

The Class of 2021: 20 leaders under the age of 30

By THE DIAPASON staff

THE DIAPASON's fifth "20 Under 30" selections came from a large field of nominations. The nominees were evaluated based on 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 to organists but reflect the breadth of our editorial scope, which includes the organ, harpsichord and clavichord, carillon, church music, and organ and harpsichord building. Here we present the winners' backgrounds and accomplishments, and then have them tell us something interesting about themselves and their achievements, goals, and aspirations.

Nominations will again open for 20 Under 30 in December 2022 for our Class of 2023. Please carefully consider those you may know that deserve this honor and begin to take notes for your nomination. We can only honor those who are nominated.

The Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America (APOBA) is graciously providing a one-year subscription to our 20 Under 30 Class of 2021.

20 UNDER 30

Amos Burch



Amos Burch was born in central Illinois, homeschooled, and from a young age studied piano. Throughout high school, he spent summers in his grandfather's workshop, learning woodworking from him, an excellent furniture maker. Around this same time Amos developed a love for concert music, especially Bach's keyboard works and cantatas. In 2010, he attended a recital at the Indiana Landmarks Center, Indianapolis, featuring a historic Sanborn organ, recently renewed by Goulding & Wood. At age 16, it did not cross his mind that he would join that same company nearly a decade later.

In 2013 he moved to Phoenix and studied guitar building and repair at the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery. After graduating, Amos moved back to Indianapolis and worked as a guitar repair specialist and also built instruments in his free time. Later moving on to a job as a custom cabinetmaker, he worked first in Cincinnati and finally at Kline Cabinetmakers in Greenfield, Indiana. After a few years there, he rediscovered Goulding & Wood and applied for a job immediately. He was hired in 2019, and his career search was complete. A love of the keyboard and woodworking finally married, as he became a pipe organ builder. He is continually motivated to push his skills and expand his knowledge of both woodworking and pipe organs by the experienced crew at Goulding & Wood.

An interesting fact: Besides music and woodworking, my greatest interest is art, particularly Japanese and American tattoo art. I enjoy collecting paintings and prints from artists across the world, and my apartment looks a bit like a museum because of it.

Proudest achievement: My proudest accomplishment to date is being a member of the Goulding & Wood team, and more specifically, having a part in building and installing our Opus 52 organ for Saint John's Cathedral in Knoxville Tennessee. I had to continually remind myself that it was reality and not a dream to be working on such a beautiful instrument.

Career aspirations and goals: It is my goal to continue to absorb as much knowledge and experience as possible in the organ shop. Woodworking is my passion, and I can't think of a more than incredible application of the craft than to be a pipe organ builder.

Daniel Chang



Daniel Chang is a Doctor of Musical Arts degree candidate at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York, in the studio of David Higgs. He began his music studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Preparatory Department where he studied composition with Michael Kaulkin and piano with June Choi Oh. He continued his education at the San Francisco Conservatory for a Bachelor of Musical Arts degree in composition, studying composition with David Conte and piano with Alla Gladysheva. Daniel served as organ scholar at Saint Dominic's Catholic Church in San Francisco under Simon Berry. At Eastman, where he has earned his Master of Music degree, Daniel was awarded the

Gerald Barnes Prize in 2017 and the Cochran Prize in 2020 for excellence in organ performance. Daniel was awarded third prize in the 2018 National Young Artists' Competition in Organ Performance (NYACOP), sponsored by the American Guild of Organists, and was a semi-finalist in the 2020 NYACOP. Daniel is director of music at Saint John's Episcopal Church in Canandaigua, New York.

An interesting fact: As a teenager I had to learn the *Ballade in G Minor* by Chopin by ear because my reading skills were so bad.

Proudest achievement: I am proudest of being the first person in my family to pursue a doctorate.

Career aspirations and goals: Career-wise I would like to teach, play for the church, compose, and perform. A personal goal of mine is to reach a point in my career where I can teach students that cannot afford lessons for free.

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2021 20 Under 30 Winners

DANIEL CHANG (MM '18)
JAMES KEALEY (MM '20)
JENNIFER SHIN (MM '20)

EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Daniel Colaner

A sixteen-year-old native of Akron, Ohio, **Daniel Colaner** captured international media attention at the age of twelve with his same-day performances on piano at Carnegie Hall and on organ at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. Since then, his talents have been showcased on ABC *World News Tonight*, *Good Morning America*, *The Harry (Connick Jr.) Show*, and the BBC *World Service Newsday*. As a recipient of the Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award, Daniel was featured on the NPR radio show *From the Top* (Show #377), performing "Jupiter" from Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. He is a 2021 National YoungArts Winner in organ/classical music and was the first prize and audience prize winner in the Sursa American Organ Competition (high school division) in 2019.



photo credit: Carol Malick

Earlier this year, Daniel premiered *Variations on Doxology*, a new work for organ and orchestra, with the American Pops Orchestra. His performance will be featured in *One Voice: The Songs We Share*, which will air nationally on PBS. Daniel studies organ with David Higgs of the Eastman School of Music and piano with Sean Schulze at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he is a scholarship student in the pre-college program and an avid chamber musician. He currently serves as organ scholar at Cleveland's Trinity Episcopal Cathedral under Todd Wilson.

