

Minister of Music Mark Laubach

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Mark Laubach is regarded among the finest organists of his generation in the US. Since winning first prize in the 1984 American Guild of Organists (AGO) National Young Artists' Competition in Organ Performance, he has concertized throughout the USA and Great Britain in some of the most notable concert venues, and continues to be in high demand for solo performances throughout the US and abroad. He has played and lectured for national and regional gatherings of the AGO in Charleston WV, Louisville KY, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Richmond VA, and San Francisco, and of the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM) in Lancaster PA, Washington, D.C., and Wilmington DE. In the USA, he has concertized in major venues including the Kennedy Center, the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.; St. Thomas's Church, St. Bartholomew's Church, Riverside Church, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City; the Cadet Chapel at West Point Military Academy; the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California; Trinity Church in Boston; Grace Cathedral in San Francisco; St. John's Cathedral in Denver; St. Philip's Cathedral in Atlanta; Methuen Memorial Music Hall in Methuen MA; and other churches, chapels, and concert halls in Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus OH, Hartford, Houston, Jackson MS, Kansas City, Lincoln NE, Memphis, Oklahoma City, Richmond, and San Antonio. In Great Britain, he has performed in the cathedrals of Bristol, Chichester, Gloucester, Lincoln, London (Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral), Norwich, Wells, and at the famed Chapel of King's College in Cambridge.

Mr. Laubach's first recorded compact disc, *Teutonic Titanics*, released in 1995 on the Pro Organo label, features works by Wagner, Reubke, and Liszt. A critique by Paul Hale in *Organists' Review* magazine (UK) evaluates Laubach's playing as "beyond reproach...his depth of feeling and passionate (yet controlled) declamation is completely satisfying". William Maddox, in *Organ Alternatives* (Canada), writes, "...Only a performer of great musicality, insight and conviction (coupled with a fair degree of daring) can not only bring off a performance such as this, but also still do justice to the composer's intentions." Mr. Laubach's second Pro Organo disc, *French Fest*, was recorded in 1997 on the Berghaus organ at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, Illinois, featuring works of Tournemire, Franck, Dupré, Duruflé, Alain, and Vierne. In a review in the January 1998 edition of *The Journal of the Association of Anglican Musicians*, G. Donald Kaye writes that Laubach's recording of Dupré's *Variations sur un Noël*, Op. 20 "has to stand with the best - breathtaking! He continues, "Throughout this disc we are confronted with playing which dares comparison for its sheer brilliance and understanding of the muse." In another review of *French Fest* appearing in the April 1998 *Diapason* magazine, critic Bernard Durman writes, "This new CD should serve as a reference of high standards for measuring all recordings of this repertoire, and should also serve as a fine introduction to the romantic and early 20th-century French school. Highly recommended." Mark has also appeared as a guest performer on the syndicated television series, *Midnight Pipes*.

Mark Laubach's earliest musical training, begun at age six, included piano study with Earl Bryan Seip of Palmerton, PA, and organ study with Clinton Miller of Allentown, PA. In 1982, he received a bachelor's degree in Church Music, magna cum laude, from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, studying organ with George Markey and Donald McDonald and harpsichord with Mark Brombaugh. In 1984, he received a master's degree in Organ Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY, where he studied organ with David Craighead and harpsichord with Arthur Haas. Mr. Laubach has also performed in master classes and coached with Robert Carwithen, Wilma Jensen, Joan Lippincott, Thomas Murray, Arthur Poister, Eugene Roan, Russell Saunders, Fred Swann, and Harald Vogel. In 1984, Mr. Laubach was the recipient of a one-year appointment as Fellow in Church Music at Washington National Cathedral, serving as an apprentice to Richard Wayne Dirksen and Douglas Major.

Since January 1986, Mark Laubach has served as Minister of Music at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Wilkes-Barre PA, where he administers a busy liturgical, choral, concert, and broadcasting schedule. In 2002, under Mr. Laubach's leadership, St. Stephen's large pipe organ was rebuilt by the Berghaus Organ Company of Chicago. This instrument now stands among the finest of its type in the Mid-Atlantic region, having won high praise from organists and audiences. In 1996 at St. Stephen's, Laubach served as Music Director for the Consecration of the Right Reverend Paul Marshall as Bishop of Bethlehem. In 2000, Bishop Marshall designated St. Stephen's the Pro-Cathedral for the diocese. Mr. Laubach continues to be active in music and liturgy endeavors within the Diocese of Bethlehem, and served as a diocesan deputy to the Episcopal Church's General Convention in Minneapolis in 2003.

Mr. Laubach also continues a busy schedule of teaching and coaching private organ students and organ and church music students enrolled at Marywood University in Scranton, PA. Several of Mr. Laubach's students have distinguished themselves in competitions, continuing studies, and as church musicians. Mr. Laubach has served as a faculty member for Pipe Organ Encounters sponsored by the AGO, and as an adjudicator for numerous organ competitions. He has presented master classes for AGO chapters, and is in frequent demand as a lecturer for workshops in church music, focusing on such topics as liturgical planning, hymnody, basic improvisation, pastoral skills, and service playing skills.

Mark Laubach is a past regional chairman of AAM, a past dean and executive board member of the PA Northeast Chapter of the AGO, and a member of the Organ Historical Society. He is active in the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) in America, having participated as an organist for its summer training courses at Valley Forge in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, this same course was moved to St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre, and was managed by Mr. Laubach from 1996 through 1998. He continues to serve as host and organist for this annual course, which attracts nearly 200 children and adults from across the country each year.