



W. A. Mozart: Organ Works

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Early Music Review (Andrew Benson-Wilson - 2003.06.01)

One of the many frustrations for organists is that Mozart, the designator of the organ as the 'King of Instruments' and noted for his virtuoso performances during his life, left practically no organ music. But that has not stopped organists from delving amongst the pieces he wrote for mechanical organs and other keyboard works for music to perform under his name. This CD is typical of the result – a selection from the works edited by Martin Haselböck for organ including, of course, the two well-known and large-scale Fantasias in F minor (both written for a larger than usual barrel organ enclosed within a mausoleum for the Field Marshall Baron von Laudon in Vienna's 'Müllersche Kunstgalerie') and the equally popular (but more easily playable by humans) Adagio in C, written for the glass harmonica performances of the young Marianne Kirchgäßner. The choice of a modern organ is better than might at first seem, the recently built Metzler being broadly rooted in the Austrian late classical style, but with some later additions and influences, notably from the organ of the Silbermann brothers, whose organs Mozart knew well. A gently uneven temperament and a nicely musical flexibility to the winding add a touch of authenticity to the music, as does Martin Sander's clean and articulate playing. Some of the quieter registrations are of a style that was fairly well developed by Mozart's time, where several stops of the same pitch could be drawn together – the opening Adagio, for example, has no fewer than six 8' stops sounding all at once – a rich and sumptuous sound. The pleno pieces use a more traditionally baroque concept of registration, using variations on the principal ranks alone, with or without reeds. The concluding Fantasia in F minor, one of the grandest of Mozart's creations for any medium, is given an impressively forthright performance, contrasted with a nice tour of the gentler colours of the organ. I am not sure if there is a recording of either of these two Fantasias using the sorts of sounds that the original, and apparently fairly sizeable, barrel organ might have produced, but it would be an interesting project.