Bach and the South German Tradition Vol. II

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Organists' Review (Nicholas Johnson - 2012.03.01)

Organists' Review

This SACD release from Audite formst he second volume of a collection focusing on composers, mostly documented by C.P.E. Bach, crowned with repertoire from Bach's own output. Detailed programme notes give a background to all composers, and the research is precise. Tuning and temperaments have been taken into account, for the earlier works of Froberger and Kerll performed at the choir organ built by Blasius Bernauer in 1776.

Much of the music is recorded at 2005 Metzler organ in Stuttgart – Obertürkheim. This splendid organ is first heard in organo pleno for Bach's Toccata in F, BWV 540. A compelling performance, although slightly lacking in forward movement.

Organist Martin Neu shows affinity with the style and his articulations are very convincing. The tempo choices in the more rapid toccatas of Muffat and Pachelbel are particularly fine together with stylish registrations (they can be found on line!) Neu always avoids the tendency to rush the toccatas. He really comes alive in the Trio Sonata no. 5 in C major, BWV 529, this being my favourite of his performances.

A pleasing touch is the addition of tenor Wilfried Rombach, whose shapely performance of the plainsong Magnificat verses sets Pachelbel's Magnificat in context of its performance at the Nuremburg Church of St Sebald. Pachelbel's final organ interpolation is lost and the addition of Bach's own Fugue on the Magnificat, BWV 733, as the Gloria Patri is master stroke of programming.

Bach's Fugue in F major, BWV 540, forms a dramatic conclusion to this most enjoyable recording, so thoughtfully conceived and executed. A few unsteady moments, but I thoroughly recommend this CD.

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