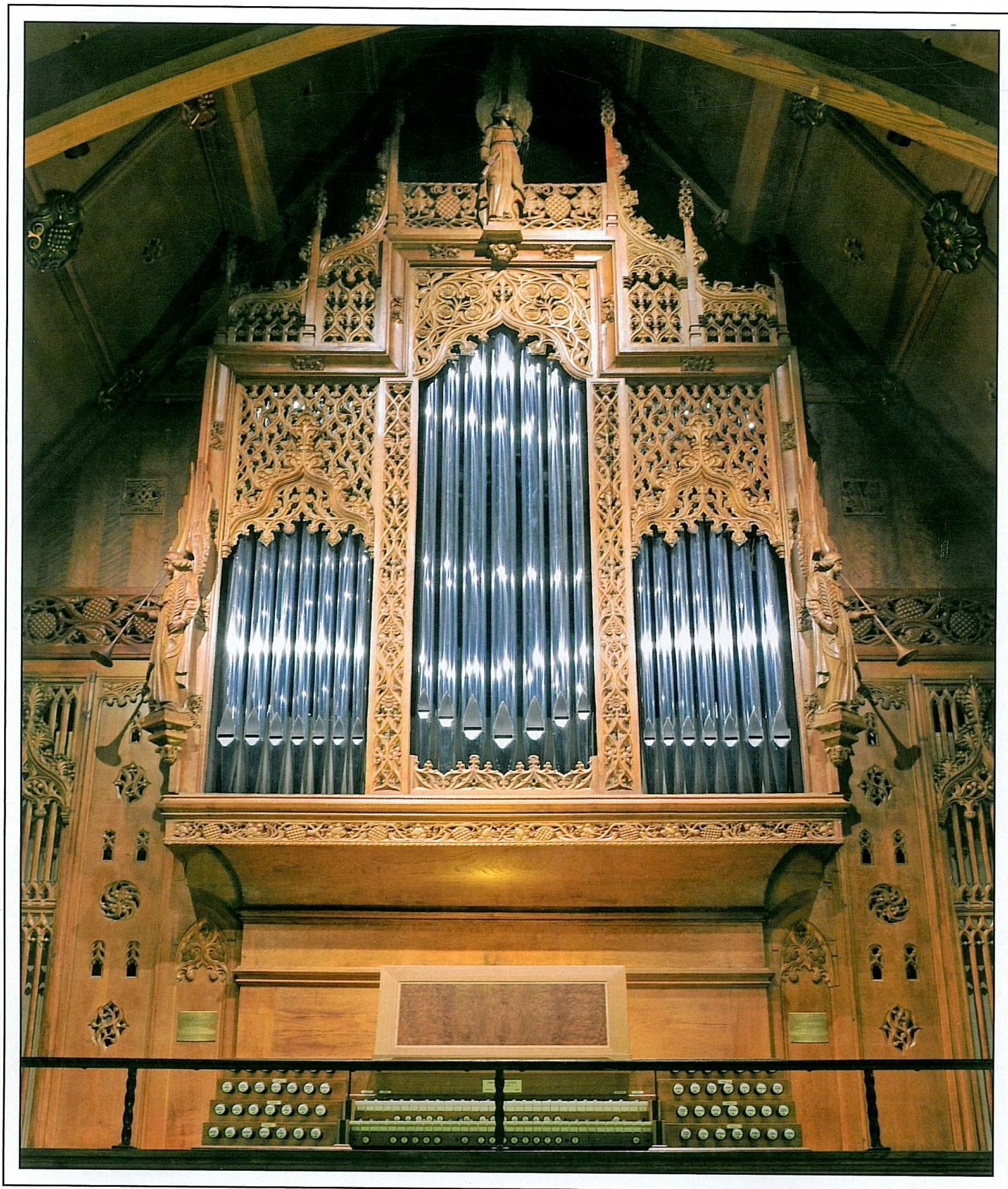


THE DIAPASON

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St. John's of Lattingtown Episcopal Church
Locust Valley, New York
Cover feature on pages 30-31

Music for Voices and Organ by James McCray

Advent music and traditions

Petal by petal, a rare flower grows
Amid bitter cold and winter snows;
God's gift to the world—an Advent Rose,
That Hope may bloom again.