An interesting fact: First exposed to music as cognitive therapy after being diagnosed with stage IV cancer as an infant.

Proudest achievement: Promoting the organ and the study of classical music on television and radio, in addition to helping to raise thousands of dollars for music education and music therapy for a variety of non-profit organizations.

Career aspirations and goals: A versatile career as a solo and collaborative musician who engages and enlightens audiences of all ages.

Website: www.danielcolaner.com.

Michael Delfin

Praised for "beautiful performances of great warmth" (*Classical Voice of North Carolina*), **Michael Delfin** is a versatile performer of historical keyboard instruments and the modern piano. Michael is the recipient of the 2018 Historical Keyboard Society of North America Bechtel/Clinkscale Scholarship and 2017 Catacousic Consort Early Music Grant. He has performed for the Historical Keyboard Society of North America and the Central California Baroque Festival and has given lectures on historical performance topics for Early Music America, HKSNA, and the Case Western Reserve University Music Department. He is artistic director of Seven Hills Baroque in Cincinnati and has taught figured bass and improvisation at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Michael has attended the American Bach Soloists Academy and the University of Michigan Early Keyboard Institute and performed in masterclasses for Richard Egarr, Joseph Gascho, Corey Jamason, Edward Parmentier, and Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra.



Michael is now pursuing doctoral studies in both piano and harpsichord at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He previously studied piano at CCM, San Francisco Conservatory, and Peabody Conservatory, as well as history at Johns Hopkins University. His mentors include Awadagin Pratt, Yoshikazu Nagai, Boris Slutsky, Michael Unger, and Carol Oaks.

An interesting fact: I enjoy cooking the Latin American food of my family's heritage.

Proudest achievement: My wife's hand.

Career aspirations and goals: I look forward to blending historical and modern performance as a solo and collaborative performer, Baroque ensemble director, and college educator.

Website: www.michaeldelfin.com.

Samuel Gaskin

Samuel Gaskin completed graduate studies in organ performance from the University of North Texas (Master of Music, 2018) with Dr. Jesse Eschbach. Samuel has studied with notable organist-improvisers such as Thierry Escaich, Baptiste-Florian Marle-Ouvrard, Franz Danksagmüller, and Thomas Ospital. As a performer, he is interested in music of all kinds, playing jazz piano in ensembles throughout his graduate school studies and harpsichord with the San Antonio Symphony under the baton of Jeannette Sorell (Apollo's Fire). He is also active as



a collaborative pianist with both instrumentalists and vocalists. In 2013, Samuel was a finalist in the Mikael Tariverdiev International Organ Competition held in Kaliningrad, Russia, and in 2016 he won first prize in the University of Michigan International Organ Improvisation Competition. Samuel began composition studies with William James Ross, S. Andrew Lloyd, and finally Ethan Wickman. Transcribing served as an important purpose to furthering his interest in composition, first focused on improvised works for organ, then on jazz improvisations, including tracks from the album *Equilibrium* by Ben Monder (guitar) and Kristjan Randalu (piano), for future publication by the Terentyev Music Publishing Company. He is interested in exploring the sometimes-contradictory relationship between improvisation and composition.

An interesting fact: I once delivered pizza to Tony Parker (the former point guard for the NBA's San Antonio Spurs).

Proudest achievement: Carving my own niche as a musician. Leaving behind formal organ studies during my undergraduate studies led me to have a greater appreciation of the instrument. It also allowed me to experience playing in non-classical genres on the keyboard and gain appreciation for musical skills like the nuances of groove, arranging parts, and learning by ear. Later, this also led me to have a better appreciation of the nuances of legato and rubato within a musical phrase at the organ.

Career aspirations and goals: I would like to continue to develop as a collaborative musician. There is a lot of fascinating music out there, and some of the best involves playing with other musicians. Learning how to communicate and relate to other musicians is something I find personally satisfying, and besides, I think instrumental/timbral variety within a program generally resonates with listeners. I would also like to continue incorporating new music and improvisation into programs.

Instagram: [samuelgskn391](https://www.instagram.com/samuelgskn391).

Nominations for the 20 Under 30 Class of 2023 will open on December 1, 2022.

Look for details at www.thediapason.com.

**20
UNDER 30**

Read about the Class of 2021 and all previous winners at

<https://www.thediapason.com/content/about-20-under-30>

Congratulations, Daniel, and all best wishes for the future! Todd, Nicole and your many fans at Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland.

Congratulations to the 20 Under 30 Class of 2021

Joyce Johnson
Robinson

Heartfelt Congratulations to the **20 Under 30 Class of 2021**

We wish you much continued success.

