



Quotes from pastors and music directors:

Deanna Witkowski has combined The Spirituality of the Soul and Heart with The Spirituality of Jazz. These performances are, above all, prayerful. They are also properly liturgical and should be sung and played in churches. Ms. Witkowski continues the work of Mary Lou Williams who was the first major jazz artist to compose for liturgical purposes. This music is 'healing to the Soul'.

-Rev. Peter F. O'Brien, SJ, Executive Director of The Mary Lou Williams Foundation

Vulnerable, soulful depth through a graceful harmonic approach. This music is a gift and an inspiration to listeners everywhere seeking new songs and ideas for worship.

-Ike Sturm, Assistant Director of Music for the Jazz Ministry at Saint Peter's Church, New York

Deanna's sensitive, searching musical voice beckons you to join her explorations of the spirit.

-Cary Ratcliff, composer, music director, Bethany Presbyterian, Rochester, NY

Deanna's music is dynamic and moving as she weaves the sacred and secular into food for the spiritual soul.

-Rev. Judy Lee Hay, pastor, Calvary St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Rochester, NY

Deanna brings a rare musical intelligence to the music of the liturgy, supporting the familiar texts of the church with inventive melodies and rich harmonic movement. She's a major talent who has much to offer to the worlds of jazz and faith.

-Bill Carter, jazz pianist and pastor, First Presbyterian, Clarks Summit, PA

Deanna's music has come along when we as church musicians need it the most. Her language is unique and fresh, and her melodies are singable by professional and amateur alike. Deanna brings soul to texts that may have passed away from the mainstream.

-Paul Klemme, music director, St. Paul's Episcopal, Salem, OR

Deanna's work as a professional musician is undergirded by a rich spiritual life. She has a deep understanding of the rhythm and flow of worship.

-Rev. Debra Avery, pastor, Hope Presbyterian, Springfield, IL

Seeing the kinetic event of Deanna's music is reserved for the fortunate at live concerts. But hearing the extraordinary vitality of her piano and her voice is open to all. In traditional material and in works fresh from her own creative spirit, Deanna is in touch with some muse in the depths which she meets and makes known to us all.
-Rev. Stephen Phelps, pastor, Central Presbyterian, Buffalo, NY

Thank you for your wonderful music at the Jazz and the Church Conference. Your playing and writing brought up a wealth of tears deep within me. Thank you for leading me into that place where God is.
-Rev. Dr. Nash Garabedian, Jr., pastor, United Church of Christ, Wells, ME

Deanna's sacred concert was a magnificent event, exceeding everyone's expectations in both artistic achievement and spiritual impact. Her approach was sensitive, highly expressive, and focused on the praise of God and on provoking the audience to meditate on God's love and role in our lives.
-Howard Whitaker, Ph.D, professor of composition, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL; music director, Emmanuel Presbyterian, Williamsville, IL

When David danced before the Arc of God, some folk were scandalized, but God was pleased, for David's dance was an expression of his joyful abandon to the Spirit of the living God. Witkowski's playing has that same spirit of joyful abandon. God's love poured out and touched even those who were convinced that jazz was not even good music, let alone a means of grace. When our jazz service ended the first person to speak with me was the chair of the worship committee who said, "When can we get her back?"
-Rev. William Weisenbach, DD, pastor, First Presbyterian, Katonah, NY

Press quotes for *From This Place*:

Witkowski is a wonderfully gifted pianist with a strong sense of beauty and harmony, but I was unprepared for how natural and affecting her voice is. Her technical skills as a singer nearly match her keyboard prowess, but in both cases, what she most powerfully conveys is emotional truth.

-Joseph Taylor, SoundStageAV.com

Following the hallowed path of Mary Lou Williams, pianist and vocalist Deanna Witkowski devotes her fourth album exclusively to the blending of jazz and liturgy, drawing on scripture, the Mass, 19th-century poetry and original verses to build this expansive house of musical worship. Four notes into saxophonist Donny McCaslin's bluesy intro to "Let My Prayer Rise" it becomes evident how invigorating this marriage of secular and spiritual will be.
-Christopher Loudon, JazzTimes

Witkowski is solid as a modern vocalist but exquisite as pianist and composer, in any context.
-Andrea Canter, JazzPolice.com

Witkowski's originals on *From This Place* are some of the most interesting selections here. The song "From This Place" builds beautifully and is a definite high point on the disc. "Never Before" is Witkowski's recounting of the angels telling Mary that she will be the mother of Jesus. While not at all jazz, it is the most striking moment on the CD. An *a cappella* piece in three-part harmony, it's stop what you're doing gorgeous.

-Paul Abella, ChicagoJazz.com

Partial list of sacred music venues

Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, MI
St. Peter's Church, New York, NY
Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY
Middle Collegiate Church, New York, NY
All Angels' Episcopal Church, New York, NY
Bethesda Covenant Church, New York, NY
Bethany Baptist Church, Newark, NJ
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Durham, NC
Trinity Episcopal Church, Houston, TX
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Stone Mountain, GA
First Presbyterian Church, Clarks Summit, PA
LaSalle Street Church, Chicago, IL
Epiphany United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL
Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Chicago, IL
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Geneva, IL
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Downers Grove, IL
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Warrenville, IL
Greater Boston Vineyard Church, Cambridge, MA
Calvary St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY
Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY
Pittsford Presbyterian Church, Pittsford, NY
Central Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, NY
First Presbyterian Church, Katonah, NY
Trinity Church, Orange City, IA
Northwestern College, Orange City, IA
University Lutheran Church, Cambridge, MA
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Salem, OR
West Hills Covenant Church, Portland, OR
First United Church of Christ, Portland, OR
Augustana Lutheran Church, Portland, OR
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Buffalo, NY
Baker Memorial United Methodist Church, East Aurora, NY
The Cathedral Church of the Intercessor, Malverne, NY
Bethany Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY
First Baptist Church, Wheaton, MD