

**BROOKLYN CHAPTER AGO**  
**Certification Workshop**  
**Nov. 15, 2014 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.**  
**St. John's Episcopal Church, Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY**  
led by Eric Birk, F.A.G.O.

**Why obtain Certification?**

1. Continuing Education -- often required by institutions for salary advancement, and generally a good idea to prevent career stagnation
  
2. Strengthens weakest skills.
  
3. Allows time to work on skills not often taught to the level of complete mastery in private lessons or college courses:
  - a) Transposition
  - b) Extemporaneous harmonization
  - c) Improvisation
  - d) Sight-reading
  - e) Effective Hymn-playing
  - f) Composition
  - g) Analysis
  - h) Counterpoint and fugue
  - i) General musical knowledge as it relates to the organ and sacred music
  
4. Proven skills by peer professionals in a blind grading process (at all levels)
  
5. Each level corresponds to recommended salary levels on the AGO Salary Guidelines.
  
6. Professional respect by peers.
  
7. Personal accomplishment.

## WHO?

**Any person** may take an AGO certification whether or not he/she is a member of the American Guild of Organists. There is a surcharge of \$100 for non members, and there are reduced rates for students (only on Service Playing and Colleague exams). (*NOTA BENE!*-- it's worth it to join: *for \$97-regular, \$72-seniors, or \$37-students, you get 12 issues a year of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine, which includes monthly articles helpful for exam preparation!*)

## WHEN?

Exam Dates for **Service Playing** -- any time between Oct. 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015  
Application Deadline -- Applications may be submitted starting Sept. 1, 2014 and no later than February 1, 2015

Exam Dates for **Colleague** -- twice per year; next dates are: May 15, 2015 and November 13, 2015.  
Application Deadlines -- March 1, 2015 deadline for May 15, 2015 exam (applications available Dec. 1, 2014) and September 15, 2015 for Nov. 13, 2015 exam (applications available July 1, 2015)

## WHERE?

Any chapter may host an exam at any location where a suitable organ and recording equipment are available. (For Service Playing, can even be candidate's own church; however, for Colleague exams, must be on an organ not normally played by candidate.)

All Service Playing and Colleague Exams are recorded and sent to AGO National Headquarters for evaluation.

## HOW?

For application forms and hymn booklets, contact Paul Wolfe, AGO Certification Exam Administrator at 212-870-2311, ext. 4303 (or main office number, 212-870-2310); email address: [exams@agohq.org](mailto:exams@agohq.org)

Manuals of procedure, which explain the process of how the exams are administered are available online at:

[https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Revised\\_SPC\\_Manual\\_04.30.2014.pdf](https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Revised_SPC_Manual_04.30.2014.pdf)

&

<https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CAGO-Manual-2014-update.pdf>

**NOTE** - Joint certification with National Association of Pastoral Musicians is available. For more information, contact Paul Wolfe.

## Examination Sections of the AGO Service Playing and Colleague Exams

### Service Playing

Exam is structured as a service with:  
Three organ pieces  
(prelude, offertory, postlude)  
3 Hymns (one transposed)  
Psalm accompaniment  
2 Anthem accompaniments

Solo Repertoire -- three groups (1 piece from each):

- A. Bach, Buxtehude
- B. 19th century (Mendelssohn, Vierne, Dupré)
- C. 20th-21st century (Schroeder, Langlais, Near, Block, Wold, Chen)

*\*Pieces chosen will function as Prelude, Offertory and Postlude*

Hymns (Opening, Middle, Closing)  
From examination booklet  
One (opening) will be transposed, to be performed in two keys

Psalm  
Varying types (plainsong, Gelineau, responsorial)  
May require singer

Anthems  
Chosen from a list of 5

Sight-reading of a piece of music on 2 staves

***For an explanation of what is being evaluated by the examiners who listen to the recorded exams, see p. 14 of the [Manual of Procedure](#).***

### Colleague

Exam has two sections:  
1. Repertoire at the Organ  
2. Keyboard Skills

Section 1 - Repertoire at the organ

1. Solo Repertoire -- Three Groups, each with two specific pieces from which to choose:

- A. Baroque
  - B. French Romantic
  - C. Twentieth Century
2. Choral work  
3. Vocal Solo accompaniment  
4. Two Hymns

Section 2 - Keyboard Skills

5. Sight-reading (on three staves)  
6. Harmonization of (choose one):  
a. simple hymn tune  
b. plainsong melody  
c. folk-style hymn tune  
7. Transposition (a passage of music, not more than a major second either direction)  
8. Improvisation (choose one):  
a. passage of music- approx. 8 m./2 4bar phrases, with modulation & clear cadence  
b. passage of music on a given motif (as in a.)  
c. provide a bridge or modulatory passage between two hymns chosen on the exam sheet from the *2013 Revised Examination Hymn Booklet*

***Evaluation expectations are explained in section 4.6 on p. 19 of the [Manual of Procedure](#).***