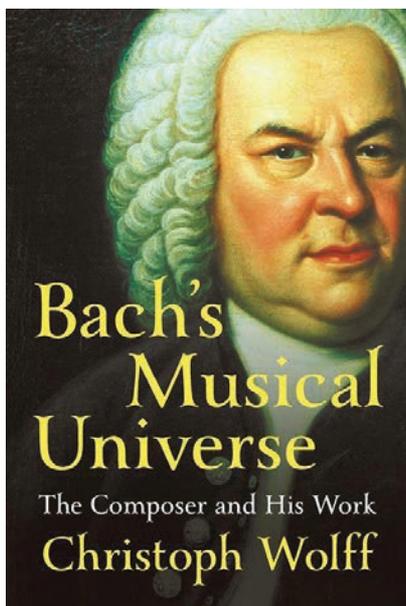


Book Reviews



Bach's Musical Universe: The Composer and His Work

Bach's Musical Universe: The Composer and His Work, by Christoph Wolff. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 2020, xvii + 410 pages, 978-0-393-05071-4. Available new and used from various online resources, including [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Christoph Wolff is a well-known Bach authority. His *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (Norton, 2000) is probably the most complete such work in the English language, having been a Pulitzer Prize finalist. *Bach's Musical Universe: The Composer and His Work* is a supplement to the biography, discussing many works in each chapter, presented in approximate chronological order. The descriptions of chapters below, one paragraph apiece, are designed to tell the reader where to find what, without resorting to the index. The spellings of titles in the summaries below reflect Wolff's versions.

Prologue, "On the Primacy and Pervasiveness of Polyphony," is concerned with the way in which Bach wanted the musical world to identify him; in effect, what his business card was. The familiar oil portrait by Elias Gottlob Haussmann (1748) shows the composer holding the

triple canon for six voices, BWV 1076. In addition to the six voices seen by the reader, the fact that it is a mirror canon adds to be possibilities of interpretation, as seen by the standing figure (Bach).

Chapter One, "Revealing the Narrative of a Musical Universe," deals with the obituary of Bach, July 28, 1750. Commissioned from Carl Philipp, the second-oldest son, it stands as the first public announcement and summary of the works, to be divided between the widow and nine surviving children. The catalog of Bach's works was the first account of his *oeuvre* and the only one for a century; it includes published and unpublished works. Special works were separated from the ordinary, pointing to the vastness of the huge collection, although the lack of autograph manuscripts from before about 1708 suggests that Bach may have done some house cleaning.

Chapter Two, "Transformative Approaches to Composition and Performance," is concerned with three unique keyboard books, which Wolff feels exhibit the characteristics that give Bach's music from the 1710s its true nature. The work on the three may have been to prepare materials to submit as a candidate for the position of cantor and music director of Saint Thomas Church in Leipzig. The three are the *Orgelbüchlein*, BWV 599–644, *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*, BWV 846–869, and the *Aufrichtige Anleitung* (Inventions and Sinfonias), BWV 772–801. Their title pages date from 1723, 1722, and 1723, respectively.

Chapter Three, "In Search of the Autonomous Instrumental Design," concentrates on the toccata, suite, sonata, and concerto. The six harpsichord toccatas, BWV 910–915, reflecting influences of Bach's use of the "fantastic style," were signed in an Italianized version of his name, Giov[anni] Bast[iano] Bach. These toccatas show backgrounds from Buxtehude, Reincken, and Bruhns. Among suites, Bach distinguished between the French custom of dances with and without preludes, resulting in the English suites, BWV 806–811, and the French suites, BWV 812–817. The six unaccompanied solo sonatas and partitas for violin, BWV 1001–1006, together with the six partitas for unaccompanied violoncello, BWV 1007–1112, are unusual

in having no continuo part and are unprecedented in the literature. Among the final grouping, the six *Brandenburg Concertos*, BWV 1046–1051, constitute an amazingly diverse group (including a harpsichord cadenza in Number 5). Other works discussed in this chapter are the six sonatas for harpsichord and violin, BWV 1014–1019, and the six trio sonatas for organ, BWV 525–530.