The Advent Rose
Kim Norton Rich

In America's secular world, a popular December song is "It's the most wonderful time of the year!" but in the sacred environs its parallel theme is *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. Both speak to the coming events of the month.

In the church year, the season of Advent is the period beginning four Sundays prior to Christmas; as with the secular world it is a period of preparation and anticipation. The first Sunday of Advent is also the beginning of the Christian liturgical year. Probably the most common tradition followed in the church is the lighting of Advent candles. A ceremony in which members of the congregation read Scripture and messages during the weekly lighting of one new candle in each of the four Sundays in Advent helps to symbolize the coming of Christ as the Light of the World.

Another common tradition is to put an empty cradle in the front of the church; a baby is not placed in it until Christmas Eve. In some countries, statues of the Holy Family are placed somewhere distant in the sanctuary, then moved closer to the front each week. Some churches decorate the church with a Christmas tree adorned with Christian symbols (in some cases this is not done until Christmas Eve or Day). These remain in place through Epiphany. Such representative symbols add greatly to the growing anticipation.

The four Advent candles usually are placed in the circle of a wreath with a larger and taller pure white candle in the center. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve, and its lighting may be part of the concluding Christmas Eve ceremony in which everyone in the congregation passes its light throughout the church with smaller individual candles, often while singing *Silent Night*. This helps bring the anticipation of Advent to its conclusion as Christ's arrival in the flesh is celebrated.

The musical works below are all appropriate for Advent church services; they have a great variety of texts and style. The next two months of reviews will focus on Christmas and Epiphany music to help with the preparation and anticipation during the Advent season.

Prepare the Royal Highway, arr. Timothy Shaw. SATB unaccompanied with tambourine, Augsburg Fortress, 978-1-4514-8592-9, \$1.66 (M).

This Swedish folk tune from the 17th century has a lilting 6/4 meter that dances along at a moderately fast pace. The choral parts, on two staves, maintain the simplicity and keep the folk spirit throughout while the tambourine adds to the energetic rhythm without intruding or dominating. Its music is on the back cover and as a separate line in the choral score.

Anthem for the Annunciation, David Schelat. SATB and organ, MorningStar Music Publishers, MSM-50-2665, \$1.70 (M+).

The organ music is more challenging than that for the choir. It begins in 5/8 then settles comfortably into a 6/8 meter. There are a few tricky rhythmic spots later when the organ is playing sextuplets. This is a setting of the Magnificat story

that announces it in a briefer context. More interesting for organ than choir.

Advent, David Conte. SATB and organ, ECS Publishing, 8026, \$1.95 (D-).

Using a text by Christina Rossetti (1830–1894), Conte has created a sophisticated and moderately difficult musical setting. The organ part has a soloistic character and usually moves independently from the choir; it is on three staves with registrations. The slow, mysterious opening is a fanfare that seems to announce the entrance of the contrasting and chant-like choir. This is a work that may appeal more to larger, well-trained groups than to the typical church choir, yet it will reward singers and congregation with an effective musical anthem. Highly recommended to accomplished singers and organist.

Come, Come, Emmanuel, Joel Raney. SATB and piano with optional instruments, Hope Publishing Co., C 5841, \$2.10 (M-).

This is not based on the traditional Advent melody, but rather a new work with words and music by Raney. Instruments include strings, brass, and synthesizer (C 5841P); however, a conductor's score will be needed since parts are not indicated in the choral score. The music is jazzy with some syncopation and strong, driving rhythms. Choral parts are easy, often in unison. The setting will prove popular and fun for most choirs.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, Thomas W. Jefferson. SATB and piano, Augsburg Fortress, 978-1-4514-8589-9, \$2.25 (M+).

