



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

CHAPTERS IN EVERY STATE

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260
New York, NY 10115

2024 National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance

Official Rules

The National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance (NYACOP) is the premier performance competition of the American Guild of Organists. Winners spanning several decades have gone on to establish prominent careers, with many first-prize winners remaining on artist management rosters long after a term as a NYACOP winner has concluded. This in itself is testament to the competition's historic strength for identifying successful performance artists.

NYACOP seeks to cultivate and support young artists in organ performance. By encouraging effective musical communication and refinement of technical skill, the competition aims to identify those performers best prepared to engage and inspire audiences in years ahead.

The AGO's NYACOP Committee administers the application process and supervises the progress of the competition in accordance with these official rules. The committee may establish other procedures and take other actions as deemed appropriate to ensure that the competition proceeds in an efficient and professional manner consistent with these rules and the competition mission. The NYACOP Committee has the sole authority to interpret and enforce the rules and procedures of the competition. Any supplemental rules, clarifications, or corrections issued in any form by the NYACOP Committee are to be considered an official part of these rules.

COMPETITION SUMMARY

The competition takes place in three stages:

1. The initial application round requires a completed application form, as specified in these rules, and a recording of the three works listed below.
2. The semifinal round will include up to nine competitors, each performing a 25-minute program of specified pieces. This round will be held on Thursday, June 27, 2024, on the Balcom & Vaughan organ, Opus 866, at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, Sunnyvale, Calif.
3. The final round will include up to five competitors, each performing a 40-minute program. This round will be held on Sunday, June 30, 2024, at Lakeside Presbyterian Church, San Francisco.

I. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. Eligibility

The competition is open to organists who were born between July 1, 1991, and June 30, 2001. Previous NYACOP first-prize winners are ineligible. All competitors must be members of the American Guild of Organists or must join at the time of their initial application. Organists are ineligible if they are under exclusive contract with a management or recording agency at any time during the competition period. Competitors who do not follow all of the rules and procedures of the competition are subject to disqualification by the NYACOP Committee. Competitors who engage in conduct that is contrary to the professional spirit of the competition are also subject to disqualification.

2. Application

A complete application will consist of all of the following:

1. A completed online application form, available at agohq.org/performance-competitions/nyacop.
2. A \$75 application fee, payable online.
3. Proof of age. A scan of the applicant's legal birth certificate, or equivalent government-issued documentation (driver's license, passport), is acceptable.
4. A 100-word biography, without reviews of recitals, and a high-resolution color headshot photograph, for purposes of publication should the applicant advance in the competition. This bio and photo will not be released to the judges, in order to preserve the anonymity of each candidate.
5. Unedited audio files of the applicant's performance of the three works below:
 - Johann Sebastian Bach: "Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter," BWV 650
 - Florence Price: Suite No. 1 for Organ, mvmt. I: Fantasy
 - Vincent Persichetti: Sonata for Organ, Op. 86, mvmt. III: Vivace

The application form contains additional instructions. The application must be submitted online no later than Oct. 17, 2023. Receipt of application will be acknowledged by AGO Headquarters. Applicants will be notified of their status on or before Dec. 15, 2023.

II. RECORDED APPLICATION ROUND

1. The applicants' recordings will be rated by three independent judges in strict anonymity. Each judge will document his/her evaluation of the application recording and provide written comments that will be sent to competitors by Dec. 31, 2023. Up to nine competitors will be chosen for the semifinal round.
2. Works may be recorded on different organs suitable for the individual pieces, but no editing is permitted within a movement.
3. Judges' identities will be revealed at the conclusion of the round. Judges' comments may not be quoted in future press materials.

III. LIVE PERFORMANCE ROUNDS

1. The semifinal round will be held on Thursday, June 27, 2024, on the Balcom & Vaughan organ, Opus 866 (1986), at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, Sunnyvale, Calif. The specification of this organ may be found online at pipeorgandatabase.org/organ/37822.
2. The final round will be held the afternoon of Sunday, June 30, 2024, on the Robert Pearson organ, Opus 1 (2003), at Lakeside Presbyterian Church, San Francisco. The specification of this organ may be found online at tinyurl.com/pearsonopus1. The final round will take place in conjunction with the 2024 National Convention of the American Guild of Organists in San Francisco. Should the convention be canceled for any reason, the NYACOP Committee will seek to complete the live rounds in accordance with the spirit of the competition but will have the authority to change dates or locations.

