

# Pianist's Guide to Church Organ Playing

This booklet provides an orientation to the organ and practical guidance that enables a pianist to play the organ for church services in a musically satisfying way. It explains how the instrument works, how to use its control devices, and how to make choices that serve the music well. It describes the adaptations of piano technique needed to make pieces sound their best on the organ. It offers specific tips for playing hymns and accompanying solos, and it provides an introduction to simple pedal playing — ways pianists can enhance their organ playing with little or no extra practice.

The ideas presented in this booklet have helped pianists who accepted the call to serve as a church organist to become “good organists” in the eyes (and ears) of their congregations.

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## **About the Author**

Kevin McCarter began taking piano lessons while in elementary school. During his senior year at Principia College, he studied organ as a second instrument, and he began playing the organ for church services the following year. He later earned a Master of Music in accompanying at the University of Southern California and then studied organ while completing a Master of Music in composition at Ball State University. He also attended the Richner-Strong Institute of Church Music at Colby College for several summers. His Doctor of Musical Arts is in composition, from the University of Maryland. He played the organ for churches in the several cities where he lived during his graduate studies, and he now works as a composer and organist in the New York area.