

# Meet the Organists

*in order of appearance on the program*

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## Mr. Charles Raasch Christ Cathedral Sub-Organist



Charles Raasch is a long time resident of Orange County and member of the OC AGO. He is on the OC AGO Study Grant Committee, and is glad through this program to have supported many successful students. He is a past Dean of the OC AGO.

He is currently the organist for the St. John's, Orange concert series, and accompanist for the Cathedral Singers at St. John's. After playing every weekend from the age of fourteen until the early 2000's, he decided to retire from having a regular position to focus on family, work, and learning literature. Without a regular Sunday

position, he is honored to substitute at many venues throughout the Southern California area.

Charles is an electrical engineer by trade, and in addition to a passion for playing organ music, is involved in developing hardware and software for digital and digitally augmented pipe organs, and in building and refurbishing instruments for use with Hauptwerk and other digital platforms. His Hauptwerk sample sets are available through [www.evensongmusic.net](http://www.evensongmusic.net), including notable Southern California instruments such as the Aeolian Skinner at Pasadena Presbyterian and the three instruments at Immanuel Presbyterian Los Angeles.

He currently is employed as a VP of Engineering at Acacia Research in Irvine. He lives with his wife Leslie and two dogs Olive and Scooby in Foothill Ranch, California.

## Mr. Hektor Pitstick

### Christ Cathedral Music Intern and Organ Scholar

**Hektor Pitstick** began to learn the piano at age three from his father, Rodrik Pitstick. Working through the tears and initially loathing the instrument, he was forced to continue into formal lessons from Ms. Judy O'Dell. In middle-school he switched instructors to Mr. Joe May, who put him on the path towards loving music and the piano. After Mr. May relocated from Great Falls to Helena, Hektor was left instructor-less for nearly a year. During this year, rather than quitting, he tried to progress on his own, tackling some of Rachmaninoff's works. After this, Ms. Su Suits took the reins and pushed him into invoking his visceral, rabid love for expression. Being unsatisfied with the piano alone, he pursued the organ. Exhilarated at finding an instrument versatile enough for his schemes, he went on to study



Organ Performance, initially at the University of Montana, and is currently a Junior at Concordia University Irvine. In 2022, he toured Germany and England with the University of Montana Chamber Chorale as their accompanist. He has served as accompanist for many organisations, including the Missoula Community Children's Choruses, The Mendelssohn Club of Missoula, and over ten parishes to date. Currently, he is an Organ Scholar and Music Intern for Christ Cathedral. When he is not in the practice room, he enjoys skiing, swimming, reading, traveling, and attending concerts.

## Dr. Emma Whitten

### Christ Cathedral Associate Organist



**Emma Whitten** is an accomplished organist specializing in early Baroque and contemporary repertoire. She performs across the United States and internationally, captivating audiences and introducing the organ to new listeners. Her programs are engaging and diverse, drawing from an extensive repertoire spanning eight centuries of organ music.

Dr. Whitten serves as Associate Organist at Christ Cathedral (formerly Crystal Cathedral) in the Roman

Catholic Diocese of Orange County, California. The Cathedral campus is home to two landmark instruments, the five-manual Hazel Wright Organ in the Cathedral and the four-manual Fred Swann Organ in the Arboretum. As Associate Organist, Emma plays for major liturgies at the Cathedral and accompanies the Diocesan Choir. In September 2022, she released her debut recording, *Hazel Is Back!* (Gothic Records 49338), in celebration of the Hazel Wright Organ's recent restoration. Emma also acts as Music Coordinator at the historic Church of the Immaculate Conception in San Diego. In Fall 2022, she joined the faculty of Concordia University Irvine as Adjunct Professor of Organ and Church Music.

Performance venues and festivals include the Dedication Year of the Hazel Wright Organ, Cathedral of St. John the Divine (NYC), Los Angeles Presidents' Day Organ Festival, St. Paul's Cathedral (San Diego, CA), Catalina Organ Festival (Tucson, AZ), Saints Simon & Jude Cathedral (Phoenix, AZ), University of Arizona, Saint Mary's Basilica (Phoenix, AZ), and University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Emma has performed for American Guild of Organists chapters including Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, Palomar, Central Arizona, and Knoxville. Internationally, Emma has performed on historic organs in Germany, Spain, Colombia, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. She particularly promotes the work of women composers, including performances of major works by Pamela Decker at the University of Arizona and Arizona State University, as well as leading workshops on women composers for chapters of the American Guild of Organists.

Emma maintains a private teaching studio in Oceanside, California where she works with organists of all ages, from beginning students to professionals. She regularly acts as an adjudicator for scholarship auditions and competitions including the AGO/Quimby Regional Competitions for Young Organists and the AGO certification programs. She has served as both faculty and featured performer for Pipe Organ Encounters, week-long educational workshops for high school organists.

