

JENS KORNDÖRFER

Biography

Dr. Jens Korndörfer is the incoming Associate Professor of Organ at Baylor University, where he will begin in August 2023.

Praised as “a virtuoso in the grand Romantic tradition” who creates “performances that are deeply musically satisfying as well as exciting” (*The American Organist*), Korndörfer is regularly invited at the most prestigious venues and festivals around the world. Highlights include solo concerts at Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, Merrill Auditorium in Portland (ME), Duke University Chapel, the Cathedral-Basilica in St. Louis, the Montreal Bach Festival, the Cathedrals in Washington, Berlin, Paris, Salzburg, Oslo, and Moscow, Westminster Abbey in London, the Royal Chapel in Versailles, the Frauenkirche in Dresden, the Minster in Ulm, Suntory Hall and Metropolitan Art Space in Tokyo, Kyoto Concert Hall, and the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong.

Korndörfer’s repertoire reaches from the Renaissance to the 21st century, including transcriptions, commissions and world premieres for organ solo, and organ with other instruments or choir. Widely recognized as a “prodigious technician” (*La Presse*, Montreal), his “effortless and poetic playing” (Susan Landale) “that is superior both technically and musically” (*The American Organist*), and his “well-planned, dramatic programming” (*Nordbayerischer Kurier*) delight both organ aficionados and first-time visitors alike. In addition to frequently collaborating with other musicians, he has also performed with ensembles such as the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra, and the Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini.

The eclectic nature of his interests is also manifest in his five commercial recordings on major instruments in Canada, France, Japan, and the USA. The recordings (one of them with the solo trumpeter of the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra) and Korndörfer’s live performances have been broadcast widely on dedicated radio channels such as Pipedreams, Organlive, and OrganRoxx.

Passionate about forming the next generation of organists, Korndörfer taught first at Agnes Scott College (2014–19) and, since 2017, has been directing the successful rebuild of the organ program at Georgia State University. Designed to prepare students for a successful career in church and concert, the comprehensive program includes classes in improvisation, choral conducting, and harpsichord in addition to organ performance; graduate assistantships in partnership with major churches in the Atlanta area provide first-rate insights into the day-to-day business of a church musician.

Frequently invited as guest speaker and clinician, Korndörfer has given master classes and presentations for chapters of the American Guild of Organists, at conventions, universities, and concert halls around the world. His research has been published in music journals such as *The Diapason*, *La Tribune de l'Orgue*, *Musica Sacra*, *The Organ*, and *The American Organist*, and he has served on the jury of several competitions.

As Director of Worship and the Arts and Organist at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, GA, Korndörfer oversees a thriving music and arts ministry. Under his leadership, the sanctuary organ was not only renovated, but enlarged to 112 ranks in 10 divisions, equipped with a state-of-the-art control system by Syndyne and completely re-voiced by organ builders Klais (Bonn, Germany) and Schlueter (Lithonia, GA). The church also just added a new Steinway Concert Grand Piano to its collection of instruments, and the concert series has expanded significantly in scope and attendance thanks to collaborations with major local cultural players (Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, HIGH Museum of Art, Atlanta Opera, Emory Chamber Music Society).

Acutely aware of the arts' responsibility towards our society, Korndörfer began a highly successful partnership with *Challenge the Stats*, an organization that raises awareness for minorities in the classical arts scene and helped create scholarship opportunities for children from minorities in the church's School of Fine Arts. Through presentations and lecture series on inter-

disciplinary topics in collaboration with FPC's resident theologian, and through creative events such as multi-media tours of the organ and lecture-recitals with organ arrangements of popular works, Korndörfer further increased the reach of the church's music and arts ministry in the city of Atlanta and beyond.

A top-honor graduate from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, the Oberlin Conservatory, the Musikhochschule in Bayreuth, and McGill University in Montreal, Korndörfer's teachers include Olivier Latry, Michel Bouvard, James David Christie, and Ludger Lohmann. His talent has also been recognized with numerous prizes and scholarship awards from the *Canadian International Organ Competition*, the *German Academic Exchange Service*, the Oberlin Conservatory (*Dean's Scholarship*), McGill-University (*Max Stern Fellowship*) and the Government of Quebec (*Quebec Merit Scholarship*).

Among Korndörfer's many formative experiences, his tenure as organist in residence at the Concert Hall *Kitara* in Sapporo, Japan, in the 2005/06 season is of particular importance: In addition to a packed schedule with performances, recordings and teaching all over Japan, he was particularly inspired by the imaginative marketing and highly creative outreach efforts of the hall's administration, which resulted in frequently sold-out organ concerts (a rare occurrence in the Western World) and a very diverse audience that included all age groups. Ever since, Korndörfer's goal has been to create similar opportunities to make the arts and especially the organ as successful as they are in Sapporo.

More information on Jens Korndörfer can be found at www.jenskorndoefer.com.

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