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Josiah Hamill

Josiah Hamill is an organist, violinist, pianist, and church musician who is reputed for bringing passion, musicality, and virtuosity to every performance. Among other recent awards and recognitions, he won first place and the audience prize at the 2019 Sursa American Organ Competition. He was named one of twelve finalists in the 2020 Musikfest Internationale Orgelwoche Nürnberg, the final round of which was unfortunately canceled due to Covid-19. Additionally, he was runner-up in the American Guild of Organists Regional Competition for Young Organists and a finalist in the Poister Scholarship Competition in Organ Playing.

He is a rising third-year Doctor of Music degree student in organ performance at Indiana University, studying with Christopher Young. As the recipient of the prestigious Robert Baker Award, Josiah received his Master of Music degree from Yale School of Music, as well as the Certificate in Church Music Studies from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, under the tutelage of Martin Jean. He received his Bachelor of Music degree with dual concentrations in organ and violin, graduating *summa cum laude* with distinctions from Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver, where he studied organ under Joseph Galema. He was Lamont's Presser Scholar and is a lifelong member of Pi Kappa Lambda.

An interesting fact: In addition to my organ career, I also have an extensive string and symphonic background, which significantly influences my approach to the magnificence of the organ and its repertoire. One of my favorite engagements was performing the entire Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto* with the Arapahoe Philharmonic Orchestra, and I have been privileged to meet and work with such illustrious musicians as Yo-Yo Ma, Midori Goto, Vadim Gluzman, and Glenn Dicterow, among others.

Proudest achievement: While every music performance and achievement has a special place in my heart, I would have to say that my proudest achievement is the Students' Choice for Best Colloquium Presentation, which is awarded annually by the student body of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music via ballots. This was bestowed upon

fellow student Laura Worden and me for our colloquium presentation, "Religious and Musical Culture in the Manzanar Incarceration Camps." This highlighted the impact of music and religion on the Japanese American incarceration experience at Manzanar Relocation Center during World War II. My grandfather, Bruce Kaji, was an American citizen incarcerated in Manzanar before becoming a war hero, peacemaker, and community leader while living an exemplary life. He is my hero, and this presentation and academic award seemed to be a perfect posthumous homage to him and his legacy.

Career aspirations and goals: My biggest aspiration is to have a successful and active career as a concert organist, hopefully under management. Especially given the dearth of live performances due to the pandemic, I have continued to discover that my true passion is in performance. I aspire to create memorable performances for audiences of all walks of life, whether as a solo performer, collaborative musician, or church musician. It is my hope that the temporary lull in live concerts will only strengthen audience interest and participation as life continues to return to normalcy.

Website: www.josiahhamill.com.



photo credit: Daniel Swanson

Thomas Heidenreich

Thomas Heidenreich is a third-year Doctor of Musical Arts degree student at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music studying with Dr. Michael Unger. He was organist for the world-premiere recording of Swedish composer Frederik Sixten's *St. John Passion*, which will be released in 2022 by Ablaze Records. A Cincinnati native, Thomas began his musical studies at age five taking piano lessons at the CCM Preparatory Department.

From 2017–2018 he was the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM) Gerre Hancock Organ Fellow at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, South Carolina. He performed at the 2019 AAM national conference in Boston. Previously, he studied with Alan Morrison at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, completing his Master of Music (2017) and Bachelor of Music (2016) degrees in organ performance. At Westminster, he was the 2016 winner of the Joan Lippincott Competition for Excellence in Organ Performance and a two-time Andrew J. Rider Scholar, an award recognizing the top students academically in each class. In Princeton, he served as organ scholar at Trinity Episcopal Church and, for three years, as co-director of music for The Episcopal Church at Princeton.

An interesting fact: I have played the organ in services at both Westminster Abbey and Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. Also, when in tenth grade after only having studied the organ for a few years, I played the 2000 Gerald Woehl "Bach" organ at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig.

Proudest achievement: I am very proud of the role I played in developing the musical quality of, and depth of community

in, the Lux Choir, which sings at the Episcopal Church at Princeton. Through a combination of supportive clergy, dedicated musicians, and God's help, the choir is a great asset in worship and a strong personal blessing to all those involved and has continued to flourish in recent years.

Career aspirations and goals: I hope to pursue a career of service to the church through my work as an organist, accompanist, and choir director. I am particularly passionate about working with and/or developing an intergenerational music program that provides opportunities for children through adults to participate in choral singing at the highest levels. I know the power of the organ and its ability to move people to worship, and I want to share this with people in any church to which I am called to serve.



photo credit: Lifetouch photography.

