

William Clayton Whittington

CONDUCTOR | VOCALIST | ORGANIST

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Seasoned conductor, organist, vocalist, and music ministry leader with more than two decades of experience in the United Methodist tradition. Equally fluent in traditional and contemporary worship, bringing strong skills in choral direction, keyboard performance, ensemble leadership, and collaborative planning. Committed to cultivating intergenerational participation, supporting congregational song, and shaping worship that is both musically excellent and spiritually grounded.

Facebook: [@claywhittington](#) | Instagram: [@claywhittington](#) | Threads: [@claywhittington](#)
YouTube: [@claywhittingtonmusic](#) | SoundCloud: [@claywhittington](#)

Employment Experience

ACTIVE APPOINTMENTS & CONTRACTS

Positions are organized by scope of responsibility.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Director of Music Ministries

Tucson, Arizona

2022 – Present

- Introduced new concert initiatives and collaborative worship arts events, including performances with University of Arizona student ensembles, silent film accompaniment paired with Trunk-or-Treat, and musical offerings for festivals and community celebrations, expanding artistic engagement and strengthening community presence
- Lead a multi-ensemble sacred music program (choir, handbells, worship band), cultivating **intergenerational participation** and shaping worship rooted in Scripture, liturgy, and community life
- Develop and direct seasonal concerts, community worship partnerships, and special services, strengthening congregational engagement and expanding the church's artistic visibility
- Recruit, mentor, and pastor volunteer and professional musicians, **increasing ensemble participation and musical leadership capacity** across the congregation

The Gaslight Theatre

Pianist, Entertainer

Tucson, Arizona

2023 – Present

- Deliver high-energy piano and vocal performances for **9 shows weekly (up to 28 during the Christmas season)**, consistently contributing to fully sold-out productions in a fast-paced theatrical environment
- Collaborate with musicians and production staff to provide seamless musical support, adapting repertoire and arrangements in real time to maintain performance excellence across frequent shows
- Cultivate strong audience engagement and rapport, sustaining the theatre's signature interactive entertainment experience for **over 100,000 patrons each season**

Cochise College

Associate Faculty – Music: Piano

Sierra Vista, Arizona

2025 – Present

- Teach applied and class piano across diverse skill levels using clear pedagogical sequencing while developing lesson plans, assessing progress, and maintaining required academic records.
- Support artistic and technical growth through individualized coaching and prepare students effectively for end-of-semester performances.

Tucson Summer Chorus	Tucson, Arizona
<i>Artistic Director, Conductor</i>	2024 – Present
<i>Assistant Conductor, Collaborative Pianist</i>	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead artistic and organizational vision for a 90-voice intergenerational chorus, fostering musical excellence and inclusive community participation • Expanded audience and donor engagement, achieving a 50% increase in concert attendance and a significant rise in donations in first season 	
Tucson Interfaith Choir & Orchestra	Tucson, Arizona
<i>Chorus Director (Volunteer Role)</i>	2024 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and conduct a 120-voice interfaith chorus for large-scale sacred oratorio performances, fostering spiritual depth, musical excellence, and inclusive community belonging • Expand interfaith participation through strengthened outreach, an improved web presence, and instruction in diverse sacred repertoire 	
Clay Whittington Music & Entertainment	Tucson, Arizona (Touring)
Lead Vocals, Keys, Guitars • <i>Dreams & Rumours: The Fleetwood Mac Experience</i>	2025 – Present
Producer, Pianist • <i>Straighten Up & Fly Right</i>	2025 – Present
Every Era Entertainment	Tucson, Arizona (Touring)
Lead Vocals, Keys • <i>The Best of Huey Lewis and the News</i>	2025 – Present
Producer, Performer • <i>Gaslight Dueling Pianos</i>	2024 – Present

PRIOR APPOINTMENTS & CONTRACTS

Positions are organized historically from most recent to earliest.

University of Arizona	Tucson, Arizona
<i>Assistant Director, University Singers (Graduate Assistantship)</i>	2024
<i>Assistant Director, Treble Glee (Graduate Assistantship)</i>	2023 – 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted in planning and leading rehearsals for collegiate choral ensembles, conducting sectionals and shaping ensemble tone, balance, and musicianship • Accompanied rehearsals and performances (piano & guitar) and supported curriculum delivery in vocal technique, score study, and ensemble leadership 	
Tucson Symphony Orchestra Chorus	Tucson, Arizona
Chorister	2022 – 2023
The Helios Ensemble	Tucson, Arizona
Chorister, Chamber Singer	2022 – 2023
First United Methodist Church	Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina
<i>Director of Music Ministries</i>	2020 – 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed chancel choir and handbell choir and served as principal organist and pianist, supporting traditional worship and seasonal liturgical services • Established a structured cantor and worship-leader formation program, mentoring emerging musicians and strengthening congregational song leadership 	

- Led special services, concerts, and collaborative ministry events and contributed to digital worship media production during COVID-19, sustaining musical participation and engagement

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church **Kinston, North Carolina**

