

The American Guild of Organists (AGO)

CORPORATE BACKGROUNDER

Founded in 1896, the American Guild of Organists (AGO) is the national professional association serving the organ and choral music fields. The Guild serves approximately 20,000 members in 330 chapters throughout the United States, Europe, Asia (Singapore and Korea), Bermuda and Australia.

The AGO was formed as both an educational and service organization to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members. Its members seek to set and maintain high musical standards and to promote an understanding and appreciation of all aspects of organ and choral music.

Under the leadership of the National Council, a network consisting of volunteer committees and officials at the regional, district and local levels directs the activities of the Guild. Headquartered in New York City, the AGO maintains a full-time staff that supports and coordinates publication, administration, and development activities of the organization. For purposes of administration and representation, the Guild is divided into nine geographical regions, with each chapter assigned to one of them.

The goals of the American Guild of Organists are:

- To advance the cause of organ and choral music, to increase their contributions to aesthetic and religious experiences, and to promote their understanding, appreciation and enjoyment.
- To improve the proficiency of organists and choral conductors.
- To evaluate, by examination, attainments in organ playing, choral techniques, conducting, and the theory and general knowledge of music, and to grant certificates to those who pass such examinations at specified levels of attainment.
- To provide members with opportunities to meet for discussion of professional topics, and to pursue other activities contributing to the fulfillment of the purposes of the Guild.

The AGO holds both national and regional conventions. The National Convention is held biennially in even-numbered years and reflects the diverse aspects of the Guild and its official work across the country. Held as a function of the national organization in partnership with a selected chapter, it represents a coalition between the national leadership and the host chapter's leadership. This joint venture combines the talents and creative strengths of each, and represents the larger vision of the whole membership and

its needs. The 2008 National Convention will take place from June 22-26 in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

The AGO Regional Conventions are held during the summer of odd-numbered years. For more information on regional dates and locations, please visit <http://www.agohq.org/organize/index.html>.

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