

Deanna Witkowski- short bio

Winner of the Great American Jazz Piano Competition and a past guest on Marian McPartland's *Piano Jazz*, New York based pianist, composer and vocalist Deanna Witkowski has been heralded for her “consistently thrilling” playing (All Music Guide). An “astonishingly versatile bandleader” (Time Out New York), Witkowski’s six recordings include liturgical music, Brazilian jazz, improvisations on classical works, and arrangements of Cole Porter standards that showcase her boundless imagination and brilliant technique. An expert on the liturgical music of Mary Lou Williams, she is currently writing a biography, *Mary Lou Williams: Music for the Soul*, to be published by Liturgical Press in 2020.

Visit Deanna online at deannajazz.com.

Deanna Witkowski- medium bio

Winner of the Great American Jazz Piano Competition and a past guest on Marian McPartland's *Piano Jazz*, New York based pianist, composer and vocalist Deanna Witkowski has been heralded for her “consistently thrilling” playing (All Music Guide). An “astonishingly versatile bandleader” (Time Out New York), Witkowski’s six recordings include Brazilian jazz, liturgical music, four part choral works, solo improvisations on pieces by Chopin, and trio arrangements of Cole Porter standards that showcase her boundless imagination and brilliant technique.

An award-winning composer, Witkowski’s catalog includes eighty sacred music originals and arrangements, including two jazz Masses. Her SATB hymn, “We Walk in Love,” appears in the Justice Choir songbook and was sung by the 1000 voice St. Olaf Choral Festival choir in November 2018. In 2017, Witkowski won the ChoralArt New England Carol Contest; the Colorado Chorale commissioning contest; and the annual hymn search sponsored by the Hymn Society of the US and Canada.

An expert on the liturgical music of Mary Lou Williams, Witkowski is currently writing a biography, *Mary Lou Williams: Music for the Soul*, to be published by Liturgical Press in 2020. Witkowski has given performance-lectures on Williams at the University of Pittsburgh, the Kennedy Center, and Duke University. She is currently booking a 2020-21 concert tour bringing her trio together with local community choirs to perform sacred music by both Williams and herself in tandem with the book’s release.

Committed to sharing resources with others, Witkowski is an active clinician for church musicians seeking new ways to enliven congregational song. Her workshops and lectures have been presented at colleges, chapters of the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, and at national conferences for the Hymn Society and the International Thomas Merton Society. Her 2017 recording/sheet music book, *Makes the Heart to Sing: Jazz Hymns*, features 14

jazz arrangements of standard hymn tunes and has been purchased by over 200 churches.

Witkowski's current composition-recording project, the *Nossa Senhora Suite*, merges Afro-Brazilian expressions of the Virgin Mary and jazz in a new work for her quartet, percussion, and four vocalists. Witkowski began research for the project in the spring of 2018 when she spent eight weeks on the island of Itaparica, Bahia, Brazil on a Sacatar Institute Fellowship. Fluent in Portuguese, she interviewed women devotees of Mary and visited Catholic and candomblé religious ceremonies. Witkowski will release the *Nossa Senhora Suite* as her seventh album in 2020.

Witkowski holds a M.A. in jazz studies from the City College of New York and a B.M. in classical piano performance from Wheaton College (IL).

Visit Deanna online at deannajazz.com.