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SCOTT DETTRA Press Notices

DUKE UNIVERSITY “From the opening pages of *Pièce héroïque*, it was clear that Dettra is a master of this symphonic style of organ music ... These recitals were a true *tour-de-force* showing Dettra's musicianship, technique, and memory to be of the highest caliber.”

CVNC, January 29, 2022

DALLAS “Rare’s the pianist who’d play two recitals totaling more than two hours of music, all from memory, in a single day. That was organist Scott Dettra’s awe-inspiring accomplishment Saturday afternoon and evening ... these performances felt so idiomatic, so viscerally right, so surely balancing expression with structural overview. Dettra gave the music natural rise and fall, organic ebb and flow. Technical assurance was never in doubt. There was plenty of flair in the *Pièce héroïque* and A major *Fantaisie*, but also great warmth in the *Prière* and C major *Fantaisie*. Flowing melodies in the E major and A minor *Chorals* were spun out as if by a great singer.”

The Dallas Morning News, January 9, 2022

RECORDING: *The Anglo-American Classic Organ* “While organ recital discs abound, ones that are exceptional rather than merely good are rare. Here is one of those proverbial hen's teeth examples with uniformly excellent repertoire intelligently chosen, superbly performed by a gifted interpreter on a first-rate instrument, and splendidly recorded and documented ... Dettra is an organist with both impeccable musical taste and dazzling technique to burn ... An extraordinary organ recital by a brilliant organist ... Urgently recommended to all music lovers, not just organ mavens.”

Fanfare Magazine

DALLAS “Top-notch technique and musicianship”

The Dallas Morning News, October 23, 2016

BOSTON: Reviews from the 2014 AGO National Convention

“Dettra programmed to the space, and to the lush sonorities of the organ ... A *C-minor Prelude and Fugue* by Healey Willan, Howells’s *Psalm-Prelude No. 2*, and Seth Bingham’s *Passacaglia in E Minor* fit the instrument like luxurious kid gloves, Dettra manipulating colors, crescendos, and decrescendos with apparently effortless suavity. The instrument delivered the French of Duruflé’s *Prelude and Fugue on the Name of ALAIN* in an upper-crust Boston accent, but both here and in Thierry Escaich’s *Évocation II*, Dettra supplied such irresistible rhythmic drive, inflected just so, that it didn’t matter. Start to finish, this was music making of absolute authority and sophisticated expression, one of the week’s high points.”

The American Organist, September 2014

“Was any player more poetic than Scott Dettra at Trinity Church? To a hushed audience Dettra traversed the 20th century with a mature line, focusing on the organ’s quieter side and creating many varieties of climax besides the merely powerful.”

Choir & Organ, September/October 2014

WASHINGTON “Scott Dettra masterfully played Bach’s towering *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*, BWV 542. Full of dynamic contrast and dazzling facility, Dettra’s performance was certainly a moment of pure euphoria for the audience.”

The Washington Examiner, November 12, 2011

WASHINGTON “Watching Dettra at the instrument was a display of utter amazement.”

The Washington Examiner, March 30, 2011

WASHINGTON “His playing had a rhythmic momentum that gave his performances a sense of inevitability and drive.”

The Washington Post, March 29, 2011

WASHINGTON: Reviews from the 2010 AGO National Convention

“The organ voluntary, *Festival Fanfare* by Kenneth Leighton, was deftly played by Scott Dettra. The energy and stamina of the cathedral organist is amazing, for later in the day he would play at the Bach Vespers as well as at the opening concert at the National Cathedral, where he played Samuel Barber’s *Toccata Festiva, op. 36* and the demanding organ part in Paul Paray’s *Mass for the 500th Anniversary of the Death of Joan of Arc*.

Dettra was organist for the opening service at 8:30am, organist for this service, and organist for the evening concert back at the National Cathedral. He is an outstanding musician, and his ability to seamlessly go from the cathedral organ to the Johan Deblieck continuo organ for his continuo part in the Bach cantata at St. Paul’s, up to the organ loft at St. Paul’s to play the St. Paul’s Schantz three-manual organ, and then to the cathedral again that evening, was more than remarkable.

The program began with Scott Dettra performing the *Toccata Festiva, op. 36* (1960) by Samuel Barber. Dettra performed this work with excitement and verve as if he had rested and prepared all day, in order to wow this audience of 2,000-plus organists.”

The Diapason, January 2011

“The postlude, *Fuga sopra il Magnificat*, BWV 733, was superbly played by Scott Dettra, who was the organist for the entire service, running between the main gallery organ and the chancel, where he played continuo with the Consort. His playing in the Vespers was stunning, but knowing that he had played the opening convocation that morning and would be performing again that evening was even more impressive.”

“The fiery *Toccata Festiva* by Samuel Barber is essentially a single-movement organ concerto lasting about 15 minutes. Tying the work to the National Cathedral, it is interesting to note that the organ soloist at the work’s 1960 premiere with the Philadelphia Orchestra was Paul Calloway, then organist of the cathedral. The performance of the works at this year’s convention featured current cathedral organist Scott Dettra, who was fully up to the challenge ... Another noteworthy feature is the technically demanding pedal cadenza, ably handled by Mr. Dettra. The distance between the conductor and orchestra and the organ console seemed to present no obstacle to a finely coordinated performance.”

The American Organist, October 2010

WASHINGTON “His virtuosity was simply remarkable”

The Washington Examiner, December 22, 2010

NEW YORK “Scott Dettra played the organ with flag-waving panache.”

The Washington Post, June 1, 2003

PHILADELPHIA: Review from the 2002 AGO National Convention

“Scott Dettra’s service playing was a model of inventive, uplifting support.”

The American Organist, October 2002

RECORDING: *Tongues of Fire* (West Point Cadet Chapel organ)

“It is clear from the very first few tracks of this CD that Scott Dettra knows how to make this organ sing, even when put to the extreme test of the German baroque and French Classic literature. He appears to handle this gigantic instrument with ease and great confidence, and with solid technique and youthful vigor to boot ... His registrations in DeGrigny’s *Veni Creator* are craftily chosen, and for this reviewer, capture the old-world grandeur of this music. I would never have thought that this organ could produce something this close to French Classic sound ... The overall program shows him to be a talented technician as well as interpreter of a wide scope of the literature ... Highly recommended.”

The Diapason, March 2000

“Organist Scott Dettra has fashioned an interesting and cohesive program. He puts the *Hymn d’Orgue: “Veni Creator”* by Nicholas de Grigny near the beginning of his recital and chooses to end with Duruflé’s mighty *Prelude, Adagio, and Choral Variations* on the theme “Veni Creator”. Since both works use the plainsong hymn, the listener gets a sense of completion on hearing the final movement of the more modern work. To make the tie even stronger, Dettra has the original chants sung by the men’s voices of Fuma Sacra between the variations of both pieces, a good idea that really works. In between the two “Veni Creator” compositions, he presents another major Duruflé work, as well as colorful compositions by Honegger and Vierne. The complex fugue in Duruflé’s homage to the memory of composer Jehan Alain, who was killed in World War II, is played with finesse and flair, and the recording is absolutely clean and clear. This is a very fine recording of singular repertoire.”

ClassicsToday.com

DUBLIN, IRELAND: Review from the 1996 Dublin International Organ Competition

“Dettra played the Bach with a greater lightness and clarity than the others, imparting a rhythmic spring to the notes ... The best Widor playing at Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday night came from Dettra, who played two movements from the Symphony No. 6 with compelling intensity.”

The Irish Times, June 25, 1996