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American Guild of Organists Holds Summer Recital At Winthrop On July 17

Winthrop University

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Quick Facts

- A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Bennett is the principal organist at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Charlotte.
- During the July 17 event, Bennett, an internationally acclaimed concert organist, will show off the versatility of the D.B. Johnson Memorial organ.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - The **Department of Music at Winthrop University** will host the Charlotte Chapter of the American Guild of Organists' Summer Recital Series on July 17. The free recital, featuring local organist J. Monty Bennett, will begin at 7:30 p.m. in **Byrnes Auditorium**.

A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, **Bennett** is a resident of Rock Hill and was formerly the minister of music at Ebenezer Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church before becoming the organist and associate minister of music at Calvary Church in Charlotte. Currently, he is the principal organist at **Friendship Missionary Baptist Church** in Charlotte.

During the July 17 event, Bennett, an internationally acclaimed concert organist, will show off the versatility of the D.B. Johnson Memorial organ. He will be performing many of the works that were showcased by famed organ virtuoso Virgil Fox on the dedicatory program of the Johnson organ on November 5, 1955, including "Toccata and Fugue in D minor"; "Toccata in F major"; "Come, Sweet Death" and "In Dulci Jubilo," all composed by J.S. Bach; "Petites Litanies" by Gabriel Grouvlez; and "Variations and Fugue" on "Heil dir im Sigerkranz" by German composer Max Reger.

The **D.B. Johnson Memorial organ**, which is named after Winthrop's founding president, is widely regarded as one of the most valuable and historic organs in this part of the country. The Boston company that built it, the **Æolian-Skinner Organ Company**, constructed some of the finest mid-20th century instruments in the U.S. Winthrop's organ is one of the few in the country to have been completely designed and voiced by **G. Donald Harrison**, Æolian-Skinner's legendary president. The large four-manual organ was installed in 1952 at a cost of \$70,000. Today, a similar organ would cost well more than a million dollars, but Winthrop's instrument simply cannot be reproduced.

Bennett's performance coincides with the organ's golden anniversary and also with a fund-raising campaign aimed at restoring the famed organ to its original glory. The D.B. Johnson Memorial organ restoration campaign is well on the way to raising \$400,000 that will be used to renovate the organ's pipe work, install a digital memory system, replace the leather components and rebuild the organ's console.

For more information, call the **Department of Music** at 803/323-2255. For more information about the Johnson organ, visit <http://www.winthrop.edu/virtualtour/buildingtour.aspx?id=3134>.

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