

ORGAN CDS

Anton Bruckner: The Symphonies Organ Transcriptions Vol 10

Hansjörg Albrecht, St. Etienne du mont, Paris

Oehms OC1905

★★★★★



It seems my last review of this Bruckner series was premature in declaring the ninth volume the final chapter