

Stephen Williams

Stephen Williams is Director of Music and Organist at St. John's Lutheran Church in center-city Allentown, Pennsylvania, and concurrently College Organist, Director of Chapel Music, and Visiting Lecturer in Music at Muhlenberg College. His summa cum laude undergraduate and graduate degrees are from Brevard College and West Chester University, and he has completed extensive degree work and organ study at Westminster Choir College of Ryder University and The Juilliard School. His organ instructors include Marilyn Keiser, Adelaide Miller, Donald McDonald, Jon Gillock, Stefan Engels, and Anita Greenlee. He is the recipient of a number of academic merit awards including the Lomench Organ Scholarship, Linares Organ Award, Clark Organ Scholarship, McClure Organ Scholarship, and the Elaine Isaacson Brown Award in Conducting. He is also a prize winner in two American Guild of Organists Chapter competitions and the Arthur Poister Organ Playing Competition. He is founder and coordinator of the Arts at St. John's annual concert series, where he introduced to the community ongoing popular weekday Noon-Ten Concerts, Christmas Day Organ Noëls, and has performed nearly one hundred solo organ recitals. In 2001-02, he performed the entire organ works of J. S. Bach in eighteen recitals using nine prominent Lehigh Valley pipe organs. He repeated this feat to critical acclaim during the summer of 2004. He has also performed and lectured on the complete organ works of Johannes Brahms, the six symphonies of Louis Vierne, and the early works of Olivier Messiaen. Stephen maintains an active concert schedule, having performed in many notable venues in the US, Canada, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and France. Locally, he has been a repeat guest artist at Musikfest of Bethlehem, Music in the Old Moravian Chapel in Bethlehem, the annual LVAGO Bach Marathon, Music from St. Stephen's and WVIA Radio in Scranton, and Lenten Recitals at First Presbyterian, Allentown. As an accompanist, conducting assistant and vocal coach, he has worked with the Symphonic Choir, Westminster Choir, and Schola Cantorum of Westminster Choir College, the Juilliard School choral and vocal arts, Lehigh University Choir and Choral Union, Gloria Dei Chorale of Allentown, Cathedral Choral Society and Concord Chamber Singers of Bethlehem, Camerata Singers of Allentown, the Muhlenberg Musical Theatre Department, and he has recorded extensively for Shawnee Press and Warner Brothers music publishers. In 2011, he appeared as concerto soloist with the Monocacy Chamber Orchestra and the SATORI chamber ensemble performing works of Barber, Rheinberger, Handel, Bédard, Bixi and Poulenc, and as guest artist with the Philadelphia Brass. In 2006, Stephen received the City of Allentown's *Arts Ovation Award* for noted excellence in performance and community artistic achievement, and is the only organist to have received this award. He is a past-Dean of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, having served three consecutive terms. He enjoys traveling home to South Carolina about twice a year to visit his folks, and without too much arm-twisting, usually ends up playing services and concerts for his sister who is director of music and organist in a prominent Charleston church.

