

GEORGE BAKER

Press Notices

Jean Langlais: Un centenaire; Oeuvres pour orgue, George C. Baker, St-Sernin de Toulouse, Solstice SOCD 240, recorded August 2007

“The virtuoso Texan, with all of his brilliance, never abandons a happy and nonchalant ease of performance (one would say in English: debonair), even in the technically difficult, jerky or tense passages, which are executed with a facile precision. The natural quality of his playing brings out the finest in these pieces, which are among the best composed as well as the most accessible works of Langlais.”

5 of 5 Diapason rating

Paul de Louit, *Le Diapason* (Paris, France) January 2008

“Baker distills with love the music of Langlais, of medieval flavors in Gregorian modes, balancing poetry, fervor, virtuosity of writing, and contrasting architectural structures, beautifully putting them in place. In short, Baker gives a powerful performance of light and shadows, full of nuances and contrasts, reminding us what an eloquent poet of the organ was Jean Langlais.”

Michel Roubinet, *Le Monde de la Musique*, November 2007

“[Baker] plays brilliantly where called for, caressingly, elsewhere. Bottom line: Attractive organ works, elegantly played.”

***The Dallas Morning News*, 2007**

OTHER REVIEWS

“With rock-solid assurance, Dr. Baker captured all the music’s drama, but also its tenderness and even playfulness [Messiaen *La nativité du Seigneur*]. And he tossed off the final toccata of “God Among Us” with, as Messiaen would have wished, almost giddy virtuosity.”

***The Dallas Morning News*, 2008**

“... George C. Baker utilizes with exquisite poetry the possibilities of the Cavallé-Coll organ at Saint-Ouen de Rouen. As light plays on a stained glass window, he continuously invents new sonorous colors.”

***Répertoire des disques compacts* (France)**

“... A superb homage to the man and to the composer ... Baker offers us the fourth complete CD version of *Les Pièces in Style Libre* — by far the best. ... One admires the talents of Baker the colorist, handling the great organ as if it were a more modest instrument, and using its rich resources to bring a great variety of tonal colors to the music. (Five Diapasons awarded)

***Diapason* (France)**

“Remarkable ... Baker liberates all of the romantic verve the music [*24 Pièces de Fantasie*] has to offer. ... His interpretation perfectly and instinctively expresses and defines Vierne’s profound personality.”

***Répertoire* (France)**

“... The *Marche Triomphale*, with brass and percussion, capitalizes on the Saint-Ouen acoustic as Baker articulates crisply and with heavy emphasis. Other impressive tracks include the reconstructed improvisation that Vierne recorded for Odéon in 1929, later transcribed by Maurice Duruflé, and the four suites of character pieces [*24 Pièces de Fantaisie*] whose technical and musical challenges rival those of the six symphonies ... Baker’s return to music making for a spell is a glad reminder of Shelly’s words, ‘For love and beauty and delight, there is no death or change.’”

The American Organist

“... This lovely piece [*Berceuse-Paraphrase*] ... is a six-minute work that reveals the composer’s Francophilia and sounds like something Duruflé might have improvised on Christmas Eve. Highly recommended.”

The Diapason

(Vierne Complete Organ Works) “... our firm front-runner for interpretation ...”

Organists’ Review

(Vierne Complete Organ Works) “Baker, of course, is well known in organ circles for his outstanding performances and his dedication to the French repertoire. ... his accurate playing coupled with the resonant sound makes this the complete collection of choice.”

American Record Guide

“The evening’s highlight was Dr. Baker’s own extemporization on the gospel hymn “*I come to the garden,*” rich in juicy chords and modulations worthy of Cochereau himself.”

The Dallas Morning News

(Dupré Works for Organ, Vol. 13, Naxos) “... Dr. Baker plays with virtuosity and grace, and, from purr to thunder, the organ in SMU’s resonant Perkins Chapel does a good imitation of its French cathedral models.”

Scott Cantrell, The Dallas Morning News