Congratulations

THOMAS HEIDENREICH
20 UNDER 30 CLASS OF 2021



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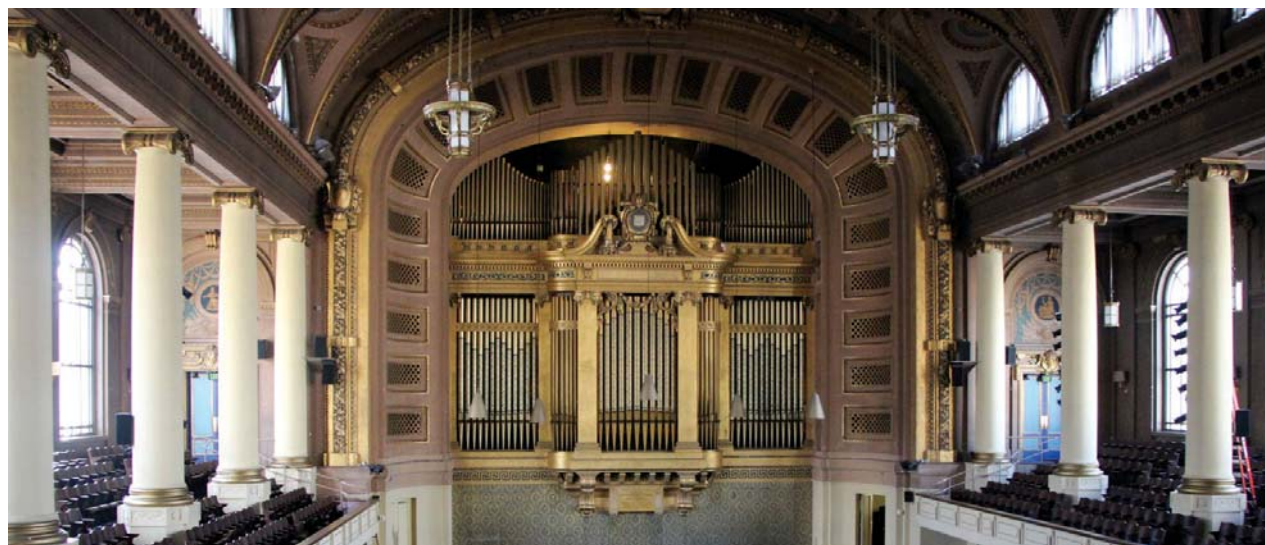
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TO ALL THE 20 UNDER 30 CLASS
OF 2021 WINNERS!

DAVIS FOLKERTS, RETIRED

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Stephen Price, D.Mus.
Assistant Teaching Professor (Organ),
Ball State University
20 under 30 Class of 2015



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THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ITS 2018 GRADUATE

Josiah Hamill

Named to Diapason's "20 under 30" class of 2021
Congratulations to Josiah and to all the Diapason's honorees

Alex Johnson



The campus tour guide didn't even know the name of the instrument. All he said was that students could learn to play the bells. **Alex Johnson** was hooked immediately. He registered for the class his first year, fell in love, and registered every semester thereafter. This was at the University of Rochester, where Alex not only played heaps of carillon music, but also majored in physics, completed research in linguistics, learned to play gamelan and mbira, and also how to swing dance. With the world's most prestigious competition in his sights, Alex then studied at Bok Tower Gardens as a Carillon Fellow. That contest, held every five years in Mechelen, Belgium, is the International Queen Fabiola Carillon Competition: in 2019, Alex won. He then spent a year studying at the Royal Carillon School "Jef Denyn" in the same city

on a fellowship from the Belgian American Educational Foundation. In his travels, Alex has performed dozens of carillon recitals across the United States, Canada, and Europe. Alex is currently exploring yet another career option by substitute teaching kids of all ages, from kindergarten to calculus.

Interesting fact: Alex serves on the Franco Composition Committee of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America.

Proudest accomplishment: Alex's proudest accomplishment is winning the Queen Fabiola Competition, in which he not only won first prize overall, but also first prize for improvisation and the prize for best performance of a contemporary Belgian work.

Career aspirations and goals: Alex is considering graduate studies in music composition, carillon positions, and returning to the content of his bachelor's career to teach high school math or physics.

James Kealey

James Kealey is associate director of music/organist at Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York. There, James oversees and coordinates children's music ministries, assists in the running of youth music, and accompanies the Chancel Choir as well as sharing service playing duties with Peter DuBois, director of music/organist. James will begin a part-time Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Eastman School of Music in the fall of 2021.

A recent graduate of the Eastman School of Music, James obtained the Master of Music degree from the studio of Professor David Higgs. While a student, James was also music minister at Church of the Ascension, where he oversaw the senior choir and began both a youth choir and a yearly arts festival. A native Brit, James has held positions at Chester, Blackburn, Wells, and Sheffield cathedrals before moving stateside.

James has performed most recently at Westminster Abbey, England; Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York City; and Hereford Cathedral. Future recitals include Cathedral of Saint Philip, Atlanta, Georgia; Church of the Covenant, Cleveland, Ohio; and the Organ Historical Society NYACOP Competition. He is the current sub-dean for the Rochester AGO Chapter and works with several committees within the Organ Historical Society.

