

Thus, we should be glad to welcome this book, since its purpose is to present the history covered in the darkness of the past. The author must be congratulated on his outstanding creativity and literary imagination. We also hope that this publication will become an inspiration to the creation of new works promoting organ building, and music culture.

Ewelina Szendzielorz

REVIEW

Organs of Opole Silesia, vol. 26 and vol. 27

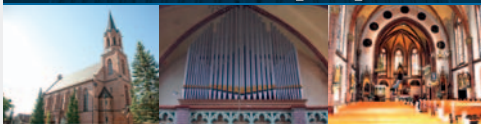
The year 2020 is associated with the release of new albums from the series *Organs of Opole Silesia*. This time they were the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh volumes. Thanks to it the sound of the next instruments of Opole Silesia was recorded and many copies of CDs with organ music with appropriate commentary were released. It is worth noting that both discs received a distinction from the Association of Catholic Publishers Feniks 2021 in the category: Christian – Classical Music.

The enrichment of the already existing collection with two more albums (vol. 26 and vol. 27) is an expression of concern for the religious and cultural heritage of organ instruments and the centuries-old achievements of church music in Silesia. This is confirmed by the fact that the instruments that we can hear were created in the local organ building companies in Opole Silesia, run by well-known organ builders, such as Karl Berschdorf from Nysa and Karl Spiegel from Opole.

The two subsequent albums are a proof of cooperation that takes place between parishioners under the leadership of their parish priests, organ builders and church musicians and musicologists. The result of this collaboration is the restoration of the former splendour of the wonderful instruments. It should be emphasized that they are located not only in large urban centres, but also in smaller rural parish communities, where they were adjusted to the local beautiful churches. In a small booklet attached to the 26th CD, Ms Ewelina Szendzielorz reminds that “over the centuries Silesian land has been marked by the traces of activity of excellent organ-building companies, which were most often the result of the continuation of the family tradition of many generations. The region located in the heart of Europe, on the Polish, Czech and German border was a meeting place of three cultures, influencing one another and creating a colourful, multicultural regional specificity, resulting in an extraordinary transfer of thoughts and ideas, also at the level of organ-building art. As a result of dynamically developing organ building in Silesia numerous instruments were created. Each of them is unique and exceptional because it was built for a particular church to fill its space connected with worship of God with wonderful sound, and at the same time to encourage the faithful gathered in the temple to sing and pray together”.

Organy Śląska Opolskiego, vol. 26
Orgellandschaft Schlesien, Vol. 26

Sonare Deo et populo



Łambinowice, kościół parafialny
pw. św. Marii Magdaleny

Lamsdorf, St. Maria-Magdalena-Pfarrkirche

Sonare Deo et Populo: the series *Organs of Opole Silesia*, vol. 26 – the organ is played by Wacław Golonka, Łambinowice, the parish church of St Mary Magdalene, SINDRUK-DIMK Publishing House, Opole 2020.

The 26th album from the *Organs of Opole Silesia* series is entitled *Sonare Deo et populo* (Sound to God and to people). It was created as a result of cooperation between the Opole community of church musicians and musicologists with the parish of St. Mary Magdalene in

Łambinowice, headed by the parish priest Adam Ciosmak and the organ building company *Kamerton* owned by Wiesław Jeleń from Olszanka near Prudnik in the Opole region. The last renovation of the instrument in Łambinowice (a village located in the Nysa Poviat of the Opole Voivodeship) took place in 2019 and is a proof to the above-mentioned cooperation.

The discussed album contains the recorded sound of an instrument from the workshop of the well-known and respected company *Berschdorf* from Nysa. The organ has 21 stops and several additional devices, which include, among others, three combinations, numerous couplers (including *Oberoctavkoppel* and *Unteroctavkoppel* – for both manual I and II), *Crescendo*, *Schweller* and tremolo. The instrument has two manuals and a pedal and pneumatic action. The organist of the recorded works is Wacław Golonka, who received his musical education at the Academy of Music in Cracow and *Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst* in Vienna in the class of Professor Hans Haselböck. The musician gives a lot of concerts in Europe and beyond its borders.

The artist guides the listeners through organ music of many centuries. The advantage is that he took into account the fact that most of the recipients of this CD are the faithful of the local parish. That is why there are several well-known organ compositions here, as well as pieces referring to popular church songs, which will allow for easier reception and will not discourage the so-called “ordinary” listener of the album.