As with the previous setting, this one is not based on the traditional, well-known Advent chant. The text has additional biblical excerpts beyond those normally used; they include "Behold a virgin shall conceive..." and "He is the Son of God..." There are two verses in unison and several different sections in four parts, which are repeated; often they have long melismas, counterpoint, and some unaccompanied singing. The music is fast and rhythmic with bold interruptions of "Rejoice."

Jesse Tree: Advent Song for Children, Dennis J. Newman. Two parts, piano, optional flute, and 12 handbells, GIA Publications, G-5192S (Singers' Edition), \$1.50 (M-).

There are different movements for each of the four Advent Sundays, repeated refrains, and responsorial refrains. A full score with paraliturgies (G-5192) will be needed for performance. This singers' edition is on two staves with no keyboard part. For those churches with a good children's choir this will be an attractive addition to their permanent yearly repertoire and is highly recommended to them.

The Advent Rose, Dale Jergenson. SATB and piano, Laurendale Associates, CH-1379, \$2.45 (M).

The poignant text by Kim Norton Rich is set syllabically to bring out the words clearly. The keyboard music is very easy placing the emphasis on the four-part choir, which sings expressive and tender musical lines. Three of the four verses have similar music. Charming and meaningful to the Advent season.

Breath of Heaven, arr. Lloyd Larson. SSA and piano with optional 3–5 octave handbells, Hope Publishing Co., C 5830, \$2.15 (M).

Also available for SATB (C 5437) or SAB (C 5641), this is an Amy Grant tune that is subtitled *Mary's Song*. The

choral parts are not difficult and include an optional solo section. The busy keyboard part has a soloistic character and is moderately difficult as Mary sings her story. Her text asks, "Help me be strong, Breath of heaven hold me together and be forever near me."

There is a flow'r, Alan Smith. SATB and organ, ECS Publishing, 7780, \$2.25 (D-).

Winner of the 2012 AGO/ECS Publishing Award in Choral Composition, this text is by John Audelay (15th century) and tells the story of Gabriel greeting Mary. T

The sophisticated organ music is on three staves with some difficult passages that include flowing septuplets and quick, short solo statements between textual phrases. Well crafted with an optional soprano solo and brief unaccompanied passages.

Belfast Evening Canticles, Philip W. J. Stopford. SATB divisi and organ, MorningStar Music Publishers, MSM-50-6319, \$2.10 (D-).

In the traditions established during the Renaissance, the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis canticles are linked together for evening services in some churches; both close with the same Gloria Patri (in English). The music is chromatic at times, but there is very limited divisi and contrapuntal lines are used. English texts are sung above a three-stave organ part that frequently has sustained chords in a driving rhythm.

New Recordings

Organo de la catedral de Oaxaca, Vol. V: Cicely Winter, organ, and Valentín Hernández, percussion. TT 64:27. Instituto de Órganos Históricos de Oaxaca, \$14.98. Available from Organ Historical Society at www.ohscatalog.org/spanporandme.html.

This recording introduces us to the exciting world of Mexican folk music and includes arrangements of both songs and dances, played on the restored organ of the cathedral of Oaxaca, with percussion accompaniment. Oaxaca was the third

diocese in New Spain, ca. 1535, a small organ imported from Spain, Mexico City, or Puebla being in use within ten years. A larger instrument was commissioned in 1569–70, the smaller organ being retained; until about 100 years ago there were always two organs in the choir, one on either side. Between 1711 and 1712, a new organ was constructed in about 10 months by Matías Chávez, using three registers from the 16th-century organ and only five additional registers, as well as a windchest with divided registers and bellows. In 1716, two more stops were added, and a new medium-sized organ replaced the old 16th-century processional instrument.

Further additions and amendments ensued over the years, and in 1907 the secondary organ was dismantled with some of its components incorporated into the larger organ. A few years later, further "modernizing" action took place, which made the eventual reconstruction in 1997 by Susan Tattershall difficult. In this, all of the old pipes were reused and some 350 new pipes made. The organ now possesses a single manual from C to d3 with a short octave in the bass, and is tuned in 1/6 comma meantone at a1=392. Divided registers include: left-hand, Trompeta Real, Flautados up to 1½', Flautas of 8' and 4', and a 3-rank Llano (Mixture); and in the right hand, Trompeta Real, Flautados up to 2', Flautas of 8' and 4', a 4-rank Llano and a Corneta of 4 ranks. The two toy stops of Tambor (drums) and Pajaritos (little birds) were added in 1997.

