



Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen – Choir and Organ Christmas Music

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Gramophone (Fabrice Fitch - 2010.12.01)

Few countries have shaped the experience of Christmas more decisively than Germany and, with one exception, the remainder of these discs are from German labels and ensembles. A highly enjoyable and off-the-beaten-track pair comes from the label Audite, whose releases are commonly issued in Super Audio format. The all-organ recital by Johannes Strobl on the great organ of the Abbey of Muri consists of music by 18th- and 19th-century South German, Austrian and Bohemian composers of whom I'd never heard. These preludes, pastorellas, pifas and the like, undemanding and undemonstrative as they are, make for instructive listening: the common emphasis on rocking cradle rhythms is a sufficient programme in itself. And let's be honest: no century has, more than the 18th, been confined to such a restricted pantheon of composing figures. It makes a change from Bach ... on which, however, more presently. The second disc, "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen", features the organist Stefan Horz and the vocal ensemble Vox Bona in a wide-ranging programme centred on the famous tune. The choral items, composed in an accessible, modern style, are a mixed bag, but as an enterprising move away from the same old Christmas programming both discs together give a positive, coherent impression of the label's aims.