

...a letter from Mark!

December 2024

Dear Friends:

Greetings in this season of sacred song! With grateful hearts, we wait expectantly for the wondrous sights and glorious sounds of Advent and Christmas to fill our lives with God's love, hope and peace.

Since the Foundation began in 2004, singers have responded with resounding enthusiasm. For some, this opportunity has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Over 50 Festivals have reached literally thousands of choir members – both adults and children! We have been abundantly blessed to have had the opportunity to share our ministry of choral and organ music on YouTube with millions of people.

Most recently we sponsored a New England Organ Festival with Jennifer Pascual and Mark Pacoe in Lewiston, Maine. The Fall Festival of Music with Deux Voix – Stephen Distad, organist, and Justin Langham, trumpeter, which included a Festival Choir with two handbell choirs, was held in Dover, New Hampshire. Hundreds of people attended these concerts.

We honored the life of my brother Wayne in Stockton, California, in November. Wayne was one of the strongest supporters of MTF over the past 20 years. We will miss his presence with us.

Our enthusiastic team eagerly anticipates making more meaningful music in 2025 as we present our 20th anniversary celebrations in Lewiston, Maine; Dover, New Hampshire; and Holland, Michigan.

Your generous gifts are vital to the strength of the Foundation. Thank you for your continued support. *God bless you!*

We send you glad tidings of great joy with sincere wishes for a merry and blessed Christmas season.

Mark Thallander



**CELEBRATION OF LIFE
WAYNE LEE THALLANDER**
(August 10, 1954 - August 19, 2024)

In person or livestream (cumcstockton.org)
Saturday, November 16, 2024 - 1pm

Central United Methodist Church
3700 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, California 95204

THE MARK THALLANDER FOUNDATION

CHRISTMAS 2024 NEWSLETTER



Scan the QR code for more information!

Join Us 2025!

Twentieth anniversary celebrations are slated for Maine, Michigan, and New Hampshire, in 2025.

Please plan to join us!
(Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera to read about the details!)

The Mark Thallander Foundation Donation 2024 List (January 1, 2024 - October 21, 2024)

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

FOUNDATION OF FAITH VISIONARY: \$25,000 & UP

- Wayne Thallander

CHORUS OF ANGELS

SERAPHIM: \$20,000-24,999

- Mark Thallander, in memory of my brother, Wayne Thallander, and in memory of Glenda Winkle-Morrow, member of the MTF Advisory Council

CHERUBIM: \$10,000-19,999

ARCHANGELS: \$5,000-9,999

- E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

ANGELS: \$2,500-4,999

- Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove, California in memory of Fred Swann

GUARDIAN ANGELS: \$1,000-2,499

- Preston City Congregational Church, Preston, Connecticut, in honor of its 325th Anniversary
- Sing For America Foundation
- Paul Genzink
- Karen Ilene Healy, in memory of Fred Swann
- Ellen R. Kanda
- Sue & Rick Miller

CIRCLE OF CHAMPIONS

BENEFACTOR'S CIRCLE: \$500-999

- The Reverend Judith K. Hanlon
- Rosemary Jackson
- Theresa & Ronald Nipper
- Mark Smith & Michael Zamojski, in memory of Fred Swann
- Bruce Wilkin, in memory of Glenda Winkle-Morrow

CONDUCTOR'S CIRCLE: \$250-499

- Basilica of Saints Peter & Paul, Lewiston, Maine
- Bernard Keith & Norma F. Heuermann Foundation
- Congregational Church of Wells, Maine
- Dorothy & Dick Dykstra
- Donna & Martin Eckmann
- Hadwen Park Congregational Church, Worcester, Massachusetts
- Charlotte & Donald Johnson, in memory of Dorothy Bloecher
- Jan (Jones) Brown, in memory of Joyce Jones
- Vickie & Larry Matuska
- Georgia Schrum

PATRON'S CIRCLE: \$100-249

- Anonymous
- Congregational Church of Exeter, New Hampshire
- First Parish Church, Dover, New Hampshire
- Sandra & Bill Barnes, in memory of Fred Swann
- Leigh Ann Braley
- William Clark
- Lawrence Dicus, in memory of Fred Swann
- David Ellis & William West, in memory of Bob McLaughlin
- Rick Gooch
- Wendy & Ted Hagarty, with appreciation to Mark Thallander, in memory of Wayne Thallander
- Terrie Harman, in memory of Charles Callahan
- Linda & James Hauger, in memory of Wayne Thallander
- Mary Carol Kennedy, in memory of Wayne Thallander

PATRON'S CIRCLE: \$100-249 (continued)

