

Canadian Sounds. Deirdre Piper, composer and organist. *Diversions*: Saxart - Jean-Guy Brault, soprano; Noël Samyn, alto; René Lavoie, tenor; Peter Smith, baritone. *Khoreia*: Peter Smith, clarinet; Joan Harrison, violoncello; Elaine Keillor, piano. Compact disc. Carleton Sound CSCD 1007. \$20.98.

Frederick Chubb: Sonata in C Minor, First Movement.

T. J. Crawford: Toccata in F Major

Clarence Lucas: Fugue

R.-O. Pelletier: 10 petits morceaux de différents caractères, no. 8

Deirdre Piper: Diversions; Khoreia

William Reed: Cantilène

Samuel P. Warren: Prelude and Fugue in A Flat Major

Canadian Sounds is an unusual but worthwhile recording. It combines two disparate themes: a historical survey of Canadian organ music, and contemporary chamber-music compositions. Both examples of each genre are eminently worthy contributions to musical Canadiana. Thus this CD showcases two sides of Deirdre Piper, a Canadian composer and performer who is also an Associate Professor at Carleton University and Music Director at St. Matthias Anglican Church in Ottawa.

On the compositional side, we have two distinctive and quite different works. *Diversions* (1998), in four movements for saxophone quartet, revels in the bright, intense sounds of the saxophone family, with occasional nods in the direction of the articulation and voicing styles of the dance band. *Diversions* is motivic and colourful rather than tuneful. It is a challenging and important work for the saxophone repertory.

The highlight of the recording has to be *Khoreia* (1992) for clarinet, cello and piano, a 20-minute, multi-movement work that exudes style and grace. Intriguing, charming, and full of delightful rhythms, the music explores the varied sonorities of the three instruments in novel, yet artistic and expressive, ways. The piano part is very unusual, eschewing the familiar techniques and figurations of the instrument, and instead focusing on its diverse reverberations. The clarinet, with its intense and exquisite lines, dominates the texture for most of the piece.

The organ music performed by Piper is a selection of repertoire from the first part of the twentieth century composed by Canadians or by those who chose Canada as their home. The selection has been inspired by the Canadian Musical Heritage series, and Piper is to be commended for bringing this music off the page and into performance. Not that any one piece is of particular moment, but together they document the tradition of "early" Canadian organ composition. The composers include many now-unfamiliar names like Chubb, Reed, Lucas, Warren, Pelletier and Crawford, who nevertheless were all leaders in their time and place, and are representative of this era in Canadian musical history. The musical styles range from the Elgarian pomp and splendor of Chubb's Sonata in C Minor, through the poetic impressions of Reed and Warren, to the grandiose showpiece, Crawford's Toccata in F Major.

The performances are impeccable and compelling throughout, though for the sake of “authenticity” one might have chosen a more romantic-toned instrument of the period, something with rounder tonal qualities, more fullness, and less brilliance. On the other hand, the recording does point up the fact that much of this music can fare very well on more modern, brilliantly-toned instruments such as the 1957/1991 Casavant at St. Matthias.

Because the two musical worlds represented on this CD are so different from one another, I as a listener would have wished for two CDs rather than one. The first would consist strictly of organ music, including the

whole of Chubb’s Sonata, and the second would be devoted to Piper’s compositions.

Piper’s liner notes (in French and English) are detailed, complete, and accurate. The recording is also expertly made. My one criticism is the insufficient dead space between the tracks. Sometimes, it makes the separate pieces sound almost like conjoined movements. *Canadian Sounds* may be ordered by from the Web site of the Canadian Music Centre: www.musiccentre.ca.

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