

KATELYN EMERSON

Full-length Biography

Organist, lecturer, and pedagogue Katelyn Emerson, hailed as “one of her generation’s most prominent organists” (*Portland Press Herald*) and “the perfect interpreter” (*Glasgow Times*), is internationally renowned for performances of repertoire from the 14th — 21st centuries that are “thrilling from beginning to end” (*Cleveland Classical*) and met with “thunderous applause” (*Reinische Post*). Upcoming and past recital venues include Cathédrale Notre-Dame (Paris), Musiikkitalo (Helsinki, Finland), Walt Disney Hall (Los Angeles, California), Hallgrímskirkja (Reykjavik, Iceland), Auditorio Nacional de Música (Madrid, Spain), Krasnoyarsk Philharmonic Hall (Russia), Cathédrale Saint-Omer (France), Kurhaus Wiesbaden (Germany), Cathédrale St-Quentin (Hasselt, Belgium), Basílica de Santa Maria de Montserrat (Spain), Hauptkirche St. Petri (Hamburg, Germany), Riverside Church (New York), Västerås Cathedral (Sweden), Longwood Gardens (Pennsylvania), Musashino Civic Cultural Hall (Japan), Cadet Chapel (West Point, New York), Benaroya Hall (Seattle, Washington), Methuen Memorial Music Hall (Massachusetts), Uppsala domkyrka (Sweden), and Merrill Auditorium (Portland, Maine), among others, as well as inaugural performances celebrating organ installations at Brasenose College (Oxford, England) and St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue and Trinity Wall Street (both New York).

Prizewinner of competitions on three continents, Katelyn garners acclaim from listeners new to classical music and audiences of organ aficionados and colleagues alike for her “beautifully designed program[s]” (*Orgue Canada*), “refreshingly original and interesting” program notes (*The Diapason*), and “careful ear and sense of musicality that puts her at the top of recitalists performing today” (*Journal of American Organbuilding*). Having been awarded first prize in the American Guild of Organists’ (AGO) 2016 National Young Artists' Competition in Organ Performance (Houston, Texas), the Guild’s premier performance competition, Katelyn performed at the 2018 National Convention of the AGO in Kansas City (Missouri) after having given over 70 concerts throughout the United States and Europe in the intervening two years. She received the Second Jean Boyer Award in the 2014 Fifth International Organ Competition “Pierre de Manchicourt” (Béthune and Saint-Omer, France), the second prize of the 2015 Arthur Poister Scholarship Competition (Syracuse, New York), and the third prize of the VIII Musashino International Organ Competition (Tokyo, Japan). Katelyn was awarded the title of “Laureate” and Third Place, as well as recital prizes, when competing as the youngest finalist in

the VIII Mikael Tariverdiev International Organ Competition (Kaliningrad, Russia). Winner of the 2011 Region V AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists (Lexington, Kentucky), She has also received numerous scholarships for her musical and academic work, including the 2013 M. Louise Miller Scholarship and the 2015 McClelland Community Music Foundation Scholarship. Katelyn was selected as part of the inaugural “20 under 30 – Class of 2015” for *The Diapason* magazine, a group of “young talents in the fields of organ and harpsichord performance, organ and harpsichord building, carillon, and church music” who show “superior accomplishments, leadership, creativity, and innovative thinking.” Katelyn’s two CD recordings appear on the Pro Organo label: *Evocations*_(2017), featuring the historic 1936 Aeolian-Skinner organ at the Church of the Advent (Boston, Massachusetts) and *Inspirations* (2018), sponsored by the Andover Organ Company in honor of their 70th anniversary and recorded on their Op. 114 at Christ Lutheran Church (Baltimore, Maryland). Her interviews and performances have been broadcast on radio programs that include *Radio Russia*, American Public Media’s *Pipedreams*, WXXI-FM’s *With Heart and Voice*, Radio VM’s *Récit au grand orgue*, Québec, Canada, and *Radio Présence*, Toulouse, France.

Between travels for performances, Katelyn is based in both the USA and the UK as a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge's Centre for Music and Science, funded by a 1+3 Studentship from the Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Training Partnership (ESRC DTP) and a Bursary from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Katelyn holds a Master of Arts in organ from the *Musikhochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst* (Stuttgart, Germany), supported by a German Academic Exchange Scholarship (DAAD), and an MPhil in Music from the University of Cambridge. Having been awarded a prestigious J. William Fulbright Study/Research Grant, Katelyn additionally studied organ *en perfectionnement* at the *Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Toulouse* (France) with Michel Bouvard and Jan Willem Jansen. She holds double bachelor’s degrees in organ performance and French as well as minors in music history and historical performance (fortepiano) from Oberlin College & Conservatory (Ohio). While at Oberlin, she taught music theory at the Oberlin Community Music School, received the Selby Harlan Houston prize for distinguished work in organ and music theory, and was inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda, the national music honors society. Other scholarships to support her musical and academic work include the 2015 McClelland Community Music Foundation Scholarship, the 2013 M. Louise Miller Scholarship, and a 2005 Young Organist Collaborative scholarship. Her teachers have included Ludger Lohmann, Olivier

Latry, Hans-Ola Ericsson, James David Christie, Marie-Louise Langlais, Ray Cornils, and Abbey Hallberg-Siegfried. She has studied improvisation with Jeffrey Brillhart, Marie-Louise Langlais, and Bálint Karosi, piano with Arlene Kies, fortepiano with David Breitman and Yasuko Uyama-Bouvard, and both harpsichord and continuo with Webb Wiggins.

In addition to teaching privately and coaching students preparing for international playing competitions and exams, Katelyn frequently accepts invitations to join the faculties of organ academies around the world, recently including the St. Andrews Organ Academy (Scotland, UK), McGill Student Organ Academy (Montréal, Canada), Oberlin Summer Organ Academy (Ohio, USA), and over a dozen AGO-sponsored Pipe Organ Encounters. She is often invited to adjudicate national and international organ interpretation and church music competitions and scholarships, most recently the 2025 Concours International pour Orgue de Saint-Maurice (Switzerland), the 2025 AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists (Phoenix, Arizona), and the 2024 IAO-RCO Organ Playing Competition (York, England). At the University of Cambridge, she has supervised undergraduate students in their research in performance studies and coordinates masterclasses, private lessons, and educational events for the University-wide Organ Scholars Forum. Having received a Certificate in Advanced Occupational Ergonomics from Colorado State University, a fundamental part of Katelyn's pedagogy emphasizes injury prevention and recovery and she has been invited to present dozens of masterclasses and lectures on preventing and recovering from playing-related or performance-impacting injuries, healthy practice techniques, organ interpretation, and sacred music at universities and other educational institutions around the USA, Canada, and the UK.

Katelyn previously held the posts of Associate Organist & Choirmaster at the Church of the Advent (Boston, Massachusetts), where she worked with the professional Choir of the Church of the Advent, the volunteer Parish Choir, and the historic Aeolian-Skinner organ, music director of St. Paul Lutheran Church (Amherst, Ohio), and Oberlin Sacred Music Intern at the Brick Presbyterian Church (New York, New York). In addition to volunteering with charity organizations such as Scotland's *Sowne of Organe* to increase public awareness of the cultural and technological significance of extant historic organs, Katelyn serves on the Membership Committee of the Organ Historical Society and as webmaster of the European Chapter of the AGO.

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