- Linda & James Kok, in memory of Fred Swann
- Pamela Leestma, in memory of Dr. Rev. David B. Leestma
- Diana & Nicholas Lumenello
- Judith MacLeod, in memory of Fred Swann, in memory of Wayne Thallander
- Felicita & Craig McGinty, in memory of Ms Mary Glenda Winkle-Morrow, dear friend of our family
- Gloria & Donald Nelson
- Gib Petzke, in memory of Alden Stockebrand
- Theodora & Robert Primes, in honor of Mark Thallander
- Beryl Samia, in memory of Louis G. Samia
- Martha Thyng, in memory of Fred Swann
- Henry Voskamp
- Qing Xiao

FRIENDS OF MUSIC: \$10-99

- Matthew Abboud
- Randall Alley
- Rafael Angulo, in memory of Fred Swann
- Michael Barone
- Janet & Harley Bennett, in memory of Fred Swann
- Monty Bennett
- Sharon Boyajian
- Ellen & Daniel Brackett
- Emily & Julian Carlin, in memory of Fred Swann
- Kevin Cartwright, in memory of Fred Swann
- Kathleen Charest, in memory of Fred Swann
- Jennifer Chen, in memory of Fred Swann
- Marlene & Vernon Cunningham, in memory of Fred Swann
- Phyllis Cusimano, in memory of Tony Cusimano
- Barbara S. Foster
- Cynthia Jean Foster
- Dana Foster
- Johanne Garfield
- Karen & Gary George, in memory of Fred Swann

FRIENDS OF MUSIC: \$10-99 (continued)

- Steven Graham, in memory of Fred Swann.
- Donna Grimm
- Amy S. Hendrick
- Scottie Mayabb, in memory of Fred Swann
- Paula & Timothy Munzing, in memory of Fred Swann
- Mary & Scott Papas, in memory of Fred Swann
- Jennifer Puhl, in memory of Fred Swann
- Rick Routzon
- Henry Salsano, in memory of Fred Swann
- Leonard Smith & Jeffrey Hong
- Jan Stover, in memory of Rev. Robert Gene Dow
- Marilyn & Jim Thyng, in memory of Glenda Winkle-Morrow
- Melissa & Steven Tracy
- Joann Nobuko Uyemura, in memory of Wayne Thallander
- Beryl & Donald Waldeland, in memory of Fred Swann



Mark Smith



Mark Thallander, Paul Genzink, Sue & Rick Miller



Lena Kanda with Joyce Jones

The Board of Directors thanks you for becoming a part of the inspiring mission of The Mark Thallander Foundation. As a member of the **Foundation of Faith, the Chorus of Angels, or the Circle of Champions**, you are nurturing the ministries of the choral art and the organ with your generous support.

We Need Your Support!

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In memory of In honor of I prefer to remain anonymous

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Archangels \$5,000 – \$9,999

Angels \$2,500 – \$4,999

Guardian Angels \$1,000 – \$2,499

CIRCLE OF CHAMPIONS

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Patron's Circle \$100 – \$249

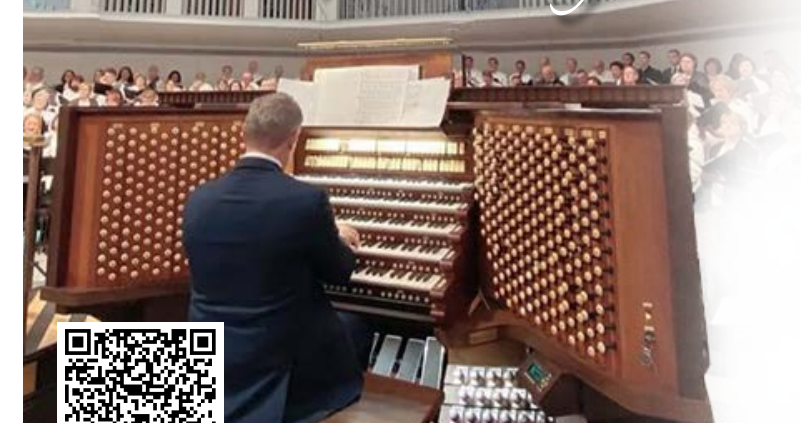
Friends of Music \$10 – \$99

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THE MARK THALLANDER FOUNDATION, P.O. Box 5511, Palm Springs, CA 92263



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"Beyond perfection"
"Thrilling"



PLEASE NOTE: *Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. If there is a discrepancy, please call, text or email. (303) 396-5960 - carolyns.miller@icloud.com*

YES! Please send me a festival CD!