An interesting fact: I would like to gain my private pilot license in the coming years, although the winters in Rochester may make that a little more tricky!

Proudest achievement: I am proudest of achieving a place to study at Eastman School of Music, which has given me many opportunities and much guidance to fulfill my desire to work as a musician in the United States.

Career aspirations and goals: I hope to have a multifaceted career. Alongside my passion for church music ministry and choral music, I hope to work as a recitalist and educator in the future.



photo credit: Gerry Szymanski

Noah Klein



photo credit: Ryan Boyle

Noah Klein is finishing his fourth year at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, Bloomington, pursuing an organ performance degree under Dr. Janette Fishell. While at school, he is the musical intern for Tabernacle Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. Back home in Northfield, Minnesota, Noah plays for local churches in the area as well as for organ recital series throughout southern Minnesota. He was the winner of the Great Lakes Regional RYCO at the 2019 regional American Guild of Organists convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Noah also had the opportunity during the summer of 2019 to play at Trinity Church Wall Street in New York City as part of their "First Friday" series,

which features undergraduate and graduate organ students from leading music conservatories across the United States and Canada. This fall he will begin his Master of Music degree at the Yale School of Music/Institute of Sacred Music.

An interesting fact: During my year abroad in South Korea after high school, I gave an impromptu organ recital in a coffee shop on a bamboo pipe organ.

Proudest achievement: The achievement I'm most proud of is winning the Great Lakes Regional RYCO because it was one of the first big competitions I've won, and it proved to me that all my hard work and dedication has paid off as well as encouraging me to pursue more competitions.

Career aspirations and goals: I hope to continue performing recitals and sharing my passion for the organ and its music both in the United States and abroad. Also, I hope to continue working with sacred music as an organist and music director.

Zoe (Kai Wai) Lei



photo credit: Eni Bogdani

An emerging Hong Kong organist, **Zoe Lei** is an advocate for new organ music and frequently plays twentieth- and twenty-first-century repertoires. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in sacred music (organ) at the University of Michigan, where she studies the organ with James Kibbie, carillon with Tiffany Ng, and harpsichord and continuo with Joseph Gascho. Prior to that, she attained her master's and bachelor's degrees in music at the University of Toronto and Hong Kong Baptist University, respectively, and has been awarded various scholarships in Michigan, Canada, and Hong Kong.

Currently based in the United States, Zoe has performed as a recitalist in various venues and concert series in Hong Kong, Toronto, and Michigan. She has also collaborated with the Baroque Ensemble at the University of Michigan, the Contemporary Ensemble at the University of Toronto, and the Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute Orchestra. She is looking forward to working with Aero Quartet and IZR Organ Trio, the latter of which was set up by Zoe along with her friends Ryan Chan and Ivan Leung. This summer, the IZR Organ Trio will give recitals in Hong Kong. In addition to organ performances, Zoe now gives carillon recitals every other Thursday at the Burton Memorial Tower in Ann Arbor.

An interesting fact: When I am not practicing the organ, carillon, or harpsichord, I enjoy hanging out with friends, traveling, and doing calligraphy.

Proudest achievement: I gave my organ debut in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre's Concert Hall in 2017, which has one of the largest pipe organs in Asia. After that, I received an interview invitation from Radio Television in Hong Kong. I always feel humbled and honored by this fantastic opportunity that was provided by my organ teacher, Miss Kin Yu Wong.

Career aspirations and goals: I will work harder in the coming years, and I am passionate about contributing more to the organ, carillon, and sacred music fields. I am currently preparing for different organ competitions, and organ and carillon recitals in the summer while doing a carillon arrangement of BWV 543i. My goal is to travel to different places to give organ and carillon concerts, especially more places in Asia, in order to promote these instruments to Asian audiences in a creative and culturally diverse way. I also hope to build a carillon in Hong Kong and introduce the carillon repertoire to Hongkongers.

Website: www.zoelei.com.

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and
The Choir of
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JJ Mitchell

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Jackson Merrill

Jackson Merrill is a graduate student of James Kibbie in organ performance at the University of Michigan. At Michigan, he was awarded the Marilyn Mason Scholarship, the Patricia Barret Ludlow Memorial Scholarship in Organ, and the Chris Schroeder Graduate Fellowship. Merrill presently works with Huw Lewis at Saint John's Church, Detroit. Merrill came to Michigan from Hartford, Connecticut, where he was organist and director of music ministries at Trinity Church. In addition to this work, he was the choral director of Trinity Academy in Hartford and sang in various choirs at Yale University. Merrill holds the Bachelor of Music degree from Jacksonville University where he was awarded such honors as the Harvey Scholl Prize in Piano and the Excellence in Performance Award. He was also the 2016 College of Fine Arts Student of the Year. While in northeast Florida, Merrill performed occasionally with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra.

