention in Boston. Wallace is a member of the American Institute of Organbuilders and the International Society of Organbuilders.

Interesting fact: I enjoy camping, backpacking, and fly fishing in some of the more remote areas of Maine and around the world. I recently had the pleasure of traveling to Australia to go hiking and backpacking in some of the national parks in Tasmania while visiting some friends.

Proudest achievement: My favorite achievement is the restoration and installation of the 1854 E. & G. G. Hook organ in Boom, Belgium. It was a very thorough and historically sensitive restoration that, even despite the extreme distance of the relocation, went very well. The organ now serves as a shining example of 19th-century American organbuilding in Europe.

Career aspirations and goals: I plan to continue to build and restore tracker organs to the best of my ability with a focus on historically informed techniques. In my experience with older organs, I have noticed that they were most often built with a great deal of care and with excellent materials. This enduring quality of the finest old organs is one of the aspects that I hope to emulate. By studying the techniques used in older organs, I hope to provide versatile new instruments and thoughtfully restored vintage instruments, as well.

Halden Toy

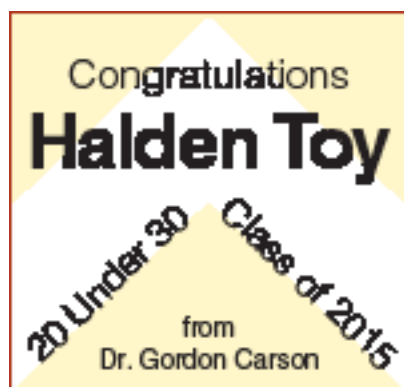


Halden Toy, 21, organist and harpsichordist, has been playing the organ since age 10. He has studied with Norma Aamodt-Nelson and Douglas Cleveland. In 2009 he took first place at the American Guild of Organists Region VIII competition, and was featured in 2010 as a "Rising Star" at the American Guild of Organists National Convention in Washington, D.C. In 2014 he was awarded the Nona C. Hunter music scholarship. Currently studying organ performance at BYU-Idaho with Daniel Kerr, Toy performs frequently as an accompanist on both organ and harpsichord. Recently, he was one of eight finalists in the Fifth International Organ Competition Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, which took place at St. Bavo, Haarlem, and in the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam. Halden Toy currently serves as organist of First Presbyterian Church in Idaho Falls. His website is haldentoy.com.

Interesting fact: I serve as a moderator for an online forum specializing in small Isuzu diesels and enjoy working on them in my spare time.

Proudest achievement: Making it to the final round of the Sweelinck competition this last fall.

Aspirations and goals: I hope to become a leading expert in the performance of Dieterich Buxtehude's music: to record the complete keyboard, choral, and chamber works utilizing authentic performance practices in all aspects from the style of playing to using period instruments including the use of the main organ in the church with the orchestra and choir. I plan to get a master's degree in historic performance and a doctorate in organ performance.



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