



East Carolina Musical Arts Education Foundation
2025-2026 Fisk on Fourth Concert Series Presents

Harold Lloyd in **The Freshman**

with live, improvised organ accompaniment by

David Baskeyfield

*Friday, October 24, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Greenville, NC*

www.ecmaef.org

Dedicated to the memory of Marilyn S. Moll

Harold Lloyd in *The Freshman*

The Freshman (1925) is one of Harold Lloyd's most beloved comedies and a landmark of the silent-film era. Directed by Fred C. Newmeyer and Sam Taylor, it captures the optimism and insecurity of 1920s American youth through the story of an eager college newcomer determined to be popular. Blending slapstick, romance, and gentle social satire, the film pokes fun at the craze for collegiate life and the pressure to conform. Lloyd's trademark "everyman" persona—earnest, naïve, and perpetually in over his head—makes the film both uproariously funny and surprisingly tender in its exploration of ambition, belonging, and self-respect.

Harold "Speedy" Lamb arrives at Tate College brimming with enthusiasm, his idea of campus life shaped entirely by a movie called "The College Hero." Determined to copy its hero's every move, he greets everyone with a ridiculous "college cheer" jig, instantly turning himself into the butt of every joke. Only Peggy (Jobyna Ralston), the kindhearted daughter of Harold's landlady, recognizes the sincerity beneath his awkwardness. The campus pranksters, led by a smirking upperclassman (Brooks Benedict), quickly mark him as an easy target and feed his illusions, laughing at him behind his back while he mistakes their amusement for friendship.

Hoping to prove his worth, Harold tries out for the football team but is relegated to water boy and tackling dummy. Undeterred, he shows up for every practice, taking a beating with a smile, believing he's part of the team. When he's persuaded to host the annual "Fall Frolic," he orders an expensive suit from a shady tailor who bastes it together with loose stitches. The result is one of the film's most celebrated sequences—a comic masterpiece of unraveling seams, quick improvisation, and desperate dignity.

On the day of the big game, a wave of injuries forces the coach to send Harold in at last. Against all odds, the awkward freshman makes the winning touchdown, finally earning the respect and friendship he had sought all along. In the final moments, as he embraces Peggy, Harold learns that true acceptance doesn't come from imitation but from authenticity and perseverance.

During the silent film era (roughly 1900–1929), films were distributed with cue sheets or compiled scores that instructed musicians on what to play to match scenes and timings. The largest movie palaces—New York's Roxy, the Capitol, and the Eastman Theater in Rochester—maintained full in-house orchestras of up to 100 players. Most smaller theaters, however, could not afford such luxury.

A bridge between the orchestra and the lone pianist came in the form of the "Unit Orchestra" theatre organ, developed by Robert Hope-Jones after arriving in the U.S. in 1903. His design, later manufactured by Wurlitzer, could imitate an orchestra with a full range of instrumental voices, percussion, and theatrical sound effects like horns, hoofbeats, and thunderclaps—perfect for the lively storytelling of silent film. At its height, the Wurlitzer factory in North Tonawanda produced around 100 instruments a day.

Theatre organists became celebrities in their own right, with Jesse Crawford of the Paramount Theater in New York earning up to \$1,000 a week (about \$17,000 today). But this golden age was short-lived: the 1927 release of *The Jazz Singer* ushered in synchronized sound, and the "Talkies" rapidly displaced live accompaniment. Many theaters kept their organs for a time, both for musical interludes and in case the sound reels failed, but the era faded almost overnight.

Today, restored theaters and preserved instruments keep the tradition alive for new generations of audiences. The Fisk organ, though not a theatre organ, admirably fulfills the same purpose—serving as a versatile and expressive instrument for live, improvised accompaniment. Tonight, it joins Harold Lloyd's *The Freshman* in celebrating one of the great moments of silent film history: a story of comedy, courage, and the enduring magic of live music with moving pictures.

Viewing of this film tonight is made possible with permission from Harold Lloyd Entertainment.

