

Maxine Thévenot

Review of **Fiesta** by **Charles Huddleston Heaton** – **The Diapason** (Jan 2011)

This colorful recording, with many compositions in the “lesser-known” category, contains much of interest, including four brief pieces by Gerald Bales, one of which is a Toccata ‘Go, Tell it on the Mountain’, which would be a sure-fire hit on any recital, as would the following Humoresque by Pietro Yon—not to mention a Serenade for Organ by Derek Bourgeois! We are indebted to Maxine Thévenot for the opportunity to hear unusual pieces beautifully performed.

The title of the CD has to do with the annual Balloon Festival held in Albuquerque, although perhaps three of the selections most embody the concept: Toccata Festival by Fredrik Sixten, Simon Preston’s familiar Alleluyas, and the concluding Toccata from Boëllmann’s Suite Gothique, which is played in its entirety as the concluding selection.

A curious and brief Patterns by George Andrix (b. 1932) did not move me very much, but is well played, as is everything on the disc. French composers Langlais, Messiaen, Gigout, Vierne, and Boëllmann represent the latter half of the recording. You will enjoy it all.

Review of **Fiesta** by **James Hildreth** – **The American Organist** (May 2010)

The Albuquerque International Balloon Festival [sic] is held for nine days every October. William T. Van Pelt, executive producer and program annotator for this recording, observes that the same air that fills and lifts those magnificent, colorful balloons into the deep blue New Mexico sky is the same air that quickens the thousands of pipes in the organ of the Cathedral of St. John. Maxine Thévenot, associate organist-choir director at the cathedral, presents a delightful, varied program of mostly short pieces that awakens a festive, joyful spirit. Composers include Fredrik Sixton (Toccata festival, premiere recording), Gerald Bales (Three Short Pieces, Toccata), Pietro Yon (Humoresque), Derek Bourgeois (Serenade for Organ), Vaughan Williams (Rhosemedre), Simon Preston (Alleluyas), George Andrix (“Patterns” from Three Pieces for Organ), Jean Langlais (“Nazard” from Suite française and “Chant de paix” from Neuf Pièces), Messiaen (“Joie et clarté” from Les Corps glorieux), Gigout (Scherzo), Vierne (“Berceuse”

from 24 Pièces en style libre and “Allegro vivace” from Première Symphonie), and Boëllmann (Suite gothique). Dr. Thévenot demonstrates her solid musicianship throughout, performing with technical security and poise, often choosing relaxed, leisurely tempos that allow for clarity and a natural flow. She uses the large, colorful instrument well. The room is not greatly reverberant, yet the sound blooms. Nevertheless, this is a most enjoyable program, beautifully performed, full of light and color, like hundreds of vividly hued balloons in the bright New Mexico sky.

Review of **Fiesta** by **Donald Metz** – **American Record Guide** (Nov/Dec 2009)

...the popular setting of (Vaughan Williams’) Rhosymedre is well-paced. ...Preston’s Alleluyas gets one of the better interpretations with appropriate registration and pace for the various sections of the piece. ...The Vierne pieces are very well performed and interpreted.

Review of **Fiesta** by **Michael Quinn** – **Choir and Organ** (Nov/Dec 2009)

Rating: ****

Recorded during the annual International Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, NM, in 2008, Maxine Thévenot’s largely European-sourced recital puts Reuter’s Op. 2210 (installed in the city’s Episcopal cathedral in 2002) through its paces to entertaining effect. Full of character and charm, it is an attractive, light-toned, flexible and subtle instrument, with Thévenot clearly relishing its ability to encompass delicacies by Vaughan Williams, Messiaen and Derek Bourgeois, the imposing Suite gothique of Boëllmann and a first recording of Frederick Sixten’s bright, buoyant Toccata Festival.