01 How to get involved

Play The Organ Year 2025 has been launched to introduce people of all ages and backgrounds to the organ through concerts and opportunities to experience playing the instrument. The ultimate goal is to increase not only the number of people learning to play the organ but also the number hearing and appreciating live and recorded organ music. To do this, we are calling organists everywhere to get involved in one or more of the following ways.

A. Introduce one person (or more) to the organ

The simplest way to share our enthusiasm for the organ and its music is to introduce just one other person to the instrument during Play the Organ Year. You do not need to be an advanced player or have teaching experience to do this, and the person you are introducing to the organ does not have to have any prior musical experience. You can, of course, repeat these one-to-one sessions multiple times with different individuals!

Each session might ideally last between 30 and 60 minutes, and there is advice on how you might go about this on our guidance sheet *02 Introducing individuals to the organ*.

B. Run a Play the Organ workshop

Through *Play the Organ* workshops you can introduce a group of people to the organ, its music and how it is played. You will almost certainly need to enlist the help of others, perhaps from your chosen venue or your local organists' association (see **iao.org.uk/associations**) to run one or more of these. These sessions can be relatively informal, with the opportunity for participants to ask questions at various points and, importantly, for all who wish to do so to 'have a go' playing at some point during the workshop. For that reason, it is advisable to limit the number of those attending to 20 at most. If more wish to attend, consider running a second session! Depending on numbers, each session will likely last for 60–90 minutes.

Please see our guidance sheet *03 Running a Play the Organ* workshop for more information.

C. Perform or organise a First Encounter organ concert

As the name suggests, *First Encounter* concerts are aimed at people of all ages who have little or no prior experience of listening to organ music. If you are a church organist this could simply be your congregation who, although hearing organ music when they attend worship, will in general have little knowledge about the instrument, its music, how it works and how it is played. If you run a recital series, could one recital be a *First Encounter* concert?

If possible, at the end of the concert we would encourage you to allow those who wish to do so to try playing the organ. If time is limited, aim to run individual *Play the Organ* sessions as soon as possible after the concert. These could be in the same venue or another nearby, and could be led by local organists/organ teachers.

For further information, see our guidance sheets *04 Planning First Encounter concerts*, and *05 First Encounter repertoire and programming suggestions*.

D. Important – let us know how you got on!

We want to share the organ with a record number of people in 2025, so it's vital that as a Play the Organ Year event organiser, you let us know how you got on.

You can simply let us know how many people heard the organ (at a First Encounter recital) or got a chance to play it (at a Play the Organ session). Or, even better, you could take and send some photos of people at the organ console (following safeguarding rules if appropriate: in the UK this means that you first ask the permission of the parent/guardians of those aged under 18, offering to take only a back view if preferred). Ask your participants for their thoughts on the experience, and of course share your own.

You can email all of this to us at **play@rco.org.uk** or visit our website at **www.rco.org.uk/play** to complete the feedback form you will find there - to go straight to the form, just visit **www.surveymonkey.com/r/5W8P52H**