An interesting fact: I am originally from northeast Florida. The city of Saint Augustine is in northeast Florida, and there are wonderful organs in historic churches there along with many important monuments. The first pipe organ I ever played was the incredible Casavant organ at the Cathedral-Basilica of Saint Augustine, built in

2003. Saint Augustine is the oldest continuously inhabited European-established settlement in the contiguous United States.

Proudest achievement: I am most proud of my work for three years with the outstanding young musicians of The Choir School of Hartford at Trinity Church, Hartford, Connecticut.

Career aspirations and goals: My goal is to use my time studying with James Kibbie to become a more comprehensive organist and performer. After graduate school, I hope to continue with my work in music ministry. I have developed a specialization for urban music ministry, and I particularly love working with young singers.

YouTube channel: youtube.com/channel/UCCC2-sMGEWCq65asbD8mZCw/ videos.



John J. Mitchell

John Joseph "JJ" Mitchell has a passion for organ and sacred music pedagogy. He is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance from the University of Houston (UH) on a graduate tuition fellowship. He is the organist of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas, serves as an organist of Saint Philip Presbyterian Church, also in Houston, and is a graduate teaching assistant in the music history department at UH. He holds degrees from Westminster Choir College and the University of Notre Dame; he also studied at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Toulouse, France. JJ has served as organist on the music staff of churches such as Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, Texas; Cathedral of Saint Thomas More, Arlington, Virginia; and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, South Bend, Indiana. He has performed in these churches as well as at Boston Symphony Hall, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, and various other venues in the United States, Canada, France, and England. He is the winner of the Nanovic Grant for European Study for Professional Development and was a finalist for the Frank Huntington Beebe

Grant. He has been featured on the *Sounds from the Spires* SiriusXM Radio program and has contributed to *Vox Humana* organ journal.

An interesting fact: I drive a manual transmission car as an enthusiast of Formula 1.

Proudest achievement: I have achieved some wonderful things in my life thus far, but overcoming performance anxiety and finding consistent calmness in my playing has been undoubtedly my best achievement.

Career goals and aspirations: My ideal career is to be a director of music at a cathedral where I will teach sacred music to the next generation. I also am considering work in academic positions as well.



Curtis Pavey

Curtis Pavey, originally from Highlands Ranch, Colorado, enjoys a diverse musical career as a harpsichordist, pianist, and educator. As a harpsichordist, he has performed in prestigious settings including the Oregon Bach Festival as a participant of the Berwick Academy. Peter Jacobi of the *Herald Times* praised Curtis as "an artist of considerable finish and even more promise" after his solo recital debut at the Bloomington Early Music Festival. His recent submission to the Jurow International Harpsichord Competition advanced him to the semifinals for the upcoming 2021 competition. Besides his performing activities, Curtis is passionate about pedagogy and has presented lectures on Baroque music and ornamentation at national conferences. In addition, he maintains a private music studio at Willis Music Kenwood in Cincinnati, Ohio. Currently completing doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati, Curtis studies harpsichord with Dr. Michael Unger and piano with Professor James Tocco while maintaining a graduate assistantship in the secondary piano department. Curtis graduated from the master's degree program at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music where majored in early music, harpsichord and piano performance. He worked

with Professors Elisabeth Wright, Edward Auer, and Evelyn Brancart.

An interesting fact: I enjoy cooking and baking when I am not practicing, teaching, or studying.

Proudest achievement: I am almost done with my doctorate—I will be proudest of achieving this once it is finally complete!

Career aspirations and goals: My dream career allows me to balance my passion for teaching and performing at both the harpsichord and the piano. I hope to attain a professorship where I can teach applied lessons and courses in harpsichord, performance practice, and piano. In the future, I would like to establish my own early music ensemble. Ultimately, I hope to make a difference in my community and beyond through my teaching and performing activities.

Website: www.curtispavey.com.



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Zoe (Kai Wai) Lei & Jackson Merrill

Department of Organ Faculty:
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James Kibbie, Chair, Organ
Darlene Kuperus, Organ & Sacred Music
Tiffany Ng, Carillon
Jeremy David Tarrant, Organ

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Solena Rizzato



photo credit: Hannah Tomlinson/HannahTstudios.com

A native of Chicago, Illinois, **Solena Rizzato** is a shop technician at the Red River Pipe Organ Company in Norman, Oklahoma, interim organist at Wesley United Methodist Church of Oklahoma City, and a non-degree-seeking graduate student at Oklahoma City University, where they study with Dr. Melissa Plamann. Prior to their studies at OCU, Solena graduated in May of 2020 from the University of Oklahoma where they earned dual Bachelor's degrees in organ performance and viola performance, as well as the organ technology emphasis and a history minor. In the summer of 2019, Solena pursued an internship with Messrs. Czelusniak et Dugal, Inc., of Northampton, Massachusetts, working on the restoration and maintenance of pipe organs in the New England area.

