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DIANE MEREDITH BELCHER

Biography

Internationally renowned organist Diane Meredith Belcher made her debut at age fifteen in her hometown just outside Philadelphia. In the decades since, she has performed throughout the United States, in Europe, and in Canada to the acclaim of critics and audiences alike. A graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music and The Eastman School of Music, she has studied with David Spicer, John Weaver, Clarence Watters, David Craighead, and Wilma Jensen. Laureate of both the St. Albans (England) and Chartres (France) international organ competitions, she also took the American Guild of Organists' top prize in its professional certification examinations.

Concert appearances have included Disney Hall, Los Angeles; Benaroya Hall, Seattle; Saint Thomas Church, New York City; Grace Cathedral, San Francisco; Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago; the 100th anniversary concert of the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ, Philadelphia; West Point Cadet Chapel; Spivey Hall, Atlanta; Saint Alban's Cathedral, England; Portland City Hall, Maine; Girard College, Philadelphia; Cathedral of the Madeleine, Salt Lake City; First Congregational Church, Los Angeles; the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri; the Curtis Institute of Music's 80th birthday celebration honoring Ned Rorem; the Cleveland Museum of Art; and the Crystal Cathedral, Los Angeles. In May 2006 she was featured in recital on the opening weekend of the new organ in the Philadelphia's Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

Ms. Belcher has appeared regularly on the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ in Philadelphia, in duo-recital with trumpeter Rob Roy McGregor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and as soloist with numerous orchestras, including the Philadelphia, Hatfield (England), Jacksonville, Syracuse, Memphis, Wichita, Columbus (Georgia), and Curtis Symphony orchestras. She has several recordings to her credit, including a JAV release which won The Absolute Sound's Golden Ear Award for the year 2000, and is often featured on radio and television interviews and features such as Public Radio International's Pipedreams.

Diane Meredith Belcher is in frequent demand by her colleagues, having performed at numerous national and regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists, and at the national conventions of

the Royal Canadian College of Organists and the Organ Historical Society. Her sensational performance of the Jongen Symphonie Concertante with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the 2002 national convention of the American Guild of Organists created a thunderous standing ovation from an audience of nearly three thousand. She has led many workshops and master classes, and is in demand as a competition juror. Often she is asked to consult for pipe organ projects for churches or other institutions planning to install a new instrument. She has commissioned and premiered several organ compositions, and is herself the composer of a small body of sacred music.

Ms. Belcher has served as a church musician for over three decades, and was the founding director of the Memphis Concert Chorale. She currently serves as Music Director of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Hanover, New Hampshire, and Lecturer in Organ at Dartmouth College. Prior positions have included Director of Music/Organist at St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish in Beverly, Massachusetts, Organist/Choirmaster at Old St. Paul's in Baltimore, Maryland, and Co-Organist/Choirmaster at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, Philadelphia. She has taught organ extensively, serving on the faculties of University of Memphis, Tennessee, Westminster Choir College, and University of Pennsylvania, and freelances with such ensembles as the Buxtehude Consort and the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra.

Laudatory reviews of her playing have appeared in such publications as *Clavier*, *The New Records*, *The American Organist*, *Organists' Review*, *The Diapason*, and newspapers throughout the country and abroad. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* has described her playing as "alchemy ... definitely among the afternoon's high points," and the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* praised her "musical elegance, clarity, projection and mastery of style ... an amazing display of musical virtuosity of the highest order." Of her recordings, the German journal *Orgel International* states, "Diane Meredith Belcher's playing is exemplary in every respect," and *American Record Guide* calls her performances "glowingly brilliant, rhythmically vibrant, consistently expressive, and full of both atmosphere and personality – in short, everything that artistic organ playing should be."

Ms. Belcher is represented by Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc. of Cleveland, Ohio.

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