The music we hear on this recording was typically played by brass bands, and the organ, by its very tonal make-up, offers a wonderful medium for this music, which is well known by the Oaxacans and is a vital part of any local celebration. The organ is complemented by the usual percussion instruments of drums and cymbals along with rattles, bells, triangle, a scraper, and a conch shell. The themes of the songs include not only love but also life after death and the longing for home by those working away. The CD offers 22 such songs and dances, from seven regions, plus an introduction and two pieces in conclusion. Most are under

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two minutes, the longer tracks including two multi-selection items, *Danza de la Pluma*, and *Sones de Pochutla*. After the short introduction in which we hear the conch shell followed by drums and a very high-pitched stop, the second track *Marcha Gira Triunfal* sets the scene—how far removed this is from the “art” music of Torres! Different sonic landscapes are achieved through registration, and frequently the changes within even the shorter pieces add to the variety, as in *La Sandunga*, which runs to just over six minutes. Half a dozen or so pieces are in triple time and have a waltz-like feel, and the several in the minor achieve a well-conveyed plaintive and wistful feeling. *La Tortuga* opens with a bright and bubbly gapped registration, and in many tracks the horizontal trumpets are used to great effect, sometimes presenting the tune in the treble, sometimes in the bass or swapping between them as in *Himno al Rey Condoy*. In *Pinotepa* we hear both single and double notes played on the trumpets. The final piece, *Dios nunca muere*, a slow reflective 12/8, includes examples of crushed notes in the melody.

The booklet contains a history of the organ culture in the province of Oaxaca, a detailed account of the cathedral instrument and its registers, a note on the music and the reasons for presenting it in this manner, and a biography of the performers. The overall feeling from this well-played CD is one of a vitality and exuberance that has been transferred most successfully to the organ, with the percussion accompaniment really enhancing the joyous atmosphere even in the slower minor-key pieces. These pieces mark a new aspect of the timeless scope of the organ in Oaxacan culture

and, I hope, will be warmly received around the globe—it is the least that this inspired venture deserves. I am also sure that it would be much appreciated if Cicely Winter could publish a modern performing edition of her arrangements.

—John Collins
Sussex, England

Soliloquies: New Japanese and Chinese Music for Harpsichord and Organ. Calvert Johnson plays an Anderson Dupree French double harpsichord (1986) and the Manuel Rosales organ (2003), St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia. Albany compact disc TROY 1048; www.albanyrecords.com.

Four Pieces for Harpsichord—i. Prélude, ii. Les Tourbillons, iii. Caprice, iv. Rio, Makiko Asaoka; *Ancient Cities for Harpsichord*, Isaac Nagao; *Sonata No. 1 for Harpsichord*—i. Energiaco, ii. Scherzando, iii. Fantasy, Asako Hirabayashi; *Suite for Organ*—i. Cloudy Sky, ii. Raining Night's Flower, Pei-lun (“Vicky”) Chang; *Reflection and Promenade for Solo Organ*, Phantasmagoria for Harpsichord, Chan Ka Nin; *Fantasy for Organ*, Wang An-Ming; *Rain Dreaming for Harpsichord*, Toru Takemitsu; *Jardin des Herbes for Harpsichord*—i. Rosemary, ii. Sweet Violet, iii. Lavender, Karen Tanaka; *Miyabi: Ballad for Organ*, Reiko Arima.

The compact disc begins with Makiko Asaoka's *Four Pieces for Harpsichord*. Ms. Asaoka was born in 1956 and comes from Tokyo. She is well known in Japan as a singer and as a composer of music for harpsichord and voice. Her style is heavily influenced by 18th-century French music, and makes effective use of harp-like arpeggiated passages contrasted with sometimes dissonant chordal passages.