Music Director 2019 – 2021

- Directed choir and handbell ensemble for traditional worship services and seasonal liturgical observances
- Designed and produced digital worship music during COVID-19, supporting congregational worship continuity and engagement

St. Thomas Episcopal Church **Bath, North Carolina**

Interim Choirmaster & Organist 2018 – 2019

Carnival Cruise Line **Miami, Florida**

Piano Bar Entertainer 2016 – 2018

- Entertained diverse audiences as a solo pianist-vocalist, delivering high-energy, request-driven performances that encouraged guest participation and created an engaging nightly atmosphere
- Curated an extensive repertoire across multiple genres, adapting sets in real time to audience demographics and shipboard programming while maintaining a professional, customer-focused presence

Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd **Salinas, California**

Choirmaster & Pianist 2015 – 2017

Westminster United Methodist Church **Kinston, North Carolina**

Music Director 2014 – 2015

Camp Ground United Methodist Church **Fayetteville, North Carolina**

Chancel Choir Director, Pianist 2012 – 2014

Temple B'nai Sholem **New Bern, North Carolina**

Assistant Music Leader, Organist 2011 – 2013

Sharon United Methodist Church **Kinston, North Carolina**

Music Director 2008 – 2012

Lenoir Community College Theatre **Kinston, North Carolina**

Music Director 2005 – 2008

Trinity United Methodist Church **LaGrange, North Carolina**

Pianist 2004 – 2006

Education & Certifications

University of Arizona <i>Master of Music, Choral Conducting</i> Graduating GPA: 4.0	Tucson, Arizona
East Carolina University <i>Bachelor of Music magna cum laude, Sacred Music (Vocal/Choral)</i> Graduating GPA: 3.82	Greenville, North Carolina
Lenoir Community College <i>Associate in Fine Arts in Music</i>	Kinston, North Carolina

Publications & Lectures

Worship & Music Conference, Presbyterian Association of Musicians Interest Session: <i>Come Sunday: Duke Ellington in Worship</i>	Montreat, North Carolina 2026
Tactus, American Choral Directors Association Western Region Article: “When Dissonance Finds Resolution: Healing and Strengthening Clergy–Musician Partnerships in the Church”	Spring 2026
Choral Conducting Program, University of Arizona Guest Lecture: <i>Mozart’s Vespers and Martines’ “Dixit Dominus”</i> Guest Lecture: <i>Pipe Organ Essentials for Choral Conductors</i>	Tucson, Arizona 2026 2025
State Summer Conference, Arizona American Choral Directors Association Interest Session: <i>Jazz in Worship</i>	Phoenix, Arizona 2025
Summer Choral Literature Intensive, University of Arizona Lecture: <i>The Choral Music of Kurt Weill</i>	Tucson, Arizona 2025
Choral Journal, American Choral Directors Association Choral Review: “ <i>Kiddush</i> ” by Kurt Weill	vol. 64, no. 8 (May 2024), p. 89

Discography & Broadcasts

Marianna Martines, <i>Terza Messa</i> (Album) University of Arizona Symphonic Choir; Elizabeth Schauer, conductor <ul style="list-style-type: none">Contributing Artist: Chorister (tenor)Album cover and artwork design	2025
Holiday Card to Tucson (Broadcast) University of Arizona School of Music <ul style="list-style-type: none">Conductor (Two movements from Martines’ <i>Terza Messa</i> performed by the University Singers)Broadcast on Classical 90.5 and NPR 89.1	2024

<i>Hymnprov</i> (Album)	2013
Clay Whittington	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 10-track recording of improvised pieces based on hymn melodies • Producer, Performer • Recorded at and mixed by Sound Pure Studios; Durham, North Carolina 	
<i>Rider on the Rim: A Musical Tribute to TEXAS</i> (Album)	2008
Stephen Hilton and performers from the TEXAS Musical Drama	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing artist (mandolin, tracks 1 and 7) 	

Honors & Awards

University of Arizona Scholarship Awards

<i>Donald and Mary Ruth Shropshire Scholarship</i>	2023, 2024
<i>Merrylees W. Mayer Choral Scholarship</i>	2024
<i>John Bloom Choral Scholarship</i>	2024
<i>Bruce Chamberlain Endowed Scholarship</i>	2023
<i>Albert M. Haldeman Music Scholarship</i>	2023
<i>Lutheran Brotherhood Bach Scholarship</i>	2023

The Society of Pi Kappa Lambda

Beta Zeta Chapter, East Carolina University

Inducted 2022

Boy Scouts of America

Eagle Scout

2005

Professional Memberships, Leadership, & Philanthropy

American Choral Directors Association

Vice President, University of Arizona Graduate Chapter

Member since 2009
2024 – 2025

American Guild of Organists

Communications Officer, East Carolina Chapter

Member since 2018
2019 – 2022

Presbyterian Association of Musicians

Church Musician Certification in progress

Member since 2022
Expected 2027

East Carolina Musical Arts Education Foundation

Marketing Consultant, Webmaster

Donor since 2022
2022 – Present

References

Dr. Elizabeth Schauer

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