

LEO SOWERBY
1895-1968

Pageant

In the strict sense of the word, *Pageant* is “an elaborate public dramatic presentation...a spectacular celebration...a colorful, showy display.” *Pageant*’s fame lies in its difficult pedal part, which is showcased in countless (and shameless) displays of virtuosity with relentless patterns scurrying up and down the pedalboard. The feet play as many as four notes at a time. All hyping aside, the piece is rather good music with a subtle form, essentially an introduction and original theme with four variations, composed solidly in B-flat. The lengthy and dramatic introduction is played mostly on the pedals, after which the theme is stated with a much more benign registration in the pedal with intermittent manual accompaniment. The first two variations on the theme are quiet, with arduous pedal work in the first and busy manual work in the second. The third is an unexpectedly heated *tour de force* in D minor. After another dramatic pedal cadenza of blistering frenzy, the fourth variation follows in B-flat as a triumphant coda.