

Ray Cornils

Biography
Winter 2019

Ray Cornils was the City of Portland's 10th Municipal Organist, serving from 1990 until 2017. Known for his highly diverse programming, he concertizes throughout the United States and abroad. He has performed at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., the Wanamaker Organ at Macy's in Philadelphia, the Spreckels Organ in San Diego as well as at the International Festival of Sacred Music in Quito and Portoviejo Ecuador. He has been a featured recitalist for conventions of the American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society.

In addition to his solo work, he performed regularly with the Portland Symphony Orchestra (PSO) as both harpsichordist and organist, including solo concertos such as Samuel Barber's *Toccata Festiva*, all six of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerti*, Poulenc's *Concerto Champetre*, Poulenc's *Concerto for Organ, String and Tympani*, Saint Saëns' *Organ Symphony* and Joseph Jongen's *Symphonie Concertante*.

For thirty years Ray served as Minister of Music at First Parish Church, UCC in Brunswick. His church choirs performed concert tours in England, Wales, Ireland and Ecuador and Portugal. Each spring Ray mounted a massive production involving church choir members, singers from the community and members of the Portland Symphony Orchestra as well as instrumentalists and soloists from the Boston area.

Known for his teaching skills with all age groups, Ray was an integral part of FOKO's education program, working with elementary and middle school students in a classroom setting. He has taught high school students through the Young Organist Collaborative and was a member of the music faculties of Bowdoin College, the University of Southern Maine and the Portland Conservatory of Music, where he taught organ, harpsichord and related classes.

Born in Sterling, Illinois, Mr. Cornils was trained at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He has studied organ with Robert Reeves, Fenner Douglas, William Porter, Yuko Hayashi and has done post-graduate studies with Dame Gillian Weir. He studied harpsichord with William Porter, Lenora McCroskey, Rhona Freeman and Lisa Goode Crawford.

An active member of the American Guild of Organists, Ray has held many leadership roles, including Convention Coordinator for the 2014 National AGO convention in Boston.

He currently divides his time between Maine and the Ecuador's Andes mountains. Ray continues to concertize from time to time.