The Perkins and Wells Memorial Organ, C. B. Fisk, Opus 126, represents the vision of the people of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and the Greenville, NC, philanthropic community. Through generous donations and a grant from the Perkins and Wells Foundation, an exceptional organ was built for the congregation of St. Paul's and the wider musical community. The East Carolina Musical Arts Education Foundation serves as a guardian for this magnificent instrument. You can learn more about the organ at ecmaef.com.

ECMAEF wishes to thank Elaine Yontz for her valuable assistance, Clay Whittington for the program design, and those who helped prepare the space for tonight's performance.

Commended for his “masterful artistry” (*The Diapason*) and “stunning virtuosity and musicality” (*Choir and Organ*), **DAVID BASKEYFIELD** has earned a reputation as a captivating performer, known for intuitive interpretation and, above all, communicative musicianship: “Baskeyfield knows how to tell a story with the organ, and there seems to be no literature he cannot interpret convincingly” (*The American Organist*). His repertoire is wide and eclectic, as much at home with the music of the Old Masters of the 17th-century as the great 19th-century virtuosos. He is one of relatively few organists in North America to improvise regularly in recital, and is also in considerable demand for improvised accompaniments to silent movies.



Performance highlights across North America and Europe have included Chartres Cathedral; St. Sulpice, Paris; St. Bavo, Haarlem; St. Albans Cathedral, UK; Basilique de Notre Dame, Montreal; and Washington National Cathedral. He has inaugurated new instruments by Letourneau and Casavant.

In 2023, he was appointed to the joint positions of Organist and Choirmaster at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Greenville, NC, and Artistic Director of the East Carolina Musical Arts and Education Foundation, which supports programming on the St. Paul’s C. B. Fisk organ, opus 126, and seeks to promote the instrument through outreach at the local and national levels. He has since built up a large private studio, the St. Paul’s Fisk long distinguished as an exceptional teaching instrument.

Baskeyfield holds an MA in Law from Oxford University, and Master’s and Doctoral degrees from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, where he has also served on the faculty. First prizes in playing competitions include the Canadian International Organ Competition, St. Albans, Miami, Mader, and the AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation, all with audience prize.

He has been featured on American Public Media’s *Pipedreams* and NPR’s *With Heart and Voice*, and has recorded for Cantoris, Gothic, ATMA Classique, and Acis, including premieres of works by Tarik O’Regan, Philip Wilby, and Arvo Pärt. Alongside performing and teaching, Mr. Baskeyfield enjoys work as a collaborative pianist, continuo player, and ad hoc cocktail pianist. He has occasionally given theatre organ recitals.

He is an avid surf- and offshore fisherman, a pursuit he has come to indulge with alarming dedication since moving from upstate New York to eastern North Carolina. He shares his house with two English springer spaniels, Lucy and Wilbur.

David Baskeyfield is represented in North America by Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.

Servire

November 14, 2025 at 7:00pm

Suggested Donation \$25

An evening of music from a premier vocal ensemble, renowned for its exceptional artistry and commitment to community engagement. The ensemble will present a varied program of choral masterpieces from across the centuries as well as music of the modern day.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Matthew Moore, conductor • David Baskeyfield, organ

December 7, 2025 at 5:00pm

Freewill offering

Join us for a luminous evening combining scripture and song to tell the timeless story of Christmas, featuring combined choirs of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Greenville, and First Presbyterian Church, Goldsboro. Repeated at First Presbyterian Church, Goldsboro on December 14.

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Scan the QR code below to make a donation and join our community of supporters. Your gift helps preserve and share the beauty of the C.B. Fisk Opus 126 organ for generations to come.



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East Carolina Musical Arts Education Foundation Mission Statement

The mission of the Foundation is to maintain and promote the C.B. Fisk, Opus 126 pipe organ of St. Paul's Episcopal Church as a cultural treasure for the benefit of Greenville and other communities throughout Eastern North Carolina, through concerts, student development and educational offerings.

The continuation of the work of ECMAEF is dependent upon contributions from individuals who attend our concerts and who support our mission. You are cordially invited to help sustain ECMAEF by becoming a "Friend of the Fisk." All contributions are tax-deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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