Isaac Nagao (b. 1938) is a retired music professor and is organist of the Baptist Church in Tokushima, Japan. His *Ancient Cities for Harpsichord* is a particularly interesting piece with a wistful, nostalgic character that makes effective use of arpeggiated chords. It shows influences of J. S. Bach and traditional Japanese music. The result is a fine evocation of the Japan of past centuries.

Asako Hirabayashi (b. 1960) is a Juilliard-trained Japanese music professor and harpsichordist who is quite a prolific composer with several dozen published compositions to her name. I have to say that, among her compositions, I do not think the rather stiffly academic *Sonatina No. 1 for Harpsichord*, a very early work, is either the best or most representative opus to have chosen. Among her more recent work is some much more interesting stuff, such as her *Dance for the Harpsichord* (2008), her *Sheet Music for Violin and Harpsichord* (2009), and her *Scherzo, Elegy, and Tango for Piano and Harpsichord* (2009). More of her music, incidentally, is available on another compact disc, *New Millennium*, played by the composer with Gina Dibello, violin, and also on the Albany label (TROY 1180).

We turn then to the Rosales organ for a performance of two movements of Taiwanese-American composer Pei-lun “Vicky” Chang, who is currently choir director and organist of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lancaster, New York. Like Chelsea Chen's *Taiwanese Suite* and *Three Taiwanese Folksongs*, Ms. Chan's *Suite for Organ* is based on the melodies of Taiwanese folksongs and represents an interesting blend of Taiwanese and Western musical motifs. The suite consists of four movements—Cloudy Sky, Raining Night's Flower, Bird, and Train—of which the first two are included on this recording.

Born in Hong Kong in 1949, Chan Ka Nin was educated in North America and is currently professor of music theory and composition at the University of Toronto. He is a prolific composer of choral, orchestral, and instrumental music. His contemplative *Reflection and Promenade for Solo Organ* combines Chinese motifs with Messiaen-like tonalities and harmonies. Messiaen himself incorporated Asian rhythms and motifs into his music, so perhaps in Professor Chan these musical influences have come full circle. This is followed by one of Professor Chan's most popular pieces, his *Phantasmagoria for Harpsichord*. The vivacious character of this piece forms an interesting contrast with the preceding *Reflection and Promenade*.

We hear next from one of the older generation of Chinese-American composers, Wang An-Ming, who was born in 1929 and currently resides in Potomac, Maryland. Her *Fantasy for Organ* was written in 1988. It is a particularly pleasing piece, again featuring Messiaen-like tonalities and rhythms, though with a much more ordered structure, reminiscent in some ways of Franck's *Prelude, Fugue, and Variation*. It gradually builds up to a climax before returning to a quieter mood at the end.

A Japanese contemporary of Ms. Wang, Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996) was an essentially self-taught composer who acknowledged a heavy debt to Debussy and Messiaen, as well as to Japanese idioms in his compositional style. His *Rain Dreaming* was commissioned for the 1986 Aliénor Musical Festival in Washington, D.C. Its use of fourths both melodically and harmonically is apparently characteristic of the composer's style, which with its arpeggiated chords and lilting character gives the piece something of the Rain Dreaming quality of its title. It may have been intended to evoke the music of the Aboriginal Rain Dreaming ceremonies of Australia.

Karen Tanaka, who was born in Tokyo in 1961 and received some musical education in Japan, moved to France and Italy for further study. She is best known for her orchestral music, but has also written some instrumental music including *Jardin des Herbes for Harpsichord*. This was written in January 1989 for Japanese harpsichordist Akiko Kuwagata and consists of three movements inspired by aromatic plants. The three delicately crafted movements contrast with each other as well as complement each other to form a very coherent totality.

The final work on this compact disc represents the work of Japanese music professor and composer Reiko Arima (b. 1933). Arima wrote *Miyabi: Ballad for Organ* in 1986. The Japanese word *miyabi* translates as “elegance” or “refinement,” and these qualities clearly characterize the piece. Once again, the influence of Olivier Messiaen is apparent, especially here in the contrasts of mood between loud chordal passages and ebullient softer ones, as well as in its rhythms and tonalities. The piece ends surprisingly suddenly, to considerable effect.