Chapter Four, "The Most Ambitious of All Projects," is devoted to chorale cantatas for the church year for Bach's new position in Leipzig, where his duties included mounting some sixty cantatas for Sundays and feast days annually. The first year was filled by various existing works, including ones by other composers, plus a few new compositions. For the second year, Bach embarked on a serial project in the manner his friend Georg Philipp Telemann had successfully used. The result was forty-two works plus some supplements.

Chapter Five, "Proclaiming the State of the Art in Keyboard Music," is concerned with the four parts of the *Clavierübung*. The first part contains the six partitas, BWV 825–830 (1731), which were clearly influenced by Handel's suites of 1720.

The *Italian Concerto*, BWV 971, and the *French Overture*, BWV 831, of 1735, comprise the second part and display musical traits of the composer's day. Part three, the 1739 publication of an organ book, Wolff sees as Bach's intention to create a German *Livre d'Orgue*, with opening prelude and closing fugue, as well as many *manualiter* and *pedaliter* pieces. The last part of the *Clavierübung* is occupied by the *Aria with 30 Variations*, known as the *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988 (1741).

Chapter Six, "A Grand Liturgical Messianic Cycle," encompasses three passions and a trilogy of oratorios. In this chapter Wolff engages in detailed analysis. *Saint John Passion*, BWV 245, was premiered on Good Friday of 1724. The biblical text is extended with strophes, which eventually led to several alternate versions in subsequent years. *Saint Matthew Passion*, BWV 244, appeared in 1727; with a libretto by Picander, its double-choir format was suitable only for Leipzig's largest church, Saint Thomas. The lost *Saint Mark Passion*, BWV 247, completes the threesome and is also extensively treated. The three oratorios celebrate the high points of the church year when passions or cantatas would not be appropriate and are scored more festively with brass. *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248, is in six parts. *Easter Oratorio*, BWV 249.4, is an arrangement of the earlier *Easter Cantata*, BWV 249. *Ascension Oratorio*, BWV 11, completes the group.

Chapter Seven, "In Critical Survey and Review Mode," deals with revisions, transcriptions, and reworkings Bach made of extant works. The process involved assembling revised compositions, transcribing or arranging pieces, and integrating extant and new material into larger units. The works treated are the Great Eighteen Chorales, BWV 651–668, the six Schübler Chorales, BWV 645–650, the harpsichord concertos, BWV 1052–1064, the Kyrie-Gloria Masses, BWV 232–236, and *The Well-Tempered Clavier II*, BWV 870–893.

Chapter Eight, "Instrumental and Vocal Polyphony at Its Peak," is devoted chiefly to *The Art of Fugue*, BWV 1080, and *Mass in B Minor*, BWV 232. Bach seems to have been fascinated by the canonic genesis of *Fourteen Canons*, BWV 1087, which he had entered on his personal copy of the *Clavierübung*. Its ending notes closely resemble the

ending of the *Canonic Variations*, BWV 769. *The Musical Offering*, BWV 1079, offers additional canons. As published, *The Art of Fugue* shows a thorough exploration of fugues. *Mass in B Minor* illustrates a very different history, with cantata borrowings, but remains Bach's ultimate statement of vocal polyphony.

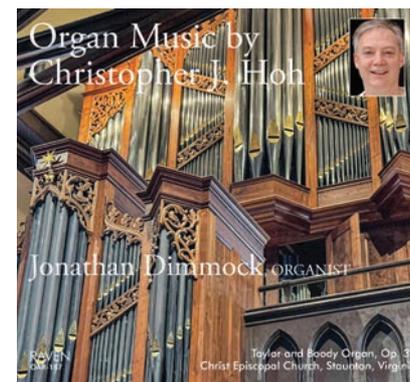
Epilogue, "Praxis cum theoria," is the maxim of the Learned Musician. From his earliest compositions to the end of his life, Bach seems to have been concerned with composing works that effortlessly combined polyphony with musical rules, always allowing musical concepts to prevail.

