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GEORGE BAKER **Biography**

A native of Dallas, a young George Baker won the American Guild of Organists National Competition in Organ Playing in 1970 and created a sensation in the organ world with his subsequent featured recital for that organization's national convention two years later. He then went to Paris to study organ and improvisation as well as to record. He returned to America to teach organ, then entered medical school. Almost four decades later he has come full circle, returning to music as a performer, improviser, composer and teacher.

George Baker has received training with some of the finest organ teachers of the twentieth century. He obtained his bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University under Robert Anderson, after which he traveled to Paris to study with Marie-Claire Alain, Pierre Cochereau, Jean Langlais, André Marchal, and Nadia Boulanger. During his time in France, Baker earned the Prix de Virtuosit  with Mention Maximum from the Schola Cantorum, under Langlais. Ultimately, he returned to the United States where he earned a Master of Music degree on full scholarship from the University of Miami, a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan and began teaching at Catholic University in Washington D.C. before deciding to undertake the challenge of becoming a medical doctor. Although he obtained his M.D. in 1987 and practiced dermatology for thirty-two years, Dr. Baker never ceased performing, composing, teaching and recording.

In his early years as a musician, George Baker won first prizes by unanimous jury decisions in several major organ competitions including the American Guild of Organists (Buffalo, 1970), the Grand Prix de Chartres (Chartres, France, 1974) and the International Improvisation Competition (Lyon, France, 1979). His recording credits include the complete

organ works of J. S. Bach (1979, the first to be recorded by an American artist) and the complete organ works of Louis Vierne (world premiere recording, released in 1994, a project he shared with Pierre Cochereau). He has been awarded three French Grand Prix du Disque, two of which were for *The Complete Organ Works of Darius Milhaud*. In 1995, the eight-CD Vierne set won the coveted Grand Prix Spécial du Jury from the Nouvelle Académie du Disque Français. In 2000, the same recording won a critic's choice award from American Record Guide. Other recordings include works of Langlais, Reger, Hindemith, Clérambault, DuMège, Ives, Sowerby, and Dupré.

George Baker's compositions, published by H. T. Fitzsimmons, Fred Bock Music, Baroque Notes Inc., and Gentry Publications, have been performed both in the United States and in Europe. His commissioned work, *Variations on 'Rouen'*, received its world premiere in the September 13, 2010, *PipeDreams Live!* concert at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas and its European premiere in concert at St-Sulpice in Paris on September 26. Other commissioned works have been created for Stephen Tharp, Nathan Laube, Renée Anne Louprette, Doug Cleveland, Ken Cowan, and Damin Spritzer. His new work, *Le Tombeau de Jean Langlais*, was premiered by Stefan Engels at the Seattle AGO 2022 convention.

Dr. Baker has served on juries in several prestigious organ competitions including the Grand Prix de Chartres in 2000, 2004 and 2016. Special areas of interest include the music of Louis Vierne and Maurice Duruflé, improvisation in the French style, and the organ building of Aristide Cavallé-Coll. He is in demand as a consultant for organ building and restoration projects. Currently, Dr. Baker is Adjunct Associate Professor of Organ at SMU, where he teaches organ improvisation.

In 2003, Naxos released Volume 13 of *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré*, recorded on the restored and enlarged Perkins Chapel organ at SMU. In 2007, he recorded a CD of the works

of his teacher Jean Langlais on the famous 1888 Cavaillé-Coll organ of St-Sernin de Toulouse. The following year, he recorded three of his own works at St-Sulpice in Paris as part of a CD honoring his former mentor, Pierre Cochereau. These two CDs were released on the Solstice label (France). On March 7, 2009, Baker was one of three Cochereau students chosen to play a special concert at Notre-Dame de Paris, honoring the twenty-fifth anniversary of Cochereau's death. His *Toccata-Gigue on the Sussex Carol* was performed at the 2009 King's College Cambridge Lessons and Carols service, which was broadcast around the world on BBC Radio. As a filmmaker, Baker released a DVD video workshop titled *Organ Improvisation* (2011). This unique DVD features Paris Conservatoire improvisation professor emeritus and Notre-Dame de Paris titular organist Philippe Lefèbvre.

George Baker first appeared on the roster of Karen McFarlane Artists as a young artist, to which he has returned at the beginning of the new millennium.

George Baker's personal website: www.drgeorgebaker.com

George Baker's compositions: www.baroquenotesmusic.com

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