In December 2014, Emma graduated with her D.M.A. in Organ Performance from Arizona State University, where she studied with Kimberly Marshall. Her doctoral dissertation, entitled "Synthesizing Styles: International Influence on Organ Music in Restoration England," explores French and Italian musical elements in the organ works of Matthew Locke, John Blow, and Henry Purcell. In 2011, Emma received her Masters of Music degree from the University of Kansas under Michael Bauer, and in 2009 she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of Notre Dame, where she studied organ with Craig Cramer. Her previous teachers include László Attila Almásy of the Bartók Conservatory in Budapest and John Brock of the University of Tennessee.

Emma Whitten is represented by [Seven Eight Artists](#).

**Aska Enomoto**  
**“Complete Works Audition” Gold Medal Winner**  
*Southern California Junior Bach Festival*

**Aska Enomoto** is 13 years old and is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She has studied the organ with Leslie Wolf Robb. She has received AGO scholarship and Spreckels scholarship award since 2016. She was 1st winner of the Southern California Junior Bach Festival 2023, and invited to perform at the Awards concert at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Long beach on Oct 14th, 2023.

Her hobbies include high jump and long jump (Track & Field), playing volleyball, and crochet.



## David Ball

### Christ Cathedral Organist and Head of Music Ministry



Juilliard-trained organist **David Ball** serves as Cathedral Organist and Head of Music Ministry at Christ Cathedral in the Diocese of Orange, California (formerly the Crystal Cathedral). David is a recognized and well-lauded young performer—*The New York Times* declared his appearance in Juilliard’s FOCUS! Festival “a rousing performance,” and as a winner of the AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists, David performed as a Rising Star at the 2016 National AGO Convention in Houston where he “used the organ evocatively...

displayed a wide palette of colors in his artistic registration and... brought Mozart's K. 608 to a thrilling close, earning an enthusiastic response from the audience.” (*The American Organist*) In recognition of his accomplishments, David was named one of *The Diapason’s* 2017 Class of 20 under 30, a peer-selected group of young people at the forefront of the organ field.

As Christ Cathedral Organist, David is the primary steward of a variety of instruments, principally the renowned Hazel Wright organ. Recently restored, Hazel is the world’s fifth largest organ, with more than 17,000 pipes, 300+ stops and nearly 300 ranks. As one facet of his role at Christ Cathedral, David serves as the Artistic Director for the Christ Cathedral concert series and the Hazel Wright Dedication Series; he has also recently performed on and released *The Hazel Wright Organ: First Recordings from the Newly-Restored Hazel Wright Organ*, an album that includes two new works by Daniel Ficarri, commissioned in celebration of Hazel’s return.

David’s musical contributions underpin the Cathedral's vast array of weekly services and events—following in the footsteps of Fred Swann, David plays, conducts the choirs, and supports the parish’s diverse congregation, all from Hazel’s 5-manual console. David oversees the ensembles of the Cathedral: the Diocesan Choir, Cathedral Choir, Cathedral Schola, Children’s Choir, and Cathedral Spanish Choir, which together total

over 300. The program at Christ Cathedral is a model of multi-lingual and multi-cultural Catholic community and liturgy, with a repertoire that spans choral polyphony and English anthems, to traditional Mexican sacred hymnody. Additionally, David's role involves training and mentorship of the next generation of sacred musicians and organists. His current and former students have gone on to hold prominent positions and have been accepted to prestigious programs and conservatories, including The Juilliard School, McGill, Rice, and Yale.

Commitment to mentoring young organists and choristers is a reflection of David's own training. Throughout his career, he has been dedicated to creating liturgical music of the highest caliber. From his earliest days as the organ scholar under Dr. John A. Romeri at the landmark St. Louis Cathedral Basilica, David played and accompanied the Cathedral Basilica's choirs in performances across the country and in Rome, Italy. During his studies at Juilliard, he worked as the Assistant Director and Interim Director of Music at St. Malachy's – The Actors' Chapel in Times Square.

David is an active member of the American Guild of Organists (AGO). David has additionally won AGO Competitions in Wichita, Denver, Kansas City, and St. Louis, and was the recipient of the rarely-conferred Outstanding Student Award from the St. Louis Chapter of the AGO. As part of a wide-ranging musical vision for 21st-century collaboration—a vision cultivated during his time at Juilliard—David is committed to making the “King of Instruments” play well with others. He has spearheaded a number of “David and Friends” chamber recitals, commissioned many new works, and co-founded the ensemble duo *corgano*, a horn and organ duet featuring fellow Juilliard alumnus Trevor Nuckols.

David completed both the Bachelor and Master of Music at The Juilliard School in New York City, studying under Mr. Paul Jacobs. While at Juilliard, his performance of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in a minor in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall was broadcast on American Public Media's nationally-syndicated radio program *Pipedreams*, and his segment of the 2014 WQXR Bach Marathon was streamed on WQXR-FM, New York City's classical radio station.

*- Biography courtesy of Paula Harper.*