



Holy Spirit

aud 97.801

EAN: 4022143978011



Choir & Organ (01.10.2022)

CHOIR & ORGAN
A Bach disc recorded on one of the Bach area's best preserved 18th century organs always piques the interest. Here, Bach's music is coupled, slightly incongruously, with music from the Hanseatic north by Reincken and Scheidemann, and more promisingly, with music by the performer. Ann-Helena Schlüter is active as a pianist, organist, poet and composer, and the most interesting material here is perhaps her own work, which reveals creative use of the historic instrument within a modernist musical jacket. Some programme notes would have been welcome. Bach's D minor trio sonata reveals just how appropriate Trost's wealth of 8ft colour seems for chamber music textures. However, all is not well with Schlüter's Bach playing more broadly, not least thanks to a general instability of pulse, punctuated by more fundamental and bizarre changes of underlying tempo. BWV 652, for example, commits the cardinal sin of collapsing at the 'Alleluia' (bar 187). The D minor Fugue BWV 565 dies an even more dramatic death from a seriously unwise crochet = c.115 to crochet = c.90 at the demi-semiquaver scales (bar 85). The Passacaglia, meanwhile is fatally compromised by the rallentandi inserted at the end of each variation., the sudden accelerando at bar 80, etc. In addition, Schlüter's over-active and inconsistent articulation is incompatible with the dry acoustic and frequently leads to over accenting. Recording a Bach disc on this most significant of historic organs calls for a level of experience and musical maturity Ann-Helena Schlüter is, as yet, unable to master.



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Ann-Helena Schlüter, Trost organ (1730), Waltershausen
Audite 97.801 [78.25]

★★



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CHRIS BRAGG