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Pulling Out the Stops: A History of the Organ (review)

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that tradition, the recently-formed girls' choir in Salisbury. In Nashville, Goodall emphasizes the power of music in the African-American religious experience, both in older traditions such as metered singing and spirituals and in the latest forms of gospel. In the final segment, Goodall explores how former communist countries such as Bulgaria kept alive a choral tradition whose antiquity he compares to a "saber tooth tiger," while Estonians gained freedom through a "singing revolution." Bonus features include full performances of songs by each choir. Although the brevity of these programs limits their detail, Goodall piques

viewers' interest in a wide variety of choral styles, gives a human face to sounds that some listeners might otherwise find forbidding, and effectively demonstrates how powerful the experience of belonging to a choir can be.

Overall, Goodall is an excellent presenter whose obvious passion for music and flair for showmanship will make these programs both informative and delightful for students, professionals, and laypeople alike. One only hopes that more of his documentaries will make their way to video.

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Pulling Out the Stops: A History of the Organ. 4, The Modern Age. DVD. Directed by Nat Lilienstein. Music by César Franck, Charles-Marie Widor, Max Reger, Olivier Messiaen, and Jehan Alain. [Germany:] Arthaus Musik, 1997. 102 153. \$21.98.

Despite the expansive title of the series to which it belongs, *The Modern Age* is a focused, concentrated film. In just under an hour, it surveys repertoire and instruments in Europe from the Romantic era through the early twentieth century, with seven works played from beginning to end by three organists on four French, Swiss, and Italian organs. Although the film was released in 1997, the most recent work included is Jehan Alain's *Litanies*, composed sixty years earlier. The film includes several informal interviews conducted in French (German, English, and Spanish soundtracks are available); the last of these conversations, with Marie-Claire Alain, is nearly ten minutes long.

The three previous films in the *History of the Organ* series were devoted to the organ's classical origins, its use in the early Baroque era, and its full flowering in the later Baroque. This last film in the series likewise covers a brief, fertile moment in the long story of the organ. It was in the nineteenth century that organ music evolved well beyond its liturgical role into a concert medium for which organs were equipped with an ever-increasing range of timbres; in the twentieth century, the organ blossomed into an instrument with an astonishing versatility of design and repertoire.

Those new sounds are thoroughly illustrated here. René Saorgin, for instance,

performs "music in the style of a military band" (the title and composer are not identified) on an 1847 Giuseppe Serassi organ in Corsica. Saorgin deploys so-called picturesque stops which are not just named after percussion instruments but actually deploy tiny bells and timpani, on which the camera is trained—even the organist would have difficulty seeing these stops in action, and the director makes ingenious use of a crane to show the insides of the organ chest at work. The lively playing of Saorgin contrasts sharply with Marie-Claire Alain's high conservatory style. She performs on the Aristide Cavaillé-Coll instrument at the Hofkirche in Lucerne, Switzerland. Interpreting works by Olivier Messiaen and by her brother, Jehan Alain, with crisp articulation and sober rhythmic accuracy, Marie-Claire Alain amply demonstrates the wide range of reeds and flutes for which Cavaillé-Coll organs are known. A third recitalist, Louis Robillard, speaks little and delivers Charles-Marie Widor's "Toccata," the Finale from the Fifth Symphony, with brisk flair.

There are no extra features at all on this DVD. However, a fascinating essay by Maria Walburga Stürzer is included with the insert. Stürzer covers several exciting developments not addressed in the film, such as the research of Albert Schweitzer, the use of digital techniques in new music (com-

monplace well before 1997), and the aesthetics of organ music in sacred versus secular contexts.

The Modern Age could have been enriched by the inclusion of more experimental repertoire, such as the György Ligeti and

John Cage referenced by Stürzer's essay, but here at least is an absorbing examination of a small yet highly significant area of the organ's vast sphere.

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The Castellani/Andriaccio Duo. DVD. Directed by William Bay. [Pacific, MO]: Mel Bay Publications, 2008. 97551DVD. \$24.95.

The Newman and Oltman Guitar Duo. DVD. Directed by William Bay. [Pacific, MO]: Mel Bay Publications, 2009. 97550DVD. \$24.95.

Two recently released performance DVDs showcase two quite outstanding yet fundamentally different classical guitar duos. They are both presented in a similar fashion but the players themselves exhibit profoundly different strengths.

Both of these DVDs, which introduce us to the Castellani/Andriaccio Duo and the Newman and Oltman Guitar Duo, are produced by Mel Bay Publishers. The ensembles (which are both female-male duos based in the New York/New Jersey area) are filmed in similar studios and perform arrangements of works that were originally written for piano. That, however, is where the similarities end.

The Castellani/Andriaccio Duo performs works by Scarlatti, Haydn, and Turina, plus a series of tangos. The true highlight here is the immaculate precision of their playing. All notes are as articulate as they possibly could be and the ornaments are executed with astonishingly crisp accuracy. The pieces often sound like one player is performing rather than two. It is that clean.

Duo members Joanne Castellani and Michael Andriaccio are both active professional musicians. They co-direct the JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Castellani is also director of guitar studies at SUNY Buffalo. Andriaccio has a separate solo career having recently released a CD of bossa nova pieces on the Fleur de Son Classics label.

Turning to the Newman and Oltman Guitar Duo, we see a shift of emphasis to that of passion and expression. Their program consists of their own arrangements of piano works by the Spanish composer, Isaac Albéniz. All the appropriate flamenco-like fire and engaging stage presence are brought forward for this musical wild ride

through Iberia. (Albéniz entitled many of his pieces with the names of cities or regions in Spain such as "Sevilla," "Granada," "Cataluña," and "Asturias.")

In their verbal introduction to the program, Newman and Oltman tell us that they are striving for a warm, legato sound. They certainly achieve that goal in this DVD. Part of the secret of this rich and balanced tone can be found in the fine instruments they play. Both were crafted by master luthier, Thomas Humphrey.

Laura Oltman and Michael Newman are also highly recognized guitar educators. Oltman teaches at Princeton and Rutgers universities, and Michael Newman is a member of the faculty at the Mannes College of Music.

Both DVDs offer quality presentations that would be worthy additions to a music library's collection. The length of each program is approximately forty-five minutes. The video quality is clear and bright with camera angles varying throughout the programs to offer good views of the performers' playing techniques. Sound quality is equally good and allows the listener to hear the fine subtleties of the artists' phrasing. In each case, the performers present interesting and informative verbal introductions to their programs which will enhance the viewer's appreciation of the music.

In conclusion, these DVDs offer valuable viewing for a wider audience than just guitarists. The clarity of the Castellani/Andriaccio Duo's performing, and the heartfelt expression of the Newman/Oltman Duo, present musicianship that would be enjoyable and beneficial for any amateur or professional musician to experience.

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