

JANETTE FISHELL Press Notices

BLOOMINGTON, IN: Seasons of Sebastian XIII Review

“Fishell sat at the organ for an hour and a half of music ... and she did so, even more remarkably, as if the achievement was no struggle at all. Each of those (works) is a technical minefield, requiring consistent and exemplary virtuosity, which Fishell supplied unsparingly and unerringly. For Fishell: highest praise for her daring, her labor and her conquest. For Bach: reminders of how deep his faith, how rich his mind in musical ideas and how incredible his genius.”

HeraldTimesOnline.com 2012

BLOOMINGTON, IN “Fishell’s mastery of all the material was breathtaking. The harmonic statements, the complex ornamentations, the fugal developments, the gentle interludes, the powerful climaxes, the passionate exhortations, the technical challenges to fingers and feet, the artistic spirit and spiritual aura: all were convincingly present at this opening recital.”

HeraldTimesOnline.com 2010

CHICAGO: Reviews from the 2006 AGO National Convention

“Janette Fishell – fabulous. The recitals that followed the worship services were the type where a recitalist’s tires hit the road, so to speak. With the services beginning the day and the recitals starting shortly thereafter, a recitalist has little or no time to warm up to reduce any performance anxiety. And yet the two recitals that morning (Fishell and Engels) were among the most well played of the convention ... Janette Fishell at Holy Name Cathedral was up to the task, and played a flawless recital. Fishell plays music about which she is passionate, and her choice of program, ‘Music that Moves,’ allowed her to be just that ... one could only admire her sense of skill and bravura.”

The Diapason, December 2006

“On Tuesday, we heard one of the lovely ladies of the organ world. Janette Fishell, a mature musician, plays with great sensitivity and strong, secure technique. The 1989 Flentrop (IV/117), the builder’s largest mechanical-action organ in the U.S., is an impressive work of art. Designed according to historic traditions, it uses pull-down vents and a mechanical combination action with adjustments on the stop knobs. It has a flat pedalboard, and its large size increases the weight of the keys. Ms. Fishell was able to overcome the obstacles, and with the help of capable assistants, achieved seamless stop changes.

“The program, entitled ‘Music that Moves – Dances and Aires for Organ,’ opened with Petr Eben’s Homage to Buxtehude, a witty parody on Buxtehude’s Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne in C. Its urgent, driving rhythms and dissonances seem to express the composer’s strong convictions and beliefs. Ms. Fishell’s reading was most convincing. Two Leipzig Chorale settings of ‘*Allein Gott in der Höh’ sei Ehr*’ (BWV 662 and 664) displayed the beautiful cornet and foundation stops. The trio setting was full of energy and colorful sounds. These were engaging works for an appreciative audience.

“The commissioned piece was Frank Ferko’s *Livre d’Orgue*. The five short movements seemed to go by quickly. The Intrada served as an exposition for the entire set. The Basse de trompette brought smiles all around with its growly reed and calliope-like accompaniment. The fugal section, entitled ‘In Time of Warm,’ was a personal favorite. Its descriptive moods effectively described the conflict and confusion, as well as death and sadness. Perhaps this movement could have been placed before the final chorale, ‘In Time of Peace.’ The Tango for Feet was a tour de force for the performer.

“The Alain *Postlude pour l’Office de Complies* was a welcome offering. Well chosen for this instrument and setting, it captured an atmosphere of serenity and peace of mind – the perfect ending for a Compline service. The *Prélude et Danse fuguée*, Litaize’s most famous piece to American audiences, successfully combines and contrasts the free, improvisatory style of jazz with the structural boundaries of composed music. Ms. Fishell’s rock-solid rhythmic drive allowed the fugue to both dance and sing! Thanks to the lovely lady, we heard a program of organ music that moved, danced, and delivered great ‘aires.’”

The American Organist, October 2006

“Janette Fishell’s recital was one of the highlights of the week as she ended with a magnificent performance of Litaize’s *Prélude et Danse fuguée* and included a virtuosic pedal solo in the commissioned work by Frank Ferko. She also included works by Bach, Eben and Alain. The instrument sounded magnificent despite its difficult console.”

Organ Australia, September 2006

GREENVILLE, NC (inauguration of Fisk organ) “A full house was on hand November 6 to hear the second of two identical inaugural concerts on the new Fisk organ, opus 126, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Greenville, North Carolina. Dr. Fishell performed with ease Petr Eben’s tricky *Moto Ostinato* before launching into works by Parisian masters Louis Vierne and Maurice Duruflé. In the Adagio from Vierne’s *Third Organ Symphony*, the organ’s foundations and *voix célestes* wafted through the room in a reading that exquisitely evoked pathos and made this listener lose all sense of time and space. Duruflé’s *Prélude, Adagio, et chorale varié sur ‘Veni Creator’* featured a small vocal ensemble singing the chant in alternation with Duruflé’s variations. It was wonderful to hear the *Prélude* played at a tempo that suggested a gentle breeze instead of a race against time. The concluding toccata variation, on the other hand, had all the Pentecostal wind and fire one could wish.”