As an organist, Solena began their formal studies at the age of eighteen with Dr. Adam Pajan at the University of Oklahoma, having come to the instrument with over thirteen years of experience as a violist. Because of this, Solena enjoys transcribing orchestral works for the organ. Their recent transcriptions include movements of Dvorák's *8th Symphony*, Tchaikovsky's *6th Symphony*, Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* (1919), and Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. Solena's next move will take them out of Oklahoma, where they will begin pursuing their Master of Music degree in organ performance. Solena continues to remain active as a professional violist as well, and enjoys cooking, weightlifting, and long-distance running.

An interesting fact: Prior to my studies in music, I spent several years in the culinary industry, training to be a professional chef.

Proudest achievement: This year, I successfully went through the process of applying for Master of Music degree programs in organ performance. Due to my late start as a keyboardist, this felt like a far-away dream. I am definitely most proud to represent Oklahoma City and am so thankful to all of my friends and mentors that supported me through this process.

Career aspirations and goals: Beginning at the end of last year, I had the opportunity to serve in more of a leadership role at Red River Pipe Organ Co. This experience, combined with my own experience as an adult learner of a new instrument, confirmed that I definitely want to be in a teaching role in some capacity! If I can help even one person along in their own journey, I will have considered that the highest level of success possible.

Jennifer Shin



Jennifer Shin is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Eastman School of Music in the studio of David Higgs, after having completed her Master of Music degree at Eastman in 2020. She received her Bachelor of Music degree *magna cum laude* at the University of Michigan, where she studied with Kola Owolabi and James Kibbie. During her time in Michigan, she held the position of organ scholar at Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and participated in the University of Michigan's University Choir and Early Music Choir both as accompanist and singer.

Most recently, she was chosen as a semi-finalist in the 2020 National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance hosted by the American

Guild of Organists. Other competition awards include first place in the AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists for the Seattle chapter (2015) and the San Diego chapter (2013), second place in the Regional AGO/Quimby RCYO (Region IX) in 2013, and first place in the national Rodgers Organ Competition in 2012. In 2016, she was awarded an E. Power Biggs Fellowship to attend the Organ Historical Society convention in Philadelphia. She has participated in masterclasses and coachings with Alan Morrison, James David Christie, Diane Belcher, Ann Elise Smoot, Daniel Roth, and Vincent Dubois, among others.

An interesting fact: I enjoy cooking and making desserts.

Proudest achievement: Something I am proudest of achieving this past year is starting a small studio of private piano students! Hopefully this will grow and expand into organ students soon.

Career aspirations and goals: In addition to concertizing as a solo organist, I would like to continue making music in collaboration with other musicians such as accompanying a choir or playing with other instrumentalists/singers, whether it is in a liturgical or a concert setting. I also would like to continue expanding teaching experiences to include a wider level of students from beginners to collegiate level, while, of course, playing for and directing a church music program.

Augustine Kweku Sobeng



Augustine Sobeng is a native of Shama in the Western Region of Ghana and is currently a master's degree student in organ performance at Setnor School of Music, Syracuse University, studying with Annie Laver and Alexander Meszler. He studied medical laboratory technology as an undergraduate at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana. Influenced by family background and musical exposure, his expressive tendencies found outlet especially in organ and choral music. He served as a conductor of the school choir in Prempeh College and organist/choirmaster for the University Choir-KNUST.

Throughout and after his undergraduate study, he worked and trained with the Harmonious Chorale-Ghana, where he was a part of several large concerts every year for seven years, serving as principal organist. Although he did not receive any formal musical education, he put himself through music theory and practical exams with the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), earning a diploma certificate in the 2018 organ practical exam. That same year he was awarded the best keyboardist in Ghana, and the following year, received admission with a Visual and Performing Arts Fellow Scholarship to study for his Master of Music. He was a participant in the masterclass of Christa Rakich during the 2019 conference of the Organ Historical Society at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

An interesting fact: I have a twin brother who looks nothing like me.

Proudest achievement: Two of my proudest moments were when I won the VPA fellow scholarship for the masters' program at Syracuse University, and when I won the best keyboardist of Ghana award in 2018.

Career aspirations and goals: Aside from becoming an astute organist of international repute, it is my goal to help raise the standard of organ playing in Ghana. In line with my ambition to institutionalize a good standard of organ music and organ playing, I aspire to establish organ faculties in the music schools of some of the country's universities. The goal is to carve out a path toward professionalism for young organ enthusiasts in Ghana.

Facebook official page: Stine_Sobeng.