3. Each semifinalist and finalist will receive a minimum of three hours' practice time on the competition instruments. Additional practice time at other venues may be available. No one other than the competitor, members of the NYACOP Committee, and designated on-site monitors or page-turners may be present during official practice times.
4. The NYACOP Committee will appoint a page-turner for the live performance rounds. This person will be available on the last day of practice. During practice sessions, page-turners are permitted to play any desired passage for competitors to listen for balance and registration adjustments. Page-turners may not offer coaching or advice on registration and are not allowed to operate stops or pistons during the performance. Competitors may record their practice sessions.
5. For the purpose of eliminating page-turns, competitors may perform from photocopies, provided they also bring their original scores for works under copyright and submit them for examination by the NYACOP Committee.
6. Each competitor will choose the order in which his/her pieces are performed during the live performance rounds.
7. Each semifinalist will provide the NYACOP Committee with his/her semifinal and final round programs by June 1, 2024.
8. The order in which the competitors perform will be chosen by lot prior to the first practice session of each live performance round.
9. In both the semifinal and final rounds, applause is permitted only at the conclusion of each competitor's complete performance.

IV. REPERTOIRE FOR THE SEMIFINAL ROUND

The nine semifinalists will present a program consisting of the following selections, played in any order:

- Sharon J. Willis: *Exodus Suite* (complete)
- Nicolas de Grigny: *Récit de Tierce en Taille* from *Livre d'orgue*
- Marcel Dupré: *Symphonie Passion*, Op. 23, mvmt. I: "Le Monde dans l'attente du Sauveur"

V. REPERTOIRE FOR THE FINAL ROUND

The five finalists will present a balanced public recital not to exceed 40 minutes, including time between pieces. Programs exceeding this length will be interrupted by the jury. The following pieces must be included in the program (they may be performed in any order):

- Libby Larsen: *Sonata in One Movement on Kalenda Maya*
- Johann Sebastian Bach: *Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542ii*
- Connor Chee: *Hózhó*

Another 15–20 minutes of music of the competitor's choice is to be included to complete an effective recital program. In choosing repertoire for the final round, competitors should bear in mind that they will be judged according to the following criteria: the music chosen makes good use of the organ, the music chosen creates an enjoyable and cogent program with the required repertoire, and the music chosen demonstrates the organist's technical and interpretative abilities. Each finalist will provide the jury with scores for any freely selected work.

Repertoire performed by a competitor in any one round of the competition may not be repeated by the competitor in a subsequent round.

VI. ADJUDICATION

There will be five judges for the semifinal and final rounds. Judges will be screened from viewing the performers to ensure anonymity. The decisions of all judges are final and not subject to appeal. Judges reserve the right to withhold any or all prizes. Each of the judges will provide signed comments for the competitors, to be sent to them in the week following the convention. As with the recorded application round, judges' comments regarding the competitors' performances in the semifinal and final rounds may not be quoted in future press materials.

VII. PRIZES

First Prize

1. The Lilian Murtagh Memorial Prize, funded by Karen McFarlane Artists Inc.: \$3,000 and career development assistance from Karen McFarlane Artists between Sept. 2024 and June 2026, including publicity materials and advertising.
2. The Jordan Prize, funded by the Jordan Organ Endowment: \$10,000. The prize will be awarded in conjunction with a gala solo recital on the Jordan Family Organ in Columbus, Ga. The prize represents the fee for this gala recital.
3. A performance during the 2026 AGO National Convention.
4. A CD recording on the Pro Organo label.

Second Prize

1. \$5,000, funded by Keggs Pipe Organ Builders.
2. Four ¼-page print advertisements in *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST* (design costs not included).

Third Prize

1. \$3,000, funded by Dorothy Young Riess, MD.
2. Four ¼-page print advertisements in *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST* (design costs not included).

Audience Prize

\$1,000. This prize will be determined by ballot upon conclusion of the final round.

VIII. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

1. Semifinalists will be provided round-trip coach air transportation and housing through the completion of the final round. The AGO will provide transportation between the semifinal and final round locations. If an eliminated competitor chooses to leave at the completion of the semifinal round, he/she will be responsible for all resulting fee and fare changes.
2. All semifinalists will receive complimentary registration for the 2024 National Convention in San Francisco and are encouraged to remain for the convention (but do not receive housing after the competition period concludes).

Kimberly Marshall, *Chair, NYACOP Committee*

Gregory Hand, *Member*

Timothy Olsen, *Member*

Jonathan Ryan, *FAGO, AGO Vice President/Councillor for Competitions and New Music*