The Festival was highlighted with Bradley Welch from the Dallas Symphony in dual organ fanfares with a choir of 400 voices under the direction of six acclaimed directors plus Ken Medema and a children's chorus.

Now we can continue listening to this great Festival with the release of this wonderful CD. I personally listen to it over and over again. I urge everyone to purchase this CD while the supply lasts!

— **R. Paul Genzink, Vice President**

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KEEP YOUR HOPES HIGH AND YOUR EXPECTATIONS LOW

By Bradley Hunter Welch

Like many other organists, I was captivated by the sound of the organ from a very early age growing up in Knoxville, TN. Its enormous span of pitches, variety of color, and thrilling dynamic range made church exciting for me. When I finally worked up the courage to go see our organist, Terrye Danner, in action at the console, I was dumbfounded by the number of stops, swell shoes, pistons, and toe studs she had at her disposal. I was particularly mesmerized by watching her feet play pedals that produced such viscerally thrilling bass! I knew even before beginning piano lessons that organ was my final destination.

One Sunday when staying home from church, I happened upon the Hour of Power, the television broadcast of the Robert Schuller Ministries and worship service at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, CA. Before the first word was spoken by Ed Arnold to introduce the program, I heard a full organ E-flat Major chord with trumpets en chamade leading into a large choir proclaiming "We Sing the Power of God's great love!" Notwithstanding the limits of 1980s television speakers, I was in awe. I continued to watch in amazement as one person conducted and played most of the music to lead the choir and congregation. During an exciting toccata introduction to the opening hymn, the organist's name appeared at the bottom of the screen: Frederick Swann. From that pivotal Sunday, I recorded nearly every Hour of Power broadcast using our VCR so that I could watch it immediately upon returning from church.

After studying piano for a few years, I finally had an opportunity to play the organ at my church when the children's choir director asked if I would use the organ to cover an instrumental part for a flutist who had fallen ill. Of course, I was thrilled by the opportunity and went to the church to practice the part—sometimes on a flute stop and sometimes experimenting with (shall we say?) a bit more sound. The desire to recreate the awe I experienced when first hearing Frederick Swann play the Hazel Wright Organ was a driving force to explore what was possible through these "new dimensions in the world of sound."

Sunday after Sunday, I was inspired by Fred's exciting service playing and consummate skill in conducting from the console as he played. Fred's improvised hymn introductions, modulations, and interludes proved to be terrific early ear training exercises for me using a small, two-octave electronic keyboard to decipher and transcribe the harmonic magic he weaved. (I broke my left wrist when I fell one Sunday excitedly running downstairs with the keyboard, manuscript paper, and pencil in my hands and slick-soled Sunday shoes still on!) In all honesty, I did watch several of Dr. Schuller's "Possibility Thinking" sermons, but it was Fred's artistry and the choir's singing that most powerfully ignited my imagination of what was possible.

Once I was in high school, I wrote a "fan letter" to Fred to thank him for his music. To my great surprise, he sent a kind and gracious reply along with encouragement to continue practicing! A year later, I sent a VHS tape of my high school junior-year recital. Fred again replied with encouragement along with constructive criticism and specific feedback about my performance. Reconsidering my initial interest in pursuing a career in ophthalmology, I wrote again to ask about his education and advice on the path to becoming a church musician and concert organist. He shared the schools he attended and suggested a few teachers I should consider. He also said he had worked hard to develop his abilities to become a concert organist beyond the minimum of what was required as a church musician. It was the wise counsel of his closing sentence, though, that struck me most and has since proven to be true in many life situations: "Keep your hopes high and your expectations low!"

By my senior year in high school, having been called out by my AP Biology teacher for interrupting her lecture by practicing trills on the lab table, I decided to pursue music instead of medicine. When some relatives announced that they were taking a road trip to California, we made plans to worship at the Crystal Cathedral. I wrote to Fred asking if it would be possible to play the Hazel Wright Organ. He replied that he would indeed be in town that 1993 summer Sunday and suggested that I meet him after worship to coordinate a time to come play the next day. Following some confounding LA rush hour traffic that Monday morning, we made it back to the cathedral, and Fred was there waiting. Heart pounding and adrenaline flowing, I played the Final from Vierne's Symphony No. 1. When I got to the B section, I asked if he had a piston that had strings and celestes; he chuckled and said, "We



don't do it like that anymore." He proceeded to work the registrations as I continued playing, and the searing sound of the Ruffatti reeds by the end brought me nearly to tears...an initial dream come true through keeping my hopes high for what might be possible through music.

