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desired effect apparently was to present a documentary-like recording of this recently restored instrument.

These three recordings present the Italian organ-building tradition in microcosm. All adhere to the same basic design, yet the variants on that theme are enough to make the instruments distinctive. Individual characteristics, the result of local tastes and builders' idiosyncrasies, are perhaps less noticeable than in Germany, for example, but they are present nonetheless.

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Notes

1. As Christopher Stenbridge points out, being able to draw the upper harmonics of a fundamental tone increases their usefulness and provides a great deal more variety than a single mixture stop could do. "Thus an organ with only seven stops will have between thirty and forty possible registrations." ("Italian organ music to Frescobaldi," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.) See also Francesco Ruffatti, "The Historical Italian Organ," *THE DIAPASON*, June 2001.
2. Liner notes, *Italienische Orgelmeister*.
3. Stenbridge, 153-4.

New Organ Music

Dan Locklair, *The Aeolian Sonata*. Subito Music Publishing, 2002; 493-0093; \$17.95 (available from Theodore Presser Company).

Looking at the significant volume of new publications appearing each month from publishers presents a dilemma: we crave new music for our instrument and even encourage composers to create works, but we very quickly put these aside too. Accordingly, the second is the more valuable performance than the first.

New publications frequently intend to serve "average" clientele. Concert pieces have a tougher road to travel as they face fewer potential buyers. Of the latter, even a smaller number ever imply that they will be commonly played or successful, and the number of contemporary masterpieces is something that, if we cannot all agree upon, we can at least count on the fingers of one hand.

What refreshing delight therefore, to notice a score which literally screams for the appraisal of masterpiece. The grounds for this conclusion are many, but none more telling than this: Dan Locklair's *Aeolian Sonata* was hard to put down. In reading through the Sonata, one sensed an urge to learn it, perfect it, and put it into the active ready repertoire. Those are reactions normally reserved for the likes of Widor, Bach, or Messiaen. Does Dan Locklair's name belong in such a rarified atmosphere? On the face of this

score, probably yes.

Why? A gaggle of extramusicalities affect this work then vanish. Duke University commissioned the *Aeolian Sonata* to mark the 70th anniversary of the Duke Chapel's Aeolian organ (the last one built by the firm prior to its merger with E.M. Skinner). The composer also mentions that "Aeolus" from the Greek signifies the god of wind and the name also refers to the mode from A to A, a tonality having particular importance in the sonata.

The more sensational extramusical connection involves September 11, 2001. The sonata's three movements (each dubbed in a different language to symbolize the global dimensions of September 11) progress from anguish and pain, through reconciliation and peace, to joy. For Dan Locklair, this sonata is about healing.

Still, in the end, all music must stand or fall on its own structure, sound, and sense. It is as easy, perhaps easier, to write a poor September 11, 2001 memorial, as it is a poor abstract composition. So stripped of all of the occasional overtones, the emotional connotations, the associations of title and place and event, the fearsome imagery, how well does this music succeed? In a word, wonderfully.

Locklair's opening movement amounts to a setting of the *Aus tiefer not* chorale of Luther, exploiting it as an obvious allegory, but also as a melodic and harmonic impulse. The descending fifth (and its counterpart inverted fourth) shapes the piece's gestures. Until the chorale theme makes its unmasked announcement in a double pedal passage, the pedal line entails nothing more than the pitches D and A, as either a simultaneous timpani-like thud, or as an alternating dirge pattern. Against this, quick rhythms and tremolos that Locklair contends owe to the French overture again outline fifths and superimpositions of fifths (resulting in de facto inverted fourth chords).

Many listeners might deem the second movement of the sonata its transcendent zenith. It is marked *Shalom*. A gentle but far-ranging melody once again outlines superimposed fifths. Locklair sets that theme against non-functional triad streams, a technique begging for comparison to many an Aaron Copland movement. This assessment hardly suggests any slavish homage, but stems rather from the inevitable compositional forces at work in this particular sonata as a whole. Still, in as tender a moment as this, the link back to Copland cannot but enhance the evocative temperament and nuance of the sonata.

In thinking of Locklair's organ scores writ large, one cannot ignore powerful rhythmic emblems, principally shifted and compound meters. *The Aeolian Sonata's* final movement, *Laudate Dominum*, explodes into a paean of joy through such reallocated rhythms as well as the transformation of the melodic fifth into a rising gesture. The internal quote of *Aus tiefer not* serves to dash it, not affirm it. While in the hands of other composers the incessant iteration of chords built up of fifths against angular lines shaped of the same interval would conclude in little but stasis, Locklair's hammering rhythmic pulse (often units of 8+3+4) propels this movement toward its furious and triumphant conclusion.

The Aeolian Sonata, though born in response to a specific occasional impetus, winds up more universal than individual in nature. It is a virtuoso vehicle, though not unduly taxing or inaccessible. It recalls tragedy, but rises from it. It shuns polemics. It pounds unmitigatedly at a handful of shaping notions, but escapes any stagnant shortcomings. It observes the place and primacy of a great instrument of specific romantic origins, but insinuates performance on a range of types of instruments. If great art is about universals, then Dan Locklair has achieved a summit. Locklair's sonata is that good.

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