

Family Fare

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The Contemporary Scene

Organ, Organist Dynamic Duo

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The music season has opened. What promises to be the most ambitious musical season ever attempted in the Rochester area began in a virtuoso manner Monday evening in the Christ United Methodist Church. The portentous activity recently displayed by musical groups and individuals has for some time telegraphed that things were about to happen and last night the Rev. Robert Scoggin did just that — he made things happen.



Oudal

Scoggin, well-known organist of the above church presented an ambitious organ recital which was even more impressive coming as it did so early in the season. Scoggin and the magnificent 60-rank Robert Sipe organ have become a familiar partnership and last night's experience added more evidence to the effect that this superb instrument and its master fulfill all the musical anticipation which their recitals arouse.

It is not surprising that Scoggin, a student of the famous French organist, Jean Langlais, should lean to French literature. Three of the most significant selections were from the French masters Langlais, Messiaen and Franck. All three wrote organ music stimulated by strong religious motivation and associations, indeed Messiaen's music can only best be understood when verbal clues are given which suggest these associations. Such statements are liber-

ally offered by the composer.

IN MESSIAEN'S WORK heard Monday night for instance, a quoted passage from the Bible helps identify the work's title, "Celestial Banquet" with the mystery of Holy Communion and this in turn is absorbed into a kind of tonal commentary in sound. The mystical efforts of Messiaen, however, are not without formal shape. This work was cast in an arch-like shape which is to say it started mysteriously subdued, rose in intensity to a climax and then subsided back into the mysterious beginning sounds again.

Langlais' "Te Deum" is also original in style, but his style lacks the mystery of Messiaen.

Langlais' piece is essentially a projection in sound of the intent of a thanksgiving hymn to God.

FRANCK'S PRELUDE, Fugue, and Variation is also original, but it lacks any textual association. His harmonic style contains an air of introspective mystery, but his formal structure is more objectively oriented. The Fugue and Variation, for instance, are standard formal procedures. The fugue, like a musical round, emphasizes the successive entrances of one main melody and was a formal structure characteristically more German than French.

Scoggin's treatment of the Fugue in Buxtehude's Prelude, Fugue, and Chaconne, for instance, emphasized the more ostentatious and virtuoso manner so characteristic of the German composer. It further emphasized the contrast of Franck's piece. The chaconne in the above piece was so similar in character to the fugue that it was almost indistinguishable from it, a fact which through no fault of the performer made an uncertain conclusion to the work.

ONE OF THE STRIKING features of Scoggin's recitals is his ability to program a variety of interesting works and styles, selections which reveal the tremendous capabilities of the instrument and its virtuoso master. The delicate registrations used in K.P.E. Bach's "Suite for an Organ Clock" was a marvelous contrast with Robert's "Prelude and Trumpetings." The sensitive galant style of the former was poles away from the trumpet fanfares and antiphonal outbursts of the latter. The Mendelssohn-like character of

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