There follows "Chronology" (listing Bach's life and works), "Notes," "Bibliography," "Illustration Credits," "Genre Index of Bach's Works," "Title Index of Bach's Works," and "General Index."

Bach's Musical Universe is, without doubt, the most thorough statement regarding Bach's creative working available now in the English language. Written by a scholar of unequaled ability, the work is well produced physically, virtually without error. The book is dedicated to the author's beloved wife Barbara, a scholar in her own right, who unfortunately died during the publishing process.

—Arthur Lawrence
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

New Recordings



Organ Music by Christopher J. Hoh

Organ Music by Christopher J. Hoh, Jonathan Dimmock, organist. Taylor & Boody Opus 34, Christ Episcopal Church, Staunton, Virginia. Raven, OAR-187, \$15.98. Available from RavenCD.com.

Chorale Prelude on "Crucifer"; Chorale Prelude on "Kirken den er"; Assorted Airs for Organ, Volume 1—"Allemande," "Fantasia," "Sarabande," "Allegretto"; Chorale Prelude on "Veni Emmanuel"; Chorale Prelude on "Christ ist erstanden"; Assorted Airs for Organ, Volume 1—"Passacaglia," "Air," "Meditation," "Gigue"; Chorale Prelude on "St. Anne"; Chorale Prelude on "Herzliebster Jesu"; Assorted Airs for Organ, Volume 1—"Elegy," "Fughetta," "Pastorale," "March"; Voluntary on "Truro."

Christopher (Chris) J. Hoh was born in 1959 in Reading, Pennsylvania, where he studied under Donald Hinkle (1933–2020), longtime director of music at historic Trinity Lutheran Church, and grew up learning piano, organ, and several other instruments, as well as music theory and harmony. As a young singer and accompanist, he was influenced by learning great choral works under several musical directors in Pennsylvania, New York, and Washington, D.C. He has been a fellow in Alice Parker's composer seminar and attended workshops with Jean Berger, Daniel Moe, and Craig Jessop. The many influences on his style include Francis Poulenc, Joseph Rheinberger, Benjamin Britten, William Billings, Charles Ives, Aaron Copland,

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Alice Parker, Stephen Paulus, and Ned Rorem. Hoh's formal education was in international affairs, and he had more than three decades as a career diplomat in the United States Foreign Service. He currently resides in Arlington, Virginia. While best known as a choral composer, Chris Hoh pivoted during the pandemic to the organ—the ultimate safe-distance instrument. The Lorenz Corporation published some of his organ pieces in 2022 with more slated for 2023, while his own publishing house, HohMade Music, has issued to date four volumes of works for recital and worship.

Jonathan Dimmock, born in San Francisco in 1957, has degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and from both the School of Music and the Divinity School at Yale University. He had the unique privilege of serving under Simon Preston as the first American organ scholar of Westminster Abbey. Furthermore, he has served three American Episcopal cathedrals: Saint John the Divine, New York City; Saint Mark's, Minneapolis; and Grace, San Francisco. He is currently the principal organist at the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco, organist for the San Francisco Symphony, and music director at Congregation Sherith Israel. Jonathan lives in San Francisco where, for over twelve years, he was music director at Saint Ignatius Catholic Church, the largest Jesuit church in the United States, and where he bases his extensive freelance career.

This is the first recording of the organ in Trinity Episcopal Church, Staunton, Virginia, Taylor & Boody Opus 34 of 2000. George Taylor, John Boody, and John's son, Erik Boody, are all members of this church, so the organ has special significance for them. The instrument has mechanical key and stop action and

consists of four divisions: Great, Rückpositive, Choir, and Pedal. The Choir is in the Brüstwerk position and has doors which may be opened and closed to obtain the effect of a swell. There are thirty-seven speaking stops drawn from fifty-four ranks. The organ is tuned to the Kellner 1/5-comma temperament. It is a masterpiece of fine design and meticulous voicing. A useful feature of this album is that the leaflet lists all the registrations Jonathan Dimmock used.

