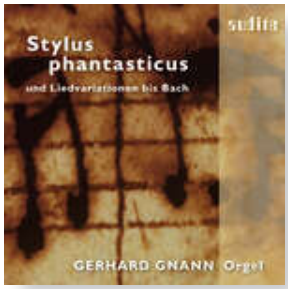

Stylus Phantasticus

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EAN: 4022143200129

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Organists' Review (Francis O'Gorman - 2011.08.01)

Organists' Review

Stylus Phantasticus und Liedvariationen bis Bach

This is a lovely recording (made in 1993), played with delicacy and rigour. The three-manual instrument at St Martin's Riegel, tuned to Werckmeister III, is excellent for this programme of song variations and music with the stylus phantasticus elements of the German Baroque. Particularly noticeable are the high quality flutes. The theatricality and colourful gestures of the stylus phantasticus are kept under control – nothing too flamboyant here – and what is remarkable about the playing is the transparent clarity. Not a note is uncared for, and each line is a delight to hear, even in the midst of rich contrapuntal textures. A gently paced account of Sweelinck's Mein junges Leben hat ein End keeps something of the tender melancholy of this song, which can be lost in brisker versions, while Bach's Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue is vibrant: there is real spring and drive in the second half of the Toccata. The Fugue is more monumental than some versions, though clarity is finely retained in a piece that is not the tidiest of Bach's contrapuntal writing. I have rarely heard echoes in the pedal solo before, but the pedal mixture goes on and off to some effect here. Other music includes a sensitive account of Bach's partita on O Gott, du frommer Gott, Georg Böhm's variations on Jesu, du bist allzu schöne, and Sweelinck's variations on the student song More Palatino. The instrument includes a Vogelgesang stop – birdsong – from which we have a delightful 17 seconds as the mood-setter at the beginning. A disc well worth hearing.

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