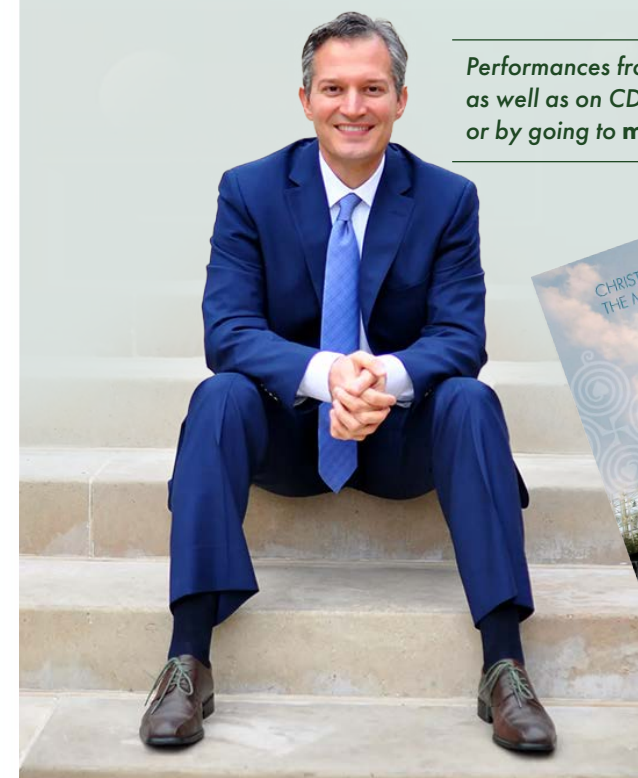
About 12 years later following undergraduate study with Joyce Jones at Baylor and Masters and Doctoral study with Thomas Murray at Yale, I had the opportunity to serve on an organ competition jury with Fred Swann and Mary Preston. I reminded Fred that I had written to him several times when I was in high school, and he nervously said, "Did I ever write back!?" I produced our correspondence and thanked him for his role in my life and development as a musician. In his ever-humble manner, he said, "I'm glad it helped."

After Fred's passing on November 13, 2022, Mark Thallander asked if I would serve as the Festival Organist for a celebration honoring the life and legacy of Frederick Swann to be held at Christ (formerly Crystal) Cathedral and co-sponsored by the Mark Thallander Foundation. The festival on January 20, 2024 featured some of Fred's most beloved organ solos and choral anthems sung by a choir of over 250 singers. David Ball (Christ Cathedral Organist and Head of Music), Dr. Emma Whitten (Associate Organist), Hektor Pitstick (Organ Scholar), Mark Thallander (former Assistant Director of Music and Associate Organist of the Crystal Cathedral) and I performed duets Fred had arranged and performed using both the main and South balcony consoles. A Children's Choir of 150 sang from the South balcony, and Ken Medema led the premier of These Are Glad Tidings, a new anthem he composed to celebrate the life and faith of Dr. Frederick Swann. Conductors Thomas Matrone, Peter Green, Julian Revie, Hanan Yaqub, Luke McEnderfer, Pamela Blackstone, John Sutton, and Dan Bird led the combined choirs in anthems composed or beloved by Fred.

Although the configuration and appearance of the cathedral are different than when Fred served there, his "fingerprints" are all around. The unmistakable sound of the Hazel Wright Organ which he molded throughout his tenure now speaks brilliantly into the renovated space thanks to his work as consultant during its extensive restoration. As David Ball aptly said during the festival service, Fred's influence on generations of young organists continues through the cathedral's Organ Scholar program.

I wish to express my extraordinary gratitude to Mark Thallander for the invitation to serve as Festival Organist for this event as it was truly another mountaintop experience in my life. Much of what I learned about service playing simply came from trying to do it like Fred did—leading hymns boldly with strong rhythm and articulation, conducting from the console, colorfully "orguestrating" choral anthem accompaniments—always attempting to inspire the same awe I felt when hearing him play. In the weeks following Fred's passing, I posted on Facebook about his influence in my life and development as a church and concert musician. Someone asked how long I had studied with him, and I quickly clarified that I had never studied with him (apart from being slapped on the hand for wanting strings in the Final of Vierne I). But upon further reflection, I was learning from Fred from the very beginning of my organ study. Thanks be to God for the life and legacy of Dr. Frederick Lewis Swann!

Performances from the 2024 Organ & Choral Festival are available on YouTube, as well as on CD available by filling out the order form in this newsletter, or by going to markthallanderfoundation.org



YES!
Please send me a festival CD!
(Order Form On Page 3)