The first chorale prelude is based on the hymntune CRUCIFER, Sydney Nicholson's tune to "Lift High the Cross," written in 1887 by George Kitchin, dean of Westminster, as a missionary hymn for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It begins in a rather restrained way on a *mezzo piano* registration of flutes and principal but loudens towards the end with a solo on the Great 16' Fagott. The second chorale prelude is on Danish composer Nicolai Grundvig's 1847 tune KIRKEN, DEN ER ET GAMMELT HUS, written for Ludwig Lindeman's hymn, usually translated as "Built on a rock the Church does stand." It has a gentle, lilting character, and Dimmock registers it on the soft flutes and gamba.

The first set of four *Assorted Airs* makes use of Baroque models and counterpoint. "Allemande" reminds me somewhat of the neo-classicism of Paul Hindemith in its harmonies and rhythms. "Fantasia in D Major" brings on the organ's chorus work including the mixtures. It reminds me not so much of the works of Buxtehude and Bach as of the toccatas contained in Georg Muffat's *Apparatus Musico-Organisticus* of 1690. "Sarabande" uses the La Folia sequence of chords and takes the form of a series of variations. As the leaflet points out, it is partly based on "Sarabande" from

Handel's *Suite in D Minor*. I particularly liked Dimmock's use of the Quintadena stop for a solo in this piece. "Allegretto" takes us into a more jovial mood, and I find it reminiscent of Christian Petzold's G-major and G-minor minuets in the *Anna Magdalena Notebook*.

The first set of *Assorted Airs* is book-ended by two more chorale preludes. The first is on the chant VENI EMMANUEL, adapted by Thomas Helmore in the nineteenth century from a fifteenth-century Requiem Mass and normally used with the text "O come, O come, Emmanuel" in John Mason Neal's translation. After a mysterious-sounding introduction on the strings and flutes, the melody first appears on the Choir Violoncello before the piece builds up to a chordal finish on a *forte* registration. The second chorale prelude is on CHRIST IST ERSTANDEN, a German chorale adapted from the tenth century monk Wipo of Burgundy's chant VICTIMAE PASCHALI LAUDES and used as the tune for CHRIST IST ERSTANDEN, twelfth century, believed to be the oldest hymn in the German language. It is used today in various translations of which perhaps the most familiar is Catherine Winkworth's "Christ the Lord Is Risen Again." As set by Chris Hoh the melody appears in several variant settings before a quasi-fugal ending, again on a louder registration.

The second set of four *Assorted Airs* is also "assorted" regarding stylistic influences. "Passacaglia" in E major, written in 3/4 time, consists of five variations and is again initially given out of the 16' Fagott. The final variation appears in canon. "Air" in G-sharp minor is written in a charming Romantic style and provides a gentle respite from the complexity of the preceding movement. The short, lilting "Meditation" in F-sharp major continues the gentle character of the preceding

piece. Organists are given the option of playing it in F major. The exuberant "Gigue" in G major begins with a reprise of the theme of the "Passacaglia." It very much reminds me of Stanford's *Prelude in F Major* (Allegretto), opus 101, number 1, in its melodic and rhythmic impact.

This is followed by the remaining two chorale preludes. The first of these is on the famous tune ST. ANNE, attributed to William Croft and widely sung to Isaac Watts's text, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." Here again, Jonathan Dimmock takes the soft, meditative approach, playing on the flutes and introducing the melody on the Trichterregal, which I think to be the best example of this stop that I have ever heard. There is a certain darkness in the harmonies of the "stormy blast." The second chorale prelude is on Johann Heermann's Lutheran Passion hymn, HERLIEBSTER JESU, five of the fifteen stanzas of which are commonly sung to Robert Bridges's translation, "Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended?" Chris Hoh's chorale prelude is split into three sections, the first and third again being meditative in character, while the second, representing the anguish of the Passion, introduces a disjointed theme in the manual played against a pounding pedal part.

