

GRAEME SHIELDS

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FULL BIO (361 words)

www.GraemeShields.com

Graeme Shields is a Canadian-American composer and organist whose influences range from the Lutheran music tradition to the experimental confidence of the avant-garde. His compositions, often exercises in dry humour and eccentricity, aim to articulate the mysteries of the past, the spirit, and the unknown. His music features repetition, audible process, stark juxtaposition, theatrical elements, and a bricolage approach to harmonic language. Through these features and influences, he has generated a body of work that breathes new life into ancient elements like old-world folk tunes and extinct pagan rituals.

Graeme has had works performed across the United States, Canada, Finland, and Russia at events such as Florida State University's New Music Festival, Greenlight New Music Festival, and the Silver Sounds International Chamber Music Competition. His work has been recognized by the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival and the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra. He has also enjoyed artist residencies at Warbler's Roost in South River, ON and Azule in Hot Springs, NC.

As an organist, Graeme is a founding member of Vital Organ Project (VOP): a non-profit that facilitates the creation, education, and performance of new music featuring the abilities and distinction of the pipe organ. Through concerts of modern repertoire and ongoing premieres of new works, VOP showcases the true versatility of the organ and its relevance to the 21st century. Since its inception in 2017, VOP has been the catalyst for over 25 world premieres and 30 concert events across the US and Canada.

Shields has held numerous organist and accompanist positions across the American Midwest, including Organ Scholar at Calvary Episcopal in Cincinnati where he had the privilege to work with Howard Helvey. He was also the sole accompanist for the Turkish American Musical Theatre Alliance, for which he traveled to Istanbul in 2013. These positions have fostered his love for collaborative work and led to his organization of multiple recitals, concert series, and commissions of new music. He currently serves as the Director of Music Ministries at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hinsdale, IL.

Graeme holds degrees from Western Michigan University and the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Primary teachers have included Michael Fiday, Christopher Biggs, Lisa Coons, and Justin Rubin. || www.GraemeShields.com