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DEAR UNCLE MAX

I have run out of ideas for postludes and am tired of the ones I have been playing. Postludes are the hardest to find. Would you be willing to suggest a dozen or so of medium difficulty, somewhat off the beaten track? I don't have all that much time to practice, but am willing to work at them.

H.B., Mass.

Taste is a tricky matter, and congregational tastes even trickier. But here goes. I am going to give just a sentence or two of comments about each one or group. These are compositions I have liked to play. Our congregation sits through the postlude and if they like something, are very much apt to applaud. While I haven't told them that I don't think I approve of applause in church (nor am I absolutely opposed to it), it does give a sort of instant feedback on whether you are communicating, which is useful.

I am going to try to hit those composers whose works may not be as well known or as available on music counters where you may be looking. That also means I will overlook Bach, Buxtehude, etc. Also, by and large, things may be slightly or mildly contemporary.

1. Andriessen, Hendrik. "Toccata" from the *Sonata da Chiesa*, Edward B. Marks or J.R. Van Rossum, The Netherlands. This sonata was enormously popular a half century ago. Whole-tone scales, broken unrelated chords, yet chorale-like in its conclusion. If you have enough organ, try playing some of the overlapping arpeggiated figures on two keyboards, the second coupled so that they sound the same. Saves wear and tear; you stay out of your own way.

2. Biggs, Richard Keys. *Carillon on "O Filii et Filiae,"* J. Fischer. A good Easter composition on a well-known tune. Also (I have mentioned the piece once before in this column) *Toccata on "Deo Gracias,"* McLaughlin and Reilly or page 9 in Summy Birchard's *Organ Music for Celebration and Praise*. Literally falls under the fingers, and has a good modal melody on which it is based.

3. Charpentier, Marc-Antoine. *Tambourin sur des Noëls, Manual Miscellany for Organ*, edited by C.H. Trevor, two vols., Elkin and Company Ltd., London; Vol. 2, page 12. In some ways this doesn't entirely fit on my list, but am including it as it is one of the small numbers of the genre: Tambourin (which was discussed in Uncle Max un-

der skip registrations, September 2000). It is especially suitable for a Christmas service with children. The left hand never changes position over low Ds and an A, and above it, as the bass drones along, are given successively three different Noëls. Its naïveté is its charm! (Watch for my arrangement for one bagpipe, one fife, one real tambourine, and six lords-a-leaping!) Refreshingly simple, yet delightful.

4. Dello Joio, Norman. "Caccia" from *Five Lyric Pieces*, E.B. Marks. Caccia: "A form of 14th-century Italian poetry and music. The text often deals with hunting and fishing scenes . . . is a strict canon in two parts," says the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Skip the canon; this is just a merry romp through the countryside. Dello Joio is one of those composers whose clothes have tags sticking out all over saying, "Made in America." He told me that he had written these pieces as children's piano pieces and only later thought to turn them into organ pieces. Nice music; fun for all—redivide the big chords and skip the notes occasionally that double the bass line.

5. Drischner, Max. "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" from *Choralvorspiele (ohne Pedal) für Dorforganisten*, Schultheiss. Very effective—just a short introduction, then a running 16th-note line in the left hand. Also, "Of Thee, Jehovah, Will I Sing" from *Choralvorspiele (mit Pedal)*, Schultheiss. Effective; good use of repeated chords.

6. Fleury, André. *Vingt-quatre Pièces (orgue/harmonium)*, Combre. This composer has written a lot of compositions; perhaps he was unfortunate in his choice of publishing houses, as little of his music appears to be known in this country. Registration is given for harmonium or organ, two-stave notation, optional pedal. I particularly like No. 1, "Allegro maestoso," with its well-defined and interesting modulation scheme. Equally good is No. XXI, "Comme une marche." One thinks of marches as being written by early Americans or in the 19th century by composers called Fernand de la Tombelle. Here's a spicy, melodic one from nearer our time. Useful to have around.

7. Franck, César. "Sortie in D" from *Pieces for Organ or Harmonium (L'Organiste, second volume)*, Enoch & Cie. I keep going through both volumes about every other year, thinking there may be something I have missed. A couple of good postludes are in Vol. 2, especially "Sortie in D," plus one in D-flat. If you have a good Great Trumpet, the D-flat Sortie is very usable as an Academic Procession with its, at times, strongly marked pulse. Scattered throughout are Elevations, Offertories, Allegrettos, and Andantinos of quiet beauty; you have to

pick and choose with care. The collection was written for a specific purpose, and however well it worked at the time, in toto, it is less useful today. Lots of short interludes, should those be useful.

