

Montgomery Philharmonic

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2015-2016 – A Celebration of the Montgomery Philharmonic’s 10th Anniversary Season Concert 5– May 15 2016

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***Three Madrigals* – Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927)**

About – Emma Lou Diemer

Emma Lou Diemer was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 24, 1927. Her father, George Willis Diemer, was an educator (college president); her mother, Myrtle Casebolt Diemer, was a church worker and homemaker. Her sister, Dorothy Diemer Hendry, was an educator, poet, writer, musician (married to Col. Wickliffe B. Hendry; their children are Betty Augsburg, Terri Sims, Alan Hendry, and Bonny Gierhart). Her brothers were George W. Diemer II, an educator, Marine fighter pilot, musician, and John Irving Diemer, an educator and musician (his children are George W. Diemer III, René Krey, Jack Diemer, and Dee Dee Diemer).

Diemer played the piano and began composing music at a very early age; she became the organist for her church at age 13. Her great interest in composing continued through College High School in Warrensburg, Missouri, and she majored in composition at the Yale Music School (BM, 1949; MM, 1950) and at the Eastman School of Music (Ph.D., 1960). She studied in Brussels, Belgium, on a Fulbright Scholarship and spent two summers of composition study at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, Massachusetts.

From 1959–61, Diemer was composer-in-residence in the Arlington, Virginia, schools under the Ford Foundation Young Composers Project. During this time, she composed many choral and instrumental works for the schools, a number of which are still in publication. She was a consultant for the MENC Contemporary Music Project before joining the faculty of the University of Maryland, where she taught composition and theory from 1965–70. In 1971, Diemer moved to the west coast to teach composition and theory at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She was instrumental in founding UCSB’s electronic/computer music program, and in 1991, became Professor Emeritus.

Through the years she has fulfilled many commissions (orchestral, chamber ensemble, keyboard, choral, vocal) from schools, churches, and professional organizations. Most of her works are published. Diemer has received awards from Yale University (Certificate of Merit); The Eastman School of Music (Edward Benjamin Award); the National Endowment for the Arts (electronic music project); Mu Phi Epsilon (Certificate of Merit); the Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards (for piano concerto); the American Guild of Organists (Composer of the Year); the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers/ASCAP (annually since 1962 for performances and publications); the Santa Barbara Symphony (composer-in-residence, 1990–92); and the University of Central Missouri (honorary doctorate).

Diemer is an active keyboard performer (piano, organ, harpsichord, and synthesizer), and in the last few years has given concerts of her own music at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC; St. Mary’s Cathedral and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco; and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

She lives five minutes from the Pacific Ocean, in Santa Barbara, California.