

KATELYN EMERSON
Press Notices

“Oberlin graduate Katelyn Emerson showed impressive technical facility and musicianship in her first Cleveland recital since winning First Prize in the American Guild of Organists [*sic*] National Young Artists Competition.

“... from Robert Schumann’s *Six Fugues on BACH* ... the scherzo-like No. [5] was charming, and the organist managed its highly-articulated theme and tricky counterpoint with ease.

“... [In] the opening movement of Charles-Marie Widor’s *Symphony No. 6*, a set of variations on a majestic march-like chorale in which technical brilliance trumps all else[,] Emerson’s performance was thrilling from beginning to end.

“... Maurice Duruflé’s “Sicilienne” from the *Suite*, Op. 5, sounded splendid ... This was one of the best performances on the program.

“Emerson also gave an astonishing reading of Louis Vierne’s *Naiades* (“Water nymphs”) from his *Pièces de fantaisie*, Op. 55. An unending stream of sixteenth notes on soft flute registers in counterpoint with a gentle melody on string stops, the piece is unrelentingly transparent. Any flaw is immediately audible. Had the organist played nothing else but *Naiades*, it would still have been worth attending the concert.

“Emerson ended the program with the craggy Prelude from Marcel Dupré’s *Symphony II*. Here, Dupré’s music is at its most jagged and dissonant — surprising in its modernism, and episodic, with many short, fragmented themes assembled, developed, and reassembled. Emerson gave it an impressive reading — an aggressive closing to a program of large works.”

Timothy Robson, ClevelandClassical.com, November 21, 2016

“Katelyn Emerson’s demonstration of the Mother Church organ [Boston, MA] really blew us away. Not in the least afraid of this 242-rank instrument, she commanded every bit of it with a careful ear and sense of musicality that puts her at the top of recitalists performing today.”

Journal of American Organbuilding, November 2016

“... first prize-winner of this year’s NYACOP, Katelyn Emerson, who gave a stunning recital at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church the day before the convention. Her strong background in historical performance was evident in the Buxtehude *D-minor Praeludium*, B[ux]WV 140, which she interpreted stylishly despite the organ’s antithetical aesthetic. Her playing demonstrated a strong command of rhythm and wonderful sense of pacing, whether in the lilting flow of Vierne’s *Naiades* or in the rhetorical flourishes of Tournemire’s *Victimae paschali*. A highlight of Emerson’s program was Thierry Escaich’s *Evocation* (2008), which she interpreted with great sensitivity, shaping its minimalist textures into compelling phrases. Her expert handling of the organ was apparent throughout, especially in the lyrical lines of Frank Bridge’s *Adagio* and in the first movement of Dupré’s *Symphonie II in C-sharp minor*, which concluded the program with exciting artistry.”

The American Organist, September 2016

“Emerson ... shows every indication that she will become one of her generation’s most prominent organists.

“Emerson is an assured, thoughtful interpreter whose strength lies in an ability to marshal the power of seemingly opposing qualities. She conveyed the excitement within the works she played ... by taking a calm, reasoned approach and allowing the music’s tensions to build without

overstatement. Her approach to coloration is subtle, rather than showing, yet ... she draws widely on the instrument's resources, and she is not afraid of a true pianissimo.

"Perhaps most crucially, in works as varied as Herbert Howells' *Rhapsody* (Op. 17, No. 3), Jehan Alain's "Litanies" (JA 119) and Mozart's *Fantasia* (K608), she focused on the music's heft and breadth, yet within the sweep of her readings, she did full justice to the works' considerable intricacies."

Allan Kozinn, Portland Press Herald, August 2016

"... Katelyn Emerson dazzled ..."

The American Organist, September 2014

"... exciting and musical playing ... I feel encouraged about the future of the organ returning to the forefront as a recital instrument. You are certainly a rising star."

L'Organo, June 2014

"Even from a distance, one can sense the gentle strength of Katelyn Emerson – in her hands, the instrument is a mere toy."

MKRU Days Trubinov, September 2013

"Katelyn stood out for her musicality, elegance in performance, and several of the judges independently used the word 'breathtaking' in her performance of ... Tournemire."

M. Louise Miller Scholarship Committee, July 2013

"Impressive rendition ... tastefully and elegantly played ... perfectly executed."

The American Organist, October 2012

"Amazing, incredible, and inspiring were just some of the adjectives I heard our members use to describe [Katelyn's] seemingly effortless performance."

Lexington Chapter, American Guild of Organists, October 2012

"Oberlin Sophomore Katelyn Emerson's strong technique and fiery musicality was especially evident ... She is indeed a 'Rising Star' in the organ world. Keep an eye out for her."

The Boston Music Intelligencer, August 2012

"In her energetic and demanding performance, Katelyn proved mastery in utilizing all the resources of the [organ's] ranks and ... keyboards, not to mention her own agile footwork ... Katelyn rose to and surpassed the [challenge] of this superlative performance with musical precision and sumptuous towering chords. She seamlessly executed intricate manual changes with the magnificence of a world-class full orchestra. A standing ovation underscored the audience's appreciation and admiration."

Worcester Chapter, American Guild of Organists, August 2011

"Katelyn Emerson played like a seasoned professional organ recitalist ... expressing power and control from the opening phrases ... to the impressive footwork ... [and] demonstrated a firmly considered interpretation ... This is a career to watch as more is added to [Ms. Emerson's] repertoire beyond this already impressive ... achievement."

Classical Voices of New England, July 2010

RECORDING REVIEWS

Evocations Pro Organo 7277

Katelyn Emerson plays the Aeolian-Skinner organ at Church of the Advent, Boston

“Fresh off her first prize win at the 2016 American Guild of Organists National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance, Katelyn Emerson has produced this very impressive album of organ works, spanning over 300 years of organ history ... What a powerful piece of music [Bruhns’s *Praeludium in E Minor*] is. I replayed it three times, and each time it gave me goosebumps ... Katelyn Emerson has given us an organ recital that is masterful in execution, in turns majestic in its musical power and deeply moving in its ministering comfort ... For all organ aficionados, this album is a must.”

*Jerry Dubins, **Fanfare Magazine**, November 2017*