I have suggested before that, whatever may be the case in North America and Europe, classical music in general and organ music in particular are very much growing in popularity in Asia, particularly in Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea. This interesting compact disc offers further evidence for this and also suggests to me how far reaching the influence of Olivier Messiaen may come to be in the 21st century.

—John L. Speller
St. Louis, Missouri

Helmut Walcha Chorale Preludes vols. 1, 2, Wolfgang Rübsam, organist; Vols. 3 and 4, Delbert Disselhorst, organist; at the Brombaugh organ, Opus 35, First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Illinois. Naxos Vol I—8.572910; Naxos Vol II—8.572911; Naxos Vol III—8.572912; Naxos Vol IV—8.572913.

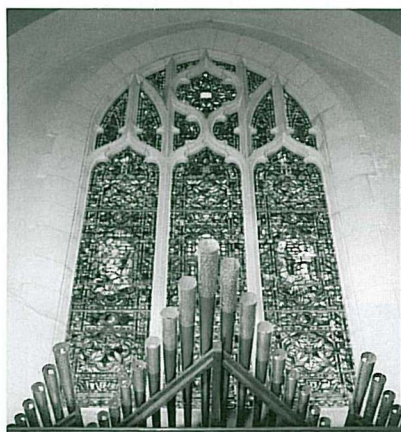
As one of the most influential organists of the twentieth century, Helmut Walcha had a profound effect on scores of students and countless others through his recordings, far beyond his modest number of compositions. Blinded at the age of seventeen, he went on to memorize and record more of Bach's music than any other person in history. It included virtually all the organ works of Bach, the harpsichord works, the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the *Goldberg Variations*, and the entire *Art of Fugue*. Unlike his other well-known contemporary, Jean Langlais, who learned and wrote music using Braille, Walcha relied on the playing of each line by his devoted wife, Ursula. One supposes that he wrote music by the reverse process and with the assistance of his wife.

Walcha's chorale preludes are short, usually lasting from one to four minutes. The melodies are often set in a straightforward manner, a throwback to his interest in the Baroque, but often motives pop out of the texture in unexpected places. Coming out of his improvisatory practices as it does, the music is often complex and makes much greater use of canons and ostinato basses than, say, the chorale preludes of his contemporary, Ernst Pepping.

During World War II, Walcha began to compose chorale preludes, which in 1954 were published by C.F. Peters. These, with their horizontal contrapuntal approach and the singing characteristics of the old masters, became popular as teaching pieces. Volume I was followed in 1963 by Volume II and by Volume III in 1966. With encouragement from his American students he published Volume IV in 1979. Volume II included the specification of his Schuke organ, a picture of the organ, and extensive notes on the interpretation of his organ works. Walcha wanted his music to be played clearly and lively, and to this end, he developed articulation markings to assist the player. He also carefully marked tempo recommendations based on his Schuke organ and its environment with four seconds of reverberation when empty. Tempos could then be adjusted for different acoustics.

This set of four CDs is a monumental undertaking by two of Walcha's former students. Wolfgang Rübsam, who is internationally known for his many recordings, plays the first two CDs. Delbert Disselhorst, professor emeritus of the University of Iowa, is the organist for volumes 3 and 4. Each CD covers the 24 chorales in each one of the Peters editions so if you want to follow along with the music score, it works out very handily. All the CDs are recorded on the magnificent Brombaugh organ, which is large enough and colorful enough to do justice to Walcha's registrational demands, despite the variances from Walcha's Schuke organ.

The playing is impeccable on the part of both organists. Each observes, as much as possible, Walcha's recommendations for registrations and tempi. I sense slightly more elasticity in Rübsam's rendition, but both are faithful to the intent. And, my hat is off to Naxos for very fine and clear recordings. I wish all organ recordings could be as clear! The set includes in each CD a picture of the Brombaugh organ as well as the stop list.



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