The recording begins with the *Sinfonia* of Georg Friedrich Händel’s *Saul* HWV 53 oratorio based on the biblical story. This composition was arranged for the organ by F.A. Guilmant and the organist himself. The next pieces are the *Prelude and Fugue* in C minor by Gottfried Kirchoff, then the *Prelude* in F major by the Czech classicist composer František Xaver Brixi and the famous work of Johann Sebastian Bach – *Toccatà and Fugue* in D minor BWV 565. After the baroque pieces, we will hear romantic ones. They are represented by the *Sonata* in D major, Op. 65 No. 5, composed by

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, consisting of: *Andante*, *Andante con moto* and *Allegro maestoso*.

There are also two Chorale Preludes from Op. 65: *Christe, du Lamm Gottes* (Christ, the lamb of God) and *Nun danket alle Gott* (So thank God all of you). Then we can hear the *Fuga* in C sharp minor, composed by the Lithuanian composer and painter of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries – Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Another piece which is played on the organ in Łambinowice is *Tarantella* by Dmitrij Dianov – a contemporary Russian composer.

The album also includes works by two Polish composers of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, inspired by church songs. The first of them is the *Fantaisie Polonoise* Op. 9 No. 1 – “*Minuit de Noël dans la Cathédrale au Wawel de Cracovie*”. The second one is a composition by Mieczysław Surzyński *Improvisations on the Polish church song “Holy God”* Op. 38.

The last piece of this album is *Marche religieuse: “Lift up your Heads”* Op. 15 No. 2 by Felix Alexander Guilman. By means of its majestic finale, this piece is a summary of the entire repertoire.



Improvisationes: the series *Organs of Opole Silesia*, vol. 27 – the organ is played by Markus Rupprecht, Tarnów Opolski, the parish church of St. Martin the Bishop, SINDRUK-DIMK Publishing House, Opole 2020.

Another album of the *Organs of Opole Silesia* series is entitled *Improvisationes*. It is the twenty-seventh part of the series in question. It was created thanks to the cooperation of the church musicians and musicologists from Opole with the parish of St. Martin the Bishop in Tarnów Opolski, headed by the parish

priest Tomasz Piontek, the musician Markus Rupprecht and the organ building company *Kamerton* owned by Wiesław Jeleń from Olszynka near Prudnik.

Tarnów Opolski, where the church of St. Martin the Bishop is located, is a village in the Opole Poviát and Voivodeship. The church has an organ from the workshop of Karl Spiegel from Opole. The instrument has 19 stops divided into two manuals and a pedal and pneumatic action. The organ front is in the Neo-Baroque style.

This album contains eight improvisations by Markus Rupprecht. The artist is a lecturer at *Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik* in Regensburg, and since 2019 its vice-rector. He was a church musician in the cathedral in Eichstätt and the Benedictine abbey in Scheyern.

In the booklet attached to the album, the artist writes about his improvisations: “attitude towards the instrument and – if you can say so – creating music together with the

instrument is a great challenge but at the same time a satisfying, inspiring and wonderful task. The result is seven improvisations in various styles and forms, partly free, partly related to the themes of German, Polish and Gregorian singing. Two songs: *Befehl du seine Wege* by Paul Gerhardt and *Hilf, Herr meines Lebens* by Gustaw Lohmann have been close to my heart for a long time. But when you take into account the fact that the parish church in Tarnów Opolski is dedicated to St. Martin, also the song *Let us thank God* was an ideal subject for improvisation. The last piece on this album is a little bonus – an improvisation based on the bugle call by the local organist, Teodor Glensek, written in honour of St. Martin. The bugle call can be heard every day at 12.00 from the bell tower of the parish church. A wonderful tradition!”

The improvised pieces come in various sizes: from over two and a half minutes to ten minutes of performance. With all the advantages of the discussed repertoire, it must also be stated that the improvisations contained in this album may be difficult for an ordinary listener who is unfamiliar with organ music.

The advantage of this album is the fact that the booklet attached to the CD contains texts for prayer meditation, which can be read while listening to the pieces. They accompany the improvisations: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7. They are usually the texts of church songs, which are the musical themes of improvisations.

Each subsequent album of *the Organs of Opole Silesia* series can fill us with joy, since it proves that thanks to the efforts of parishioners and the cooperation of many groups of people, another instrument has been restored to its former glory. We hope that the restored organs will continue to be used to praise God and to the benefit of the faithful. The music of these instruments will enrich the religious and cultural heritage of the Opole Silesia region, and thus it will add majesty to church ceremonies, so that the minds of the faithful may be raised to God and to heavenly matters.

Piotr Borowiak