



***Friendly Amendments*, Grant S. Peters, trumpet, and Charles W. Ore, organ.**
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F*riendly Amendments*, a new release on compact disc of music for trumpet and organ by American composers, represents a compilation of works by a remarkably close group of performers and composers. Throughout the disc, there is a special sense of cohesiveness and collaboration among all forces present. Robert Frank, professor of composition and theory at Southern Methodist University; Charles Ore, professor emeritus at Concordia University; Michael Murray, professor of music at Southwest Missouri State University; and John Prescott, also a professor of music at Southwest Missouri State University, are nationally known composers whose works are aptly essayed through the brilliant work of organist Charles Ore and trumpeter Grant Peters, assisted by fellow trumpeter Rick Bogard. The recording was made at First Plymouth Congregational Church, Lincoln, Nebraska. The featured organ is Schoenstein Opus 126 (1997). Trumpet and organ represent two of the most natural pairings of instruments. These performers continue that tradition with a CD of inspired virtuosity. Yet, one gets the feeling that this is not just a recording that features virtuosity for the sake of virtuosity. There is an unfolding sense of musical community indicative of an ensemble wherein everyone is contributing to the common good. It is a good wake-up call for those who are mired in tradition. *Friendly Amendments* is a reminder that there has been some strong writing for this combination in more recent times.

The collection begins with Robert Frank's "Liturgical Impressions" (1986). The work is cast in three movements — Introit, Sanctus, and Gloria. The first movement, Introit, is described in the accompanying notes as opening "with a majestic, formal invocation via a 12-tone row in the trumpet, which warms into flowing melodies when joined by the glowing sonorities of the organ's chorale." The quiet second movement, Sanctus, contains powerful images of the holy flames above the Ark of the Covenant with special emphasis given to the word "holy." The third movement, Gloria, presents moments of joyful praise leading into the climactic section where themes from all three movements are combined. Frank's music is permeated with numerous images of sound, all blending into a coherent whole. The technical prowess of both Peters and Ore, as well as their collaborative sense of expression, makes this performance exhilarating.

Ore's "The Seventh Trumpet", inspired by Revelation 11:15-19, is a reworking of an earlier work for solo organ. Described in the liner notes as being cast "in ritornello form," the piece is an effective rendering of lightening, rumblings, peals of thunder, earthquakes, and hailstorms. Peters and Ore portray these verses dramatically with virtuosic performances grounded in an understanding of the theological underpinnings of the subject. This work is a natural complement to the previous "Liturgical Impressions." With the blowing of the seventh trumpet, a heavenly chorus is unleashed proclaiming the universal sovereignty of God. Fear gives way to celebration as the setting shifts from earth to the heavenly throne room. The joy

permeating the piece is reminiscent of the joyful praise found in "Liturgical Impressions." The clarity of the writing style and the high performance level make this work a valuable addition to a body of music that might be described as "apocalyptic" music.

Compositions often mirror current events, providing moments for probing, philosophical reflection. Such is the case with Michael Murray's *What is it For?* This work received its world premiere performance on April 30, 2003 in Ellis Recital Hall on the campus of Southwest Missouri State University. While written as a reaction to a specific event, it offers a deeper glimpse at questions that traverse the ages. The work explores the idea of conflict and the impact that conflict can have on society. As described in the accompanying notes, trumpet and organ are set at odds with each other from the very beginning — never quite reaching agreement. Such themes as the loss of youth, optimism, innocence, and ideals are explored throughout the composition. The work comes to a pessimistic conclusion with no resolution of the conflict occurring. This composition is not for the passive listener. It demands engagement with extramusical concerns. The language is disturbing at times, but never ceases to be interesting and engaging.

John Prescott's *Toccata and Fugues* was composed in 1999 for the Centennial Convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs in St. Louis, Missouri, and was premiered in St. Louis Cathedral. The liner notes mention that "Fugues" in the title actually refer to the concept of psychogenic fugues where patients set out on a new life for months or years without any memory of the lives they have left behind. According to the notes, the trumpets in the work seemingly play musical fragments that have nothing to do with the organ toccata. However, all forces appear to join together at the end. Grant Peters is ably assisted by fellow trumpeter Rick Bogard, professor of music at the University of Texas at Arlington. Solid construction, imaginative thought, and clear musical insight mark this exciting piece.

The disc concludes with an outstanding offering of joy in worship with Charles Ore's "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Described in the liner notes as being cast in the revival and gospel style of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the work offers a delightful alternative to normal renderings of the tune "Converse." Published by Concordia Publishing House in *11 Compositions for Organ Set VII*, the work is meant, by the composer, to be played in the spirit of "just having fun." Chromatic scales, occasional parallel chords, ostinato patterns reminiscent of boogie woogie piano style, and various transformations of the tune combine in a spirit of exhilaration that should uplift the spirits of any gathering. Ore is one of America's finest organists. His improvisational skill is a spark that keeps the tradition of J. S. Bach alive. This work is to be commended as a wonderful "amendment" to organ literature.

Friendly Amendments offers a remarkable selection of new music for trumpet and organ and is highly recommended. It is hoped that this recording of *Friendly Amendments* represents only a beginning for the team of Grant Peters and Charles Ore.

