

Maija Lehtonen BIO

MAIJA LEHTONEN is a Finnish organist, born in Helsinki where she received her musical education first at the Helsinki Conservatory and later at the Sibelius Academy. After graduating as Master of Music in Classical Music Performance in 1985, she continued her organ studies abroad with Jon Laukvik, Guy Bovet and Marie-Claire Alain. During her studies in Paris, she also studied harpsicord with Huguette Dreyfus.

Ms Lehtonen started her concert career at the age of 17 and has since played over 800 performances throughout Europe, the USA, Canada, and Russia. In 1988, she was invited as the first Finnish organist to give a recital at the Royal Festival Hall in London. During that same year, she was named Finland Festival's Young Artist of the Year which gave her the opportunity to perform in all of the major music festivals in Finland.

Her various radio and television performances, both in Finland and abroad, include the film "Finnische Orgellandschaft" with Norddeutscher Rundfunk TV in Germany. She has made about 20 recordings of both solo organ and duo repertoire, the latter with her husband, Manfred Gräsbeck, one of Scandinavia's leading violinists.

Ms Lehtonen has won several prizes, including a special award in the National Organ Competition in 1980 and the 1st prize four years later in the Nordic Organ Competition arranged by the Lahti International Organ Festival. In 1989, she received the 2nd prize in the International Organ Competition "Donato Marrone" in Bari, Italy.

Ms Lehtonen has worked as Senior Lecturer in Organ Music for over 20 years in Oulu, Finland and was nominated "Teacher of the Year" in 2018 for her work at the Oulu University of Applied Sciences. Starting fall 2021, Ms Lehtonen will take on her position as Senior Lecturer in Organ Music at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden.