



# American Guild of Organists

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## **JOHN WALKER TO BE HONORED AT AGO ENDOWMENT FUND DISTINGUISHED ARTIST AWARD RECITAL AND GALA BENEFIT RECEPTION IN PITTSBURGH**

**Colleagues, Students, Loved Ones, and Friends from Across the Country Will  
Gather to Celebrate His Lifetime Achievements at AGO Endowment Fund Benefit**

NEW YORK CITY — The **American Guild of Organists (AGO)** has selected internationally acclaimed organist and teacher **JOHN WALKER** as the honoree for the **2019 AGO Endowment Fund Distinguished Artist Award Recital and Gala Benefit Reception on Friday, April 26, in Pittsburgh.** The public is invited to attend. Complete information is available online at [Agohq.org/2019-gala](http://Agohq.org/2019-gala).

The celebration begins at 7:30 p.m. with a free recital by John Walker at Shadyside Presbyterian Church, 5121 Westminister Place, where Dr. Walker previously served as minister of music (1992–2004). His program will include Guilmant’s stirring *March on Handel’s “Lift Up Your Heads,”* Virgil Fox’s transcription of Bach’s *Come Sweet Death*, John Knowles Paine’s virtuosic *Concert Variations on Old Hundredth*, and John Weaver’s *Sine Nomine*, along with other selections.

The Gala Reception (advance tickets required) benefitting the AGO Endowment Fund will follow the recital at Mansions on Fifth, an elegant Gilded Age hotel, located just a few steps from the church. Guests will enjoy cocktails and hors d’oeuvres while mingling and visiting with John Walker.

**Purchase tickets online at [Agohq.org/2019-gala](http://Agohq.org/2019-gala) by April 12 to attend.**

The AGO Endowment Fund Distinguished Artist Award Recital and Gala travels around the country to celebrate distinguished members of the organ world, to raise awareness for the Endowment Fund, and to secure gifts to strengthen it. All proceeds from the 2019 Gala will honor John Walker in perpetuity. Annual earnings from the AGO Endowment support educational programs and outreach.

To purchase Gala Benefit Reception tickets, commemorative program book ads, or participate from a distance by making a contribution in honor of John Walker, visit [Agohq.org/2019-gala](http://Agohq.org/2019-gala). All donors and advertisers will be recognized in the commemorative program book. **April 12 is the deadline to be included.**

**For more information: 212-870-2311, ext. 4308, or [gala@agohq.org](mailto:gala@agohq.org).**

## BIOGRAPHY

**JOHN WALKER** has performed in recital and as concerto soloist throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. He has performed three times at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and other cathedrals and churches in Europe and the U.S. In Taiwan he has performed frequently at the National Concert Hall in Taipei and as soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared frequently with the San Francisco Symphony under the baton of Michael Tilson Thomas, notably as soloist in Lou Harrison's avant-garde *Concerto for Organ with Percussion Orchestra*.

"A lot of people can play the notes, but there's always something indefinable in John's playing," remarked Frederick Swann, past president of the AGO and Walker's predecessor at the Riverside Church in New York City. "It's playing that can reach out to people. John always understands the music he's performing. He seems to have a way of projecting the music that enables the people to know what the music is saying. He doesn't put himself out in front. The music always comes first."

A profound practitioner of the art of sacred music, John Walker is minister of music emeritus at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, following distinguished tenures at the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, the Riverside Church in New York City, and First Methodist Church in Palo Alto, Calif.

Walker is the immediate past president of the American Guild of Organists (2014–2016). As president, he led the organization representing more than 15,000 members. He was vice president for six years and treasurer for four. In addition, he coordinated two regional conventions and was dean of the San Jose and New York City AGO chapters. He was the first director of the Task Force on the New Organist, which conceived and implemented the highly successful Pipe Organ Encounters program, now occurring annually throughout the U.S. and abroad.

A Fellow (FAGO) of the American Guild of Organists, Walker is professor of organ performance at Baltimore's Peabody Institute. Previous appointments include the music faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, where he was organ department chair; Duquesne University; Westminster College; and San Jose State University. He holds the doctor of musical arts degree from Stanford University as well as two master of music degrees *cum laude* from American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. In 1999 he was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach and to perform in Taiwan. In 2015 he was visiting professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and in 2017 he adjudicated international competitions in organ performance in both Taipei and Shanghai, marking his seventeenth professional visit to Asia. ■ Photo available at: <https://bit.ly/2GM3fZ8>