The final four *Assorted Airs* begin in a somber mood with the slow and deliberate "Elegy" in D minor. The rather stately "Fughetta" in B-flat minor reminds me a little in its opening of Bach's *Fugue in G Minor*, BWV 578, though in a more solemn style. There is a livelier middle section before "Fughetta" returns to the stately form of the beginning. The rocking, lullaby-like "Pastorale" in A-flat major has an ambiance that I find reminiscent of Vierne's well-known

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“Berceuse.” The melody is somewhat alluring. “March” in C major is a trumpet tune, though differing from many of the genre in maintaining the stateliness and somber mood of the preceding airs.

The last of Chris Hoh’s compositions on this recording is a one-off piece published by Lorenz, *Voluntary on “Truro,”* the well-known eighteenth-century hymntune composed by Charles Burney and sung to seemingly countless texts, of which Isaac Watts’s “From All That Dwell Below the Skies” seems to be the most common, being found in more than 1,000 hymnals according to Hymnary.org. Chris Hoh’s setting is bright and festive and would make an excellent voluntary for general use at the end of a service.

Jonathan Dimmock’s performance on this compact disc has convinced me of the usefulness of Chris Hoh’s fine organ compositions in liturgical settings as well as of the excellence of the Taylor & Boody organ. I am happy, therefore, to commend this album to the readers of THE DIAPASON. So far as the organ is concerned, however, I am left wishing for more. I should like to hear more performances of Baroque, Romantic, and further recent composers on this masterpiece of organbuilding!



Organ Music in New England: Cultivating a Living Tradition

Organ Music in New England: Cultivating a Living Tradition. Justin J. Murphy-Mancini plays the organ of First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalist, Newburyport, Massachusetts. Acis, APL03781, CD \$15.00; MP3 \$9.00; AAC \$9.00;

ALAC \$15.00; FLAC \$15.00. Available from acisproductions.com. Also streaming on Apple High Res Lossless, Spotify, and TIDAL Max.

Washington’s March, traditional, arranged by Edward Little White; *A Fuge or Voluntary*, William Selby; *Voluntary No. 1 “Duetto,”* William Wood; *Soft Organ Voluntary*, Christian Heinrich Rinck, arranged by Manuel Emilio; *Variations on “Adeste Fideles,”* Rayner Taylor; *Double Fugue on “God Save the Queen,”* John Knowles Paine; *Three-voiced Canon in the Fifth*, George William Chadwick; *Variations on “The Last Rose of Summer,”* Dudley Buck; *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, Henry Morton Dunham; *Prelude for a Festive Occasion* (in the style of Mozart), Edith Lang; *Suite in E Major—“Prelude,”* “Scherzo,” “Cantilène,” “Recessional,” “Everett Titcomb; *In the Isles of the Sea*, Daniel Pinkham; *I’ll sing on*, Justin J. Murphy-Mancini; *Partita on “Detroit,”* David Hurd.

Organ Music in New England is dedicated to the memory of Barbara Owen (1933–2024), American organist, organ historian, editor, musicologist, organbuilder, and lecturer. A committed member of the Unitarian Universalist Church, she was for thirty-nine years director of church music at the First Religious Society of Newburyport, Massachusetts, where this recording was made. Joseph Alley (1804–1880) of Newburyport built this instrument in 1834, and it was subsequently rebuilt by George Hutchings (1889), Andover Organ Company (1957), and A. David Moore (2012). In its present state the organ has two manuals with twenty-seven ranks, many of which survive from its original Joseph Alley incarnation. This is not actually the first organ that the First Religious Society of Newburyport has owned—Josiah Leavett of Boston built an earlier one in 1794. When the Joseph Alley organ replaced it in 1834, First Universalist Church of Bangor, Maine, bought the Leavett organ, but it was unfortunately lost in a storm at sea on the way there. I have fond memories of hearing the present organ at Eileen Hunt’s recital during the 1987 Organ Historical Society Convention. A nice touch is that the Acis compact disc has on it a picture of the face of the tavern

clock that has graced front of the organ gallery for more than 150 years.

