



Bach and the North German Tradition Vol. I

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The Organ (Curtis Rogers - 2010.05.01)

In this programme, Martin Neu shows what a close connection there was in the genres and style used by these great masters of Baroque organ music, Bach being the student who studied the compositions of Buxtehude and Böhm and went on to outshine them. The instrument that Neu plays is entirely suited to the music, which ranges from the extrovert (Bach's D major Prelude and Fugue, a Passacaglia and a D minor Prelude from Buxtehude) to the intimate and meditative (two Chorale Partitas by Böhm, which of course served as models for Bach). Remarkably, given the sort of antique reediness that emanates from the organ it sounds as though it is an authentic baroque instrument, but it is in fact a newly built organ by Hendrik Ahrend in St. Otto church, Herzogenaurach in north Bavaria. Apparently the organ loft was extended into the body of the church in order to accommodate the 8' pipes for the great organ and the 16' pipes for the pedals. Neu makes effective use of these in the Buxtehude and Bach pieces mentioned above; he uses the 16' pipes most effectively in the Buxtehude Passacaglia, which makes a fitting conclusion to the recital, not least because Neu maintains a steady and dignified poise in raising the volume and tension without increasing the tempo to achieve the climactic effect artificially. The subtler flute and octave stops are contrastingly displayed in the Böhm. Neu details the registrations he uses for all the sections of all the pieces played, and this disc is thoroughly recommended to those who have a general appreciation of this sort of repertory as well as those with a serious interest in particular organs and their sound.