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Raphael Attila Vogl

German organist **Raphael Attila Vogl** has taken part in various competitions, winning second prize at the “Jugend musiziert,” and in 2015 was awarded the Promotion Prize 2014 as the youngest prize winner of the Kulturkreis Freyung-Grafenau. He has also received prizes in the International Mendelssohn Organ Competition in Switzerland, the International Tariverdiev Competition in Russia, and at the Boulder Bach Festival’s World Bach Competition. Raphael studied at the Hochschule für Katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik in Regensburg, Germany, including organ and church music with Stefan Baier and Markus Rupprecht. While studying at Hochschule, Raphael spent one year at the Franz-Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary, where he studied with Laszlo Fassang, and graduated from the Hochschule in 2018. Raphael made his debut at Alice Tully Hall when he performed the New York premiere of Sophia Gubaidulina’s *The Rider on the White Horse* at the Focus Festival at Lincoln Center in January 2020. Raphael Attila Vogl graduated from The Juilliard School of New York City in May 2020, where he studied for his master’s degree in organ performance with Paul Jacobs.

An interesting fact: I am half Hungarian and half German. I am proud to have access to both cultures, and I enjoy their differences such as in history, food, music, architecture, mentality, and traditions.

Proudest achievement: Playing recitals on the biggest cathedral organ in the world in Passau, Germany, with more than 1,300 people in the audience. That is an amazing feeling to bring joy and music into that magnificent Baroque space with that incredible and unique instrument.

Career aspirations and goals: My goal would be to become a successful concert organist performing my own transcriptions for the organ. Besides the wonderful existing literature for the organ, there are gorgeous pieces for orchestra or piano that can bring a symphonic organ much closer to the audience by a spectacular and exciting performance. I am also interested in teaching students and sharing my knowledge about the organ.

Website: raphael-vogl.de.



photo credit: Christian Haasz

Destin Wernicke



Destin Wernicke grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he started playing piano and drums at an early age. He continued studying both instruments through high school and then decided to pursue music at the University of North Texas. During his jazz percussion bachelor’s degree, Destin was the drummer for the Grammy-nominated One O’Clock Lab Band and had the opportunity to work with accomplished artists such as Maria Schneider, Gary Smulyan, and Regina Carter. He also played with One O’Clock at the 2020 Jack Rudin Jazz Championship and recorded the recently released

album *Lab 2020*. Destin is now continuing his studies at UNT by working on a graduate Artist Certificate in organ performance, studying with Dr. Jesse Eschbach.

Destin has served as the organist for Saint Barnabas Episcopal Church in Denton for the past two years, leading congregational singing along with a small but dedicated choir. In March 2020, he won first prize in the undergraduate division of the William C. Hall Pipe Organ Competition in San Antonio, earning a cash prize and the opportunity to play a recital at Saint Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church.

An interesting fact: I am also a photographer! In 2016, the Natural History Museum in London displayed a photo I took of a Galapagos sea lion in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year gallery, and I earned an honorable mention in the competition.

Proudest achievement: My proudest achievement so far is playing my first organ recital at UNT while an undergraduate jazz percussion major. I played a varied program of works by Clérambault, Bach, and Jean Guillou.

Career aspirations and goals: Over the past year, I have been preparing a program including Jeanne Demessieux’s *Six Etudes*, which I will perform at the Marcel Dupré conference held in North Texas this October. Following the conference, I plan to take this program to audiences across the country, playing concerts in Texas, the Midwest, and New York. Long-term, I am hoping to continue working as a church organist and keep learning challenging, seldom-played repertoire that I can perform and compete with at a high level.

Collin Whitfield



Hailed by Mason Bates as “a fine citizen musician,” **Collin Whitfield** is an award-winning composer, pianist, and organist based in Michigan. He has been the recipient of the James Highsmith Award for new orchestral music, first prize in the American Choral Directors Association Choral Composition Competition through Central Michigan University, and first prize in the Biennial Art Song Composition Competition at the San Francisco Conservatory. His music has been praised by librettist Nicholas Giardini as “beautiful, rapturous, and unabashedly romantic, without any of the failings that so often accompany these qualities.”

Collin Whitfield is an active recitalist and frequently collaborates with his wife, soprano Erin Whitfield. He was awarded the 2017–2018 Tacoma American Guild of Organists Scholarship and the 2020 Kent S. Dennis Memorial Scholarship. Since 2018, Collin has served as director of music ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Saginaw, Michigan, where he directs the chancel choir, guides the concert series, and accompanies the congregation on their

70-rank Casavant Frères, Limitée, Opus 3660 organ. Collin Whitfield holds a Master of Music degree in organ performance from Central Michigan University and a Bachelor of Music degree in composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. His primary teachers have included Mason Bates, David Conte, Steven Egler, and Paul Tegels.

An interesting fact: I like to go on long hikes and long drives, especially exploring beautiful sites in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Proudest achievement: Winning the James Highsmith Competition at San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the unique opportunity to hear an orchestra perform my music.

Career aspirations and goals: I plan to pursue a doctorate in music and hope to teach collegiately in the future. I also want to continue my church music work, remain active as a recitalist, and expand my presence as a composer.

Website: collinwhitfield.com.

**Congratulations,
Collin!**

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*You are a bright light
in the future of our profession,
And I’m very proud of you.*

Dr. Steven Egler
Professor of Music (Ret.)
Central Michigan University

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