Justin J. Murphy-Mancini was born in Connecticut in 1989, but grew up in Wilbraham, Massachusetts. After leaving school he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy at Oberlin College in 2013, and a Bachelor of Music degree in composition and organ performance and a Master of Music degree in historical performance at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, both in 2014. He subsequently obtained a Ph.D. degree in composition at the University of California, San Diego, in 2019. Since the fall of 2024, he has occupied the Paul Fritts Endowed Chair in Organ Studies and Performance at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington. Although a Catholic by birth, most of Murphy-Mancini’s experience as an organist has been in Unitarian Universalist churches, including as stint at First UU San Diego while he was working on his doctorate. In 2019 he returned east as director of church music at the First Religious Society of Newburyport, Massachusetts, which he combined with a faculty post at the School of Music at the University of Southern Maine in Gorham, Maine, until his appointment to the faculty of PLU in 2024.

The first work on the compact disc is *Washington’s March*, which comes from a collection with the unlikely title, *Organ without a master: containing the elements of music, and complete instructions for the melodeon, seraphine, or reed organ; to which is added a choice collection of fifty pieces of popular music, consisting of songs, marches, waltzes, polkas, dances, &c.,* by Edward Little White (1809–1851), and which also includes such delights as Jenny Lind’s *Favorite Polka* and *The Wrecker’s Daughter*. *Washington’s March* is sprightly piece in which we hear contrasting loud and soft voices of the organ.

The second track is a performance of *A Fuge or Voluntary* by William Selby (1738–1798), an English-born musician who was successively organist of Trinity Episcopal Church, Newport, Rhode Island, and the King’s Chapel in Boston. This composition is one of several on this album that Barbara Owen published in her four-volume anthology, *A Century of American Organ Music (1776–1876)*, which is the source of most of the early American music that I have ever played. Selby’s piece is found in volume one. This animated fugue comes across well on the clear principal chorus of the Newburyport organ; we hear the full organ at the end. The next composition is by a composer I had not previously heard of, William Wood (born 1788), who was organist of the First Religious Society of Newburyport from 1811 to 1815, during the time when they were using the Leavett organ. His *Voluntary No. 1 “Duetto”* survives in a manuscript entitled *Voluntaries, Sacred Music and Organ Book of the Church in Pleasant St, Newburyport*. It is written in the style of the Mannheim School and features dance-like rhythms, but I am a loss to understand why it is titled “Duetto.”

Following this we hear *Soft Organ Voluntary*, by Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770–1846), adapted by Manuel Emilio (1812–1871), a Spanish immigrant who settled in Salem, Massachusetts. This composition is found in the second volume of Barbara Owen’s *A Century of American Organ Music (1776–1876)*. Here we discover some of the Romantic potential of the Alley organ. We return to the first volume for Rayner Taylor’s *Variations on “Adeste Fideles,”* one of the best known early American compositions

for organ. Taylor (1747–1825), another English-born musician, was successively organist of Saint Anne’s Episcopal Church in Annapolis, Maryland, and Saint Peter’s Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, where he presided over a three-manual organ of twenty-seven stops built by Philip Feyring in 1764. Concurrently with this, he seems also to have been the organist of Saint Joseph’s Catholic Church in Philadelphia, which may have had an organ by Johann Gottlob Clemm. *Variations on “Adeste Fideles”* allows Justin Murphy-Mancini to explore the many varied colors of the First Religious Society’s organ.

