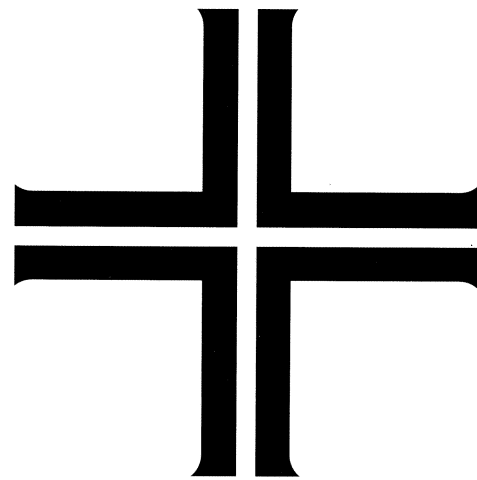


A New Liturgical Year

John Ferguson, editor



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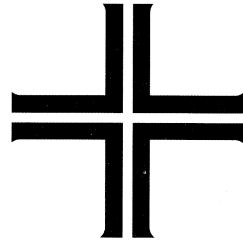


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PREFACE

In 1933, the Oliver Ditson Company published a new edition of the J. S. Bach *Orgelbüchlein*. The editor, Albert Riemenschneider, chose to give the collection a new name, *The Liturgical Year*, instead of translating Bach's German title (*Little Organ Book*) into English. Perhaps he wished to avoid the implication in English that these pieces were little, i.e. insignificant. Perhaps he wished to emphasize Bach's organization of the book which begins with chorales in the order of the liturgical seasons and concludes with more general chorales relating to the Christian life. Such was the impact of Riemenschneider's edition that generations of American organists have come to call this significant collection by Riemenschneider's new English name.

If one is to take the original title page at face value, Bach's purposes in producing this collection were pedagogical—to provide guidance to organ students in the working out (improvising) of chorale preludes (our American term for an organ composition based upon a chorale melody) and in the developing of organ technique, especially with respect to pedal playing.

The improvisation of short pieces based upon hymntune melodies has always been a part of the art of the European organist. Therefore it is not surprising that Bach, one of the greatest masters of the organ, would wish to provide a pedagogical tool such as the *Orgelbüchlein*. It is interesting to note that all settings in the collection are brief, one statement of the melody with few interruptions. Such pieces are ideal models of improvisation.

A New Liturgical Year has been chosen as the title for this anthology of hymn settings because it has similar goals. The chorale prelude, or hymntune prelude (a better name today since many tunes are not originally chorale melodies) still plays an important role in the life of the church organist. Major figures in this century have produced excellent examples of this genre, examples worth learning to play and perform as well as to study for insight into more contemporary improvisational (arranging) techniques. *A New Liturgical Year* provides a representative cross section of pieces, arranged by liturgical season and concluding with more general themes just as Bach organized his collection. Each tune appears in a key appropriate for congregational singing. This required transposition for some of the pieces selected. All such transpositions have been noted in the accompanying commentary. In order to provide examples of a wide range of approaches to the art of the hymn prelude and to complete the liturgical framework of the collection, a few pieces have been newly-commissioned from major contemporary composers of the younger generation (either in age or stylistic approach). All of these settings are reasonably brief as they parallel their prototypes in the *Orgelbüchlein*.

A New Liturgical Year is an urtext edition. All performance instructions including registration, phrasing, tempi, and articulation are from the original published version. Although the result is an inconsistency in appearance from

one piece to another, it was considered important that the performer be informed of the composer's original suggestions. A few suggestions have been removed when they were redundant or confusing.

The commentary preceding each piece provides brief biographical information and includes additional performance and registration suggestions when deemed helpful. Brief observations on the musical structure are provided to assist those wishing to grow in their own personal skills as an improviser (arranger) of hymn melodies. Most of the information for the biographical sketches was drawn from the invaluable resource *Organ Literature, A Comprehensive Survey, Third Edition*, Corliss Richard Arnold, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, NJ, 1995.

Each tune has been provided with a brief introduction and reharmonization which could be used with congregational singing. Because much great traditional hymnody is really a kind of folk song, remembered as much in the hearts and minds of believers as notated in books, many tunes have different versions from hymnal to hymnal. While often slight, these differences may require readjustment of the harmonizations provided. In some cases the harmonizations could be crafted so that they work with more than one version of the tune. Others may require subtle modifications from what is printed. In every instance, be sure to check the hymnal version being used, comparing it with the tune as reharmonized here.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor acknowledges GIA Publications and Ludwig Music Publishing Company who have graciously given permission for him to use certain ideas from his previously-published harmonizations. Some specific progressions have proven just right and it is good to be able to use them here. The editor also appreciates and acknowledges the enthusiastic response of Augsburg Fortress Publishers to his proposal for this anthology. Three people have contributed significantly to the realization of this project. The assistance of Norma Aamodt-Nelson, music editor, and David Moglebust, engraver, has been exemplary. Both have been helpful and insightful in working to devise a format most useful and easily grasped by the user. The third person to acknowledge is my wife, Ruth, who has patiently endured the mess, phone calls, and frustrations as the stresses of completion against a deadline mounted. It is for persons like Ruth, dedicated church organist, that this book is envisioned and to whom it is dedicated.

John Ferguson
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota
May, 1997

Herzlich tut mich verlangen

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Sw: Flute 8', Gamba 8', Celeste 8'
Ped: Octave 4' or Reed 4'

Pamela Decker

Espressivo e legatissimo (♩=63)

Veni, Creator Spiritus

Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire

Libby Larsen

Flowing (♩=72)

lightly
mp

mf

p 8' only

mf

boldly
mf

mp

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