8. Jacob, Gordon. "Festal Flourish," *Album of Praise*, Oxford University Press. Very British, well written, may not like on first reading, but you will like it if you learn it.

9. Langlais, Jean. "Bells" from *Three Characteristic Pieces*, Novello. Everyone will have his or her favorite Langlais pieces, but this one is a bit less well known and very charming, as well as fun to play and hear. Listeners will relate to it immediately.

10. Murrill, Herbert. *Carillon*, Oxford University Press. This is a charming mini-toccata, with a slightly tricky pedal part—not too much so; mostly to be learned at the piano. If the pedal is bothersome, try "Postlude on a Ground" from *Simple Organ Voluntaries*, also Oxford University Press. This sounds terrific. Mr. Biggs recorded it, you may remember. It is quite thrilling when the change from minor to major comes at the end.

11. Pinkham, Daniel. "Toccata" from *Revelations*, E.C. Schirmer. Pinkham's compositions are always skillful, original, and with a sure knowledge of how something should and will sound. This collection of pieces from 1965, which includes a *Pastorale* and *Litany* (itself a possible postlude), seems to me to be a good introduction to Pinkham's style if you or your congregation are unfamiliar with his writings. You may also want to check out his *First Organbook*, for one manual without pedals, and his *Second Organbook*, with pedals, for trumpet tunes and other nice things! A bit spicier still would be the "Allegro brillante," No. IV, from *Blessings*, E.C. Schirmer. Pinkham has greatly enriched 20th-century solo organ music repertoire, and has produced a varied and skillful outpouring of ensemble music for organ and guitar, harp, two organs, electronic tape, you name it. We'll have to see what he intends to do in this century. I am sure he has begun.

12. Sanders, Bernard. *Two Eclogues and Fugues*, Edition Dohr 96393. My list is more than a little skimpy on fugal literature, so here are a couple of suggestions. I particularly like the F major, the first of the *Two Eclogues and Fugues*. It is full of interest and is playable. Would make a good teaching piece. If you like that, you may want to go on to the Fugue from Sanders's *Chaconne und Fuge in G*, Edition Dohr 97475. The Chaconne is very interesting as well. Mr. Sanders, better known for some of his chorale preludes, which are published in the U.S., was born and educated in this country, then went to Germany for postgraduate work, married,

and stayed there. Mr. Sanders is another composer who has written much chamber music with organ—trombone, recorder, alto saxophone, viola.

13. Schroeder, Hermann. *Kleine Præludien und Intermezzi*, Op. 9, Schott 2221. The first in C, a Maestoso, is broad and grand, but even better is No. VI in C, Poco vivo, which has a nice "kick" to the rhythm, making it quite exciting. From Schroeder's *Präambeln und Interludien*, Schott 4539, see especially No. IV in D, Vivace, which is equally good.

14. Last, for that special occasion: Wyton, Alec. "Shall We Gather at the River," from *A Little Christian Year*, C. Fischer. A simple setting, direct, unimpeded in its flow; more successful than complicated arrangements, still it has drive and forward movement.

Something from the above list should strike your fancy.

Dear Uncle Max: Note to myself—try to learn something new everyday! See below:

1. "Dear Uncle Max" (Dec. 2000) says of a tuning keyboard inside an organ, "Such a thing could exist. I can't imagine its useful function." The only such situation I can recall was within an antiphonal division so far from the main console that oral communication was not practical. The tuning keyboard was a luxury enjoyed by the tuner or his key-holding assistant. Today, I suppose, cellular phones would be a simpler solution.

D.J., Ga.

2. The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ has twelve separate tuning keyboards. The pipe chambers are too numerous to list and they are quite far from the main console.

D.S. (e-mail)

3. Check with the folks at Lord & Taylor in Philadelphia. As I recall, the Wanamaker organ has tuning keyboards in its various chambers, which, as you know, are spread over a large area of the department store. It would be most difficult to tune an organ this size from the console. Don't know if there are other large organs that have tuning keyboards, but it certainly seems possible. So it wasn't just made up for the movie.

D.Z., Colo.

Thank you very much—my imagination is duly enlarged!

MAX B. MILLER, FAGO

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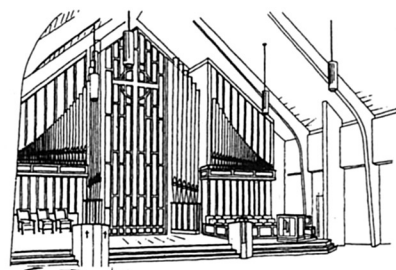
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