

An Archive of the musical compositions by Herb Bielawa

Composition:

Organ Booklet

Ouverture 3:04
For Mood 2:24
For Touch 2:03
For Pedalling 2:47
For Arpeggios 2:44
For Endurance 4:11

Date: 1992

Recording: by Sandra Soderlund

Program Note:

The movements in Organ Booklet are essentially etudes modeled upon the various "Organbooks" in history. It was from Bach's term *Orgelbüchlein* that the title for these organ etudes is drawn.

Organ Booklet was begun in October 1991 in the music library of the Warsaw Academy of Music where it was profoundly quiet. I completed six movements there over a period of one week. I subsequently dropped a few of these and added three new ones after returning to San Francisco.

Inventing different compositional strategies (or algorithms) is important to my compositional process. In fact, none of my works gets written until I have found some sort of strategy for it that I haven't tried before, whether it be in the realms of harmony, texture, instrumentation, form, or in various combinations of these. In Booklet, I set myself the task of making use of the classical major and minor triads but to manipulate them by linear methods instead of the usual root movement methods of the classic period. The challenge was to create a fresh marriage of familiar triads with unfamiliar and unexpected developmental procedures. Whereas the triads are from antiquity, their combination is dictated by the practices of 20th-century composition.

The music in the Organbooks of William Albright has been an inspiration to me for years. I have shared them with students, and I have listened to them often. Of special interest to me is how Albright often uses musical materials that are in one way or another fairly common but in ways that have a new, fresh and highly original sound, great beauty and often intense dramatic power. Moreover, I know of few composers whose music contains as much genuine humor as does Albright's.

H. B.