

Pianist, **Kara Benyas** has served on the faculties of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale School of Music and the McKendree University Department of Music. Her college teaching experience includes music history, literature, theory, fundamentals, counterpoint, and applied piano. She holds a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Northwestern University, where she was a student of Alan Chow, and a Bachelor of Music, Magna cum Laude, in Piano Performance from SIUC. Ms. Benyas has also studied at the Aspen Music School under Frank Weinstock and Anton Nel. While at Northwestern, she was the collaborative pianist for the voice studio of the late William Warfield. Ms. Benyas also spent a summer as collaborative pianist with the Des Moines Metro Opera. Ms. Benyas has appeared several times as a soloist with the New Chicago Chamber Orchestra, on subscription concerts in downtown Chicago and on tour throughout the Midwest. She has also appeared on the Dame Myra Hess Recital Series at the Chicago Cultural Center, a performance broadcast on local television, on WFMT-FM in Chicago and syndicated nationally over the internet. She has performed as soloist with the Southern Illinois Symphony and appears each season as soloist or chamber musician with the Southern Illinois Music Festival, now in its 14<sup>th</sup> season. In 2011 and 2013, she performed a series of concerts in Northern Italy, including Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. In 2017, Ms. Benyas performed Tchaikovsky's monumental Piano Trio with members of the Arkansas Symphony in Texas and on the River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series at the William Jefferson Clinton Library in Little Rock, Arkansas. In addition to her performance activities, Ms. Benyas is also a certified *Kindermusik* instructor. In Southern Illinois, she and her husband established *Klassics for Kids*, a highly acclaimed monthly concert series that exposes preschool children to a variety of live classical music that is now in its second decade.