Classical Voice of North Carolina, November 2005

BALTIMORE “JANETTE FISHELL ‘WOWS’ THE AUDIENCE AT APRIL RECITAL”

“OK, it was a beautiful day, a day when you probably could have done something other than sit in a hot church. But if you missed the concert, sponsored by our chapter, featuring Janette Fishell on April 10, you really missed a remarkable event. She was a performer in the best sense of the word, displaying a technique and facility at the organ that was amazing, making incredible music in some extremely difficult works. The manual changes in the Eben looked easy when she played them. Her performance of *Danse Macabre* was a real *tour de force*, and Vierne’s *Clair de Lune* was lyrical and lush ... Her workshop on the music of Petr Eben the previous day was remarkable, too. She knows this man personally, can talk in an engaging manner about his remarkable life ... Such a great artist ... Such a wonderful program!”

Baltimore Chapter News, May, 2005

SYDNEY “Another stunning recital at St. Andrews’ Cathedral! From start to finish this program was a blockbuster.”

Newsletter of the Sydney Organ Association, Fall/Winter 2004

ANN ARBOR “The New Music Festival weekend was a polished event. From Ms. Fishell’s dynamic performance on Saturday night to the members’ recital on Sunday, it was top notch all the way. Ms. Fishell was as stunning and refined to look at as she was to hear.”

Ann Arbor Pipings, May, 2004

GREENSBORO, NC “SISTERS PRESENT UNUSUAL, STIRRING PERFORMANCES”

“The **Music for a Great Space** series has a fine unpredictability about it. Often its performers are organists who display their own talents and the immense resources of Christ United Methodist Church’s Fisk organ. But sometimes they are musicians of other kinds, and – as on Friday evening – there are some unusual variations on the musical theme.

“Organist Janette Fishell was joined Friday in her program by her sister, Julie, an accomplished performer, in a words and music offering of Czech composer Petr Eben’s ‘Faust for organ.’ It was a happy blending of talents. Janette Fishell teaches at East Carolina University, her sister at UNC-Chapel Hill. Accomplished in their respective fields, they share the spotlight with complementary talents.

“... Since Janette Fishell offered the idea of saying her final French work was a kind of Gallic soufflé to follow some heavy German and Czech pieces, it wouldn’t be amiss to call her a good cook. The blend may have been unusual, but it was also tasty. The Felix Mendelssohn fourth sonata opened the program, followed by the organ chorale, ‘Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr,’ and then the famous, and infamously difficult, Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, the piece that tests both the organ and the organist. This heard-at-Halloween piece received a strong and effective performance from Fishell ... (it) showed her at the peak of her form.

“The concluding selections from Vierne’s third symphony did indeed offer a sharp contrast and again, Fishell played with understanding and style ... (It was) one of the most innovative performances in the series’ six-year history.”

News & Record March 14, 1998

DENVER (recitals at the 1998 National AGO Convention) “The husband-wife duo Janette Fishell and Colin Andrews presented a program that was varied and appealing. Dr. Fishell’s transcriptions of several orchestral movements provided the beginning, middle, and ending of the program ... For this team to have succeeded so admirably in creating very workable orchestral registrations on such a modest-sized instrument is notable ... The team demonstrated an exceptional sense of ensemble. Their accents sounded appropriately orchestra, not organistic, and they flexed as one for the many rhythmic nuances ... Dr. Fishell began her solo pieces with Vierne’s ‘Méditation’ from *Trois Improvisations*. Everything about this performance, from the pliant shaping of lines to a floating wrist, demonstrated a unity between performer, music, and instrument. Dr. Fishell’s excellent pacing and skillful control of the instrument in Duruflé’s *Scherzo*, Ops. 2, and Dupré’s *Te Deum*, Op. 43, were also deeply satisfying.”

The American Organist, September 1998

WELLINGTON, New Zealand “ORGAN RECITAL REMARKABLE” “The programme was exciting, innovative and must have been revelatory even for the specialist. Janette Fishell explored Continental music, with two pieces by contemporary Czech, Petr Eben, scintillating in their sharpness and their brilliantly original sound world. Fishell is a leading authority on Eben: nothing could better her command and in the second work, from *Job*, the playing developed a fiery, shouting, defiant energy. And since no such recital could be complete without something from the French school, it was two movements from the Franck/Widor-influenced Louis Vierne. It moved from beautifully registered, poetic passages to a surging finale of pulsing pedal scales and massive piling up of rhetorical ecstasy.”

Wellington Evening Post, June 12, 1992

RECORDINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

Eben: Organ Anthology

“... Fishell has done an invaluable service to Eben and new listeners by presenting this short sampler. Her performance is first-rate; she has an intrinsic feel for Eben’s music and an obvious joy in performing it. Her use of the Casavant organ of St. George’s Episcopal Church, Nashville, is without flaw. A truly enjoyable recording.”

American Record Guide, March/April 1996

Marcel Dupré Complete Organ Works, Vol. 4 NAXOS

“The B Major (Prelude and Fugue, Opus 7, No. 1) is handled with great panache ... I am impressed with the greater degree of clarity in (Fishell’s) performance. Similarly, her reading of the F minor (Prelude and Fugue, Opus 7, No. 2) provides a greater sense of space in the prelude ... a greater degree of clarity is also achieved in her reading of the G Minor Prelude and Fugue (Opus 7, No. 3).”

Music Teachers.Co.UK Online Journal, September 2001

But What Do I Do With My Feet? The Pianist’s Guide to the Organ (*Amazon.com reviews*)

5 stars out of 5 “Of course, it isn’t a substitute for proper lessons from a qualified organ teacher, nor is it a complete ‘method’ ... however, for a pianist who is dragooned into service as an organist, who does not have access to a teacher, it is invaluable in keeping one from making a musical fool of oneself. Refinements can come later.”

4 stars out of 5 “Very helpful. This book made it quick and easy for me to learn.”