

ORGAN MUSIC

Reviewed by Velinda Secor

All prices are in U. S. dollars.

Prayerful Preludes - Set 4 for Organ by Robert J. Powell. MorningStar Music Publishers MSM-10-679, 2015. \$9.00. Level: Easy.

Contents: EVENTIDE, DENNIS, TERRA BEATA.

This is the fourth in a series of preludes that are meditative, reflective, and fill the need for quiet music during the worship service. They are interestingly arranged with ease in performing. Registrations are suggested. Good balance of manuals and pedal for presenting melody and harmonizing. A good resource for oldies in a new setting.

New Songs of Celebration, 10 Settings for Organ, by Benjamin Colli. Augsburg Fortress, ISBN 978-1-4514-9408-2, 2014. Level: Easy Medium.. \$17.00.

Contents: Ten pieces for use during Lent, Easter and Pentecost: BRIDEGROOM, DEO GRACIAS, FORTUNATUS NEW, GOTT SEI GELOBET UND GEBENEDEIET, LITTLE FLOCK, LLANFAIR, LOVE UNKNOWN, RENDEZ A DIEU, VARVINDAR FRISKA, VICTORY.

Very accessible and easy to play, but the sound and arranging are impressive and creative. Each piece is arranged in a manner that reinforces the character of the hymn tune and text. The wide range of styles create a collection that is very versatile and enjoyable to use in worship. The distribution of melody line is between pedals and manuals throughout. This helps create a more interesting sound. The chords fit the hand; without overly large stretches. Pedaling is easy. Key and meter are not complicated. Suggested registrations are given for each piece. Most pieces are two-three pages long. If I have a complaint, I wish the pieces were longer!

American Hymns for Organ, by Edwin T. Childs. Augsburg Fortress, ISBN 978-1-4514-9405-1, 2014. \$22.00. Level: Easy Medium.

Contents: Eighteen pieces based on folk hymns and shaped note tunes found in such sources as *The Sacred Harp*, *Southern Harmony*, *Columbian Harmony* and Early American hymn tunes. Most denominations are familiar with these tunes and the pieces can be appropriate for different occasions and times of the church year. BEACH SPRING, BOURBON, CONSOLATION, DETROIT, DISTRESS, DOVE OF PEACE, FOUNDATION, HOLY MANNA, JEFFERSON, LAND OF REST, LORD REVIVE US, NETTLETON, NEW BRITAIN, PROMISED LAND, PROSPECT, RESIGNATION, RESTORATION, WONDROUS LOVE.

A great resource of familiar hymn tunes presented with a new musical viewpoint. What makes this collection so enjoyable and versatile are the fresh harmonies, sparkly sound and use of rhythm that makes the tunes dance. There are several pieces that are manual only - NETTLETON, DOVE OF PEACE, and LAND OF REST. The remainder of songs use pedal as an integral part of rhythm or creating the character of the piece - not just outlining harmonies. A smaller hand-size can reach all the chord tones. The use of key changes in eight of the eighteen pieces help create interest. You might encounter five-six sharps or five flats. In general, two-three flats or sharps are most common. Registrations are suggested. Although I have many

collections of organ music centered on this genre, this is a great addition due to the color, vitality of rhythm, and the unique personality given to each piece.

25 Alternate Hymn Harmonizations for Organ by Clay Christiansen. MorningStar Music Publishers MSM-10-215, 2015. Level: Moderately Easy. \$28.00.

Contents: Harmonizations of hymns found throughout most denominations.

This set offers short introductions to each hymn and/or interludes and then alternate harmonizations. These harmonizations can be used for final stanzas or the editor suggests with interior stanzas. What was appreciated, on several of the hymns, two keys were offered to accommodate varying hymnals. The introductions given are rather short. If you are in a denomination that expects the total hymn played as an introduction, you might find the given intro unusable. The harmonizations are playable but if you have a congregation or choir that are not confident singers, you might want to use them sparingly. Fanfares and descants are also used in presenting these harmonizations.

An Old Favorite: "Festival Alleluia based on LASST UNS ERFREUEN" from *Two Festive Hymn Settings* by Dan Miller. Morningstar Music Publishers MSM 10-419, 1999. \$7.00.

When I play this piece I am thinking the text from "All Creatures of Our God and King." The A section of this piece has driving triple rhythms, fanfare style, and presto tempo followed by a more flowing, soaring B section returning to the original idea to end the piece. Tending to think in pictures, I imagine God's creatures - horses galloping, eagles soaring, dolphins swimming, prairie dogs playing - all God's creating praising Him in joy for the world He has created for us.

Velinda Secor (M.M.-Butler and M.A.C.M - Christian Theological Seminary) is currently sharing the gift of music through private piano/organ instruction and as church organist, children's choir director, and flute ensemble co-director in a Presbyterian church in the Midwest.