

# Music, She Wrote: Organ Compositions by Women

## Part Five: Service Music for Ascension and Beyond

by Dr. Frances Nobert, South Coast District Convener

### Ascension

Janet Linker. *Variations on "All Hail the Power."* Concordia Publishing House 97-6856. *Fanfare, Adagio, Gigue* and *Meditation* are one to three pages long and are in the key of F Major. Linker indicates that the first might serve as an introduction to the congregational hymn. *Scherzo, Toccata, Air, Trumpet Tune, Cantilena* and *Finale* move to G Major. Registrations are noted throughout. All of the moderately easy variations may stand on their own and thus function well as a group or as individual compositions during a service.

### Pentecost

Mary Beth Bennett. *Partita on "Veni, Creator Spiritus."* Augsburg Fortress 11-10588. Bennett's eight-page composition consists of a recitative, chorale, bicinium, aria, hocket, pedal cadenza and toccata. The first four movements could serve as a brief prelude or as communion music, while the closing toccata would be an excellent postlude. Of medium difficulty, the entire composition would also be an interesting recital piece.

Emma Lou Diemer. *Psalms 104* from *Seasonal Psalms for Organ, Volume II*. Sacred Music Press 70/1259 S. The work is based on the tune *Sonne der Gerechtigkeit*, Bohemian Brethren, Kirchengeseng, 1566. The seven-page toccata is in ABA' form with the melody in the pedal. As the composition progresses from D Major to Eb Major and back to D, the intricacies of the manual accompaniment become rhythmically more complex with six notes against four. The last five measures have full organ chords that conclude a fine postlude.

Jeanne Demessieux. *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit pour Orgue (Seven Meditations on the Holy Spirit)*. Editions Durand 13,312. Most of the lengthy compositions are difficult and require sizable romantic-style organs with 16' stops on one or more manuals. However, the quiet *Paix* would be a lovely prelude, if the organist could comfortably manage the octaves in the chords throughout.

Jeanne Demessieux. *Veni Creator* from *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes for Organ*. Summy-Birchard, ISBN 0-87487-603-6. This collection of twelve compositions has been referred to as the Catholic version of the organ booklet of our century. *Veni Creator* is a brief, moderately difficult toccata in B-Flat major and would be an excellent postlude for Pentecost. Because the easy pedal part consists of only three pitches, it is possible to practice this work very effectively on the piano.

Langlois, Kristina. *In Babilone* and *Down Ampney* from *Eight Miniatures for the Seasons of Lent, Easter and Pentecost*. MorningStar MSM 10-345. *In Babilone* (*Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling*) is a sprightly, clever, two-page piece with one pedal note on the last chord. *Down Ampney* has two variations and an alternate accompaniment. The first quiet setting is in a slow 6/8, while the second is a cheerful, fast rendition. The alternate harmonization and the two variations present the cantus firmus in the pedal.

Sandresky, Margaret Vardell. *Toccata on "Veni Creator Spiritus"* from *Organ Music, Volume I: Solo Organ*, ed. Virginia L. Haisten. Wayne Leupold Editions WL 600031. The eleven-page composition is mostly for manuals. The unadorned melody appears twice in the pedal, with the same manual accompaniment each time. The presentation of the cantus firmus is surrounded by an introduction, several interludes in various keys and a brief coda. Supporting the final four chordal measures is a descending scalar passage in the pedal.

## Trinity

Emma Lou Diemer. *Psalm 150* (based on the tune *Nicaea* by John Bacchus Dykes) from *Seasonal Psalms for Organ, Volume I*. Sacred Music Press 70/1258 S. The quiet, expressive, five-page setting would be a fine prelude to a church service opening with the singing of the hymn *Nicaea*.

### July 4 or Other Patriot Occasions

Janet Linker. *Meditation and Variations on America*. Beckenhorst Press OC6. The *Meditation* of three pages would be an effective, quick-to-learn prelude for July 4. The moderately easy theme and seven variations are in different major or minor keys with changing dynamic levels and tempi. They would thus be useful individually or in combinations as preludes, postludes or communion music.

### Christ the King

\*Emma Lou Diemer. *Diademata* from *Hymn Preludes and Free Accompaniments*. Augsburg 11-9398. This is a hole-punched setting with a prelude on one side and an accompaniment on the reverse. The lightweight cardboard helps to keep the music on the rack.

\*June Nixon. *Diademata* from *Final Flourish: Two Hundred Last Verse Arrangements of Familiar Hymn Tunes*. Kevin Mayhew 1400108. Except for the last three measures, the melody is in the soprano with conservative harmonic alterations in the accompaniment.

June Nixon. *Diademata* from *Organ Miniatures: 200 Short Improvisations on Familiar Hymn Tunes*. Kevin Mayhew 1400196. This setting would be an excellent introduction with the slightly ornamented tune on the top until the last six measures. The harmonies are similar to those in the hymnal.