

CHELSEA CHEN
Press Notices

KANSAS CITY (Pipe Organ Encounter 2009) “From the opening bars of the [Mulet] *Carillon Sortie* ... to the final piece on the program ... Chen held the audience captive ... [Her] fluid musical expression was sovereign to every technical challenge. Her footwork in the Prelude of Bach’s *Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV 543* was phenomenal. The range of tonal colors and variety of nuance in texture and style she brought to each work revealed a depth of musicality that delighted and inspired the audience, who awarded her an enthusiastic standing ovation.”

Kansas City Star, June 2009

LOS ANGELES (Disney Hall)

“Chen ... plays French music (Dupre and Vierne) with lovely lyrical grandeur. But it [is] in her ability to make forbidding German organ music utterly engaging that Chen really stands out. On Sunday, Hindemith’s gray *Organ Sonata No. 1* became not gray but kaleidoscopically colored and character-filled. A Chorale-fantasy by Max Reger was a fabulous rush of mad passion but never at the expense of eye-popping contrapuntal clarity ... not all organists have her delicacy ... her ability to paint a line with a poetic brush stroke before – or after – she lets rip.”

Los Angeles Times, November 2008

“... I’ve heard organists much older than Chen who could take a lesson from the San Diego native ... Her technical prowess was on display immediately. She effectively probed the brooding mysteries of ‘The World Awaiting the Savior’ (the first movement of Dupré’s *Passion Symphony*) and sailed effortlessly through exquisite runs and trills in Vierne’s *Naides* ... Chen offered a powerful, affecting performance with a dancing pedal cadenza of [Ola Gjelio’s] *Sinfonietta* ... She played both [Bach and Reger] without pause ... building the Reger to a thunderous conclusion that brought forth a thunderous ovation from the crowd of about 1,200.”

Pasadena Star

SAN DIEGO (Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Balboa Park) “Chelsea Chen ... is not just another success story. As she proved Monday ... she’s something special. Sometimes the complexities, setting and temperament of the Spreckels instrument can make it seem like a monster truck; Chen drove it like a sports car. She had the beast, and the audience, eating out of her hand. The organ, in particular, seemed to appreciate an arrangement of Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm,” which sounded scary good. You could swear the instrument was alive.”

James Chute, San Diego Union Tribune, July 2010
www.signonsandiego.com/news/2010/jul/21/summer-organ-festival/

PIPEDREAMS (Radio broadcast January 22, 2007) “... Chelsea played with confidence, style, and imagination at a level that many older performers would surely envy ... The [organ’s] future is in the hands [of] players such as Chelsea Chen who not only perform exceptionally well but also compose for the organ and encourage other friends of their generation to write for it too.”

Pipedreams host Michael Barone

CHICAGO (2006 AGO National Convention Recital)

“A brilliant recital by Chelsea Chen ... Her distinctive flair and bravado, mastery of repertoire, and command of the instrument dazzled the audience ...”

C. B. Fisk Organ Company

“Ms. Chen played with remarkable maturity for her 22 years ... The Messiaen *Transports de joie* was spontaneous and free ... The Prelude [*Prelude and Fugue in A Minor*, J. S. Bach] had great energy and drive. The phrasing and articulation were consistent and convincing. The Fugue was well paced and built to an exciting finish ... Her performance of the Brahms *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor* had strength and brilliance. With passion and fire, its structure and form were clearly stated.”

The American Organist, October 2006

LOS ANGELES (2004 AGO National Convention) “... extraordinary! Wonderful tempos, flowing lines, and beautiful ornamentation ... She ended her performance with Durufle’s *Prelude et Fugue sur le nom d’Alain*. The Prelude was wonderfully played with smooth lines, a perfectly steady tempo, and appropriate French nuances. The Fugue was very self-assured and smooth as silk ... an extraordinary performance by a very talented young organist.”

The American Organist, October 2004

LEHIGH VALLEY AGO (Chapter Recital, 2006) “The recital presented by Chelsea Chen ... proved that she has star quality ... Her relaxed, fluid technique combined with her sense of phrasing and direction of musical line ... was beautiful and never boring ... The recital ended with a thunderous and exciting rendition of Duruflé’s *Toccata from Suite, Op. 5*. I believe that I spied the figures in the stained glass windows dancing along with Chelsea’s music.”

Lehigh Valley Chapter AGO

AGO REGION IX (Winter Conclave Recital, 2006) “Her performance of Bach’s *Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor*, BWV 542, was the best I’ve yet heard. Her performance of Reger’s *Chorale-Fantasy on ‘Hallelujah! Gott zu loben, bleibe meine Seelenfreud’* took my breath away.”

Utah Valley Chapter AGO

PITTSBURGH (2005 American Institute of Organbuilders Convention Recital) “... She makes the organ her instrument for making music. Her every move is musical. Every piston she pushes, every manual change, every tiny nudge of the shades is a fluid part of her music ... Every note perfectly attacked and released. Not fussy, just perfect.”

Journal of American Organbuilding

TAIWAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (2007 Concert on Yang-Ming Mountain) “... Her brilliant technique, natural musicality, and elegant body language ... allow[ed] the audience to experience the joy of her music ... Her two encores ... caused the audience to shout and cheer over and over. The pipe organ — surprise! — can really party.”

Xiu-Wen Chen, Director, Taiwan Theological Seminary Music Department