



UF PIPE ORGAN
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Matt Gender
Silent Movie Accompaniment
Friday, January 24, 2025
8:00 p.m.
University Auditorium

Program

During the silent film era (mid-1890's to the late 1920's), the theatre organist would often provide improvised musical accompaniment as patrons enjoyed the drama unfolding on the screen.

Tonight's program features three short silent films accompanied by organist Matt Gender:

Buster Keaton in "One Week" (1920)
Charlie Chaplin in "Pawn Shop" (1916)
Buster Keaton in "Cops" (1922)

About the performer

Matt Gender, DMA, is a concert organist and church musician currently serving as the Director of Worship Arts at Zumbro Lutheran Church in Rochester, Minnesota. He holds degrees in organ performance from the University of Florida and the University of Kansas, where he studied with Laura Ellis, James Higdon, and Michael Bauer. Matt is an award-winning improviser specializing in silent films and having taken prizes in the AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation (2016) and the University of Michigan's Organ Improvisation Competition (2017). Matt is an active recitalist and has performed throughout the country, specializing in improvisation, especially to silent films. He is a specialist in modernist organ repertoire, and organ literature of France post 19th century. Matt is, in addition to being an organist, also a professional choral musician and conductor, in addition to being a practiced electroacoustic composer, sound engineer, videographer and photographer; Matt runs his own production flying studio. When he's not playing organ or making music, he is a pilot and avidly enjoys flying airplanes!

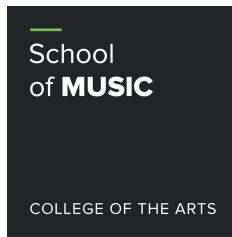
History of the Andrew Anderson Memorial Pipe Organ

A financial gift by Dr. Andrew Anderson, a St. Augustine physician, philanthropist, and associate of early Florida developer Henry Flagler, provided the funds for a pipe organ in the newly constructed University Auditorium. Tonal plans were prepared by William Zeuch of Boston's famous Skinner Organ Company, which built and installed the instrument in early 1925. The organ was first played publicly on June 7th, 1925, at the annual University Commencement Convocation. A musical landmark for its day, the organ was designed and voiced at the zenith of orchestral-imitative or "symphonic" organ design in this country, and is mentioned in such reference works as Orpha Ochse's *The History of the Organ in the United States* and Charles Callahan's *The American Classic Organ*. Claude Murphree, university organist from 1925-1958, performed over 550 concerts on this instrument and his Sunday afternoon recitals became a tradition on campus.

During World War II and immediately after, due to institutional economic conditions, the instrument itself was not given proper care. This University treasure was virtually buried behind layers of heavy velour curtains hung in front of the organ to allow theatrical presentations. When the Division of Music was established in 1948, however, immediate efforts were made to rescue the instrument.

Willis Bodine succeeded Murphree as university organist in 1959 and by the early 1960's the curtains were removed. Under Bodine's leadership, the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company began a program of mechanical renovation and tonal rehabilitation to repair the damage caused by the ravages of time and neglected maintenance. By 1976, renovation and air-conditioning of the building had been completed, but Aeolian-Skinner was no longer in business. In 1992 the M.P. Möller Organ Company continued the careful work of restoring the organ to its former excellence as a teaching and recital instrument.

Laura Ellis joined the UF faculty in 2003 to become the third university organist in the history of the institution. In the fall of 2014, the Reuter Organ Company located in Lawrence, KS, was contracted to provide tonal renovations to the instrument. Twenty-four new ranks of principal pipes were built to revise and enhance the Great, Swell, Positiv, and Choir choruses. Reed pipes in all divisions were rebuilt or replaced. Other stops were re-scaled and wind pressures were adjusted. Finally, the entire instrument was re-voiced to achieve a new tonal balance, characterized by abundant fundamental tone and greater clarity. The newly renovated organ was heard for the first time during the *Phantom of the Opera*, presented by the College of the Arts in January 2015.



To ensure an enjoyable concert experience for all, please refrain from talking and entering or exiting while musicians are performing. Food and drink are prohibited in all concert halls. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. Thank you for your cooperation.

Program 068 in the School of Music Events Series of the 2024-2025 academic year.

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