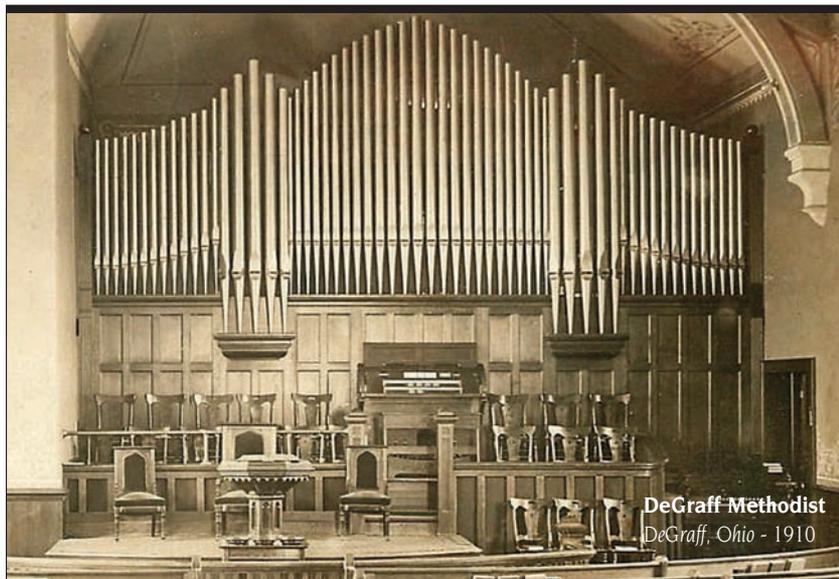
John Knowles Paine (1839–1906), the first professor of music at Harvard University, wrote his *Double Fugue on “God Save the Queen” for the Full Organ*, opus 2, number 4, while a student in Germany. Murray Forbes Somerville published a scholarly modern edition of this composition in 1994. It is a fine piece of contrapuntal writing, demonstrating the strong influence that Johann Sebastian Bach exerted upon Paine—indeed, it could almost have been written by Bach himself—and includes a virtuosic pedal part. It culminates in a repetition of the theme on full organ, which makes an impressive sound.

George Whitefield Chadwick (1853–1931), director of the New England Conservatory of Music, published his *Ten Canonic Studies for Organ* in 1885. “Three-voiced Canon in the Fifth” is the ninth of the collection. Masters Music issued a scholarly modern edition in 2000. Chadwick intended these canonic studies as pedagogic works for his students, but they are nevertheless fresh and interesting.

Dudley Buck (1839–1909) was perhaps the best-known American recitalist of the nineteenth century, as well as being a respected composer, well respected for his *Variations on The Star-Spangled Banner*, opus 23. He published a similar set of variations, *The Last Rose of Summer, Varied for the Organ*, opus 59, in 1887. These variations were based on the traditional Irish melody *Aisling an Óigfhear*, later set to a poem by the Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779–1852), “The Last Rose of Summer.” This is the longest piece on the compact disc. Once again Murphy-Mancini makes good use of the varied resources of the organ, and I thought that the Swell Oboe sounded particularly effective as a solo stop in one of the variations. After some fireworks in the middle, the work draws to a very peaceful close.

The American organist Henry Morton Dunham (1853–1929) spent much of his time as an editor, producing editions of works by César Franck, Théodore Dubois, Théodore Salome, Eugène Gigout, and Léon Boëllmann, among others. His own compositions for organ included two organ symphonies (opus 10 and opus 16) and *Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor*, opus 19, as well as several pedagogical works. Among his lesser-known works is the piece found on this album, “Chorale Prelude on ‘Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele,’” the first of his *Three Chorales*, opus 20, which he published in 1903. It features the chorale melody in the tenor with very Bach-like accompaniments. The melody repeats in several variant forms, and the piece might almost be considered a chorale partita.

Edith Lang (1885–1969) was both a theatre and a church organist who was very fond of theatrical effects in her compositions, regardless of what audience they were intended for. At college, Barbara Owen would sometimes



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