

Suzanne U. Polak is a dynamic and genre-defying artist whose work as both a soloist and collaborator has captivated audiences across concert halls, ballet stages, and theatrical venues. Praised for her “wonderfully sensitive” touch and “tender, shimmering, deeply resonant” sound (CVNC, 2023), her performances reflect a rare versatility and emotional depth.

In the 2024–25 season, Suzanne appeared as soloist for the Carolina Ballet in Zalman Raffael’s works *Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto* and *A Fall Mixtape*, as well as a featured collaborator on their *Carmina Burana* program, which included Stravinsky’s *Duo Concertant* and Ravel’s *Piano Trio in A minor*. Other highlights include a recital appearance with oboist Courtney Miller at the International Double Reed Symposium, playing *Carnival of the Animals* with the North Carolina Symphony, and a moving performance of the *Street Requiem* with the North Carolina Master Chorale. In October, she will be appearing again with the ballet for their program *The Seven Deadly Sins* and as a featured performer with the Master Chorale.

A passionate advocate for collaborative music-making and ensemble work, Suzanne serves on the adjunct faculty at Elon University, where her students have excelled at the national level in the NATS competition, often performing her original arrangements of popular music. She is accompanist for the North Carolina Master Chorale, recently preparing major works including Mendelssohn’s *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* and Bartók’s *Cantata Profana*. Her orchestral experience is equally distinguished. She has performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra as a soloist in *Carnival of the Animals*, organist for Strauss’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and thereminist for David Del Tredici’s *Final Alice*. She has served as Acting Principal Keyboard for the Wheeling and Virginia Symphony Orchestras, and appeared with the North Carolina, Charlotte, and West Virginia Symphonies. Her ballet work includes live and recorded performances with Carolina Ballet, including the recent premiere of *Snow White*.

As a composer, Polak has received numerous commissions and accolades. Her work *Fugue and Romance* premiered at the Charlotte New Music Festival, performed by the Beo String Quartet. She serves on the adjunct composition faculty at Guilford College and recently completed a commission for the North Carolina Saxophone Ensemble. Her compositions have been featured in solo recitals, theatre productions, and recordings, including *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* and a celebrated score for a new realization of *The Beggar’s Opera*, which was named among the “Best Scores of 2001” by both the Pittsburgh Post-

Gazette and City Paper. Her album of original piano works, *Unguarded Moments*, showcases her unique voice as a composer-performer. Her early work in musical theatre, including as accompanist and faculty at Pittsburgh CAPA 6–12 and Hope Academy and as composer/performer for productions at Pittsburgh Public Theatre (*The Royal Family*, *Private Lives*, *Our Town*, and *Amadeus*), continues to inform her broad creative vision.

She currently resides in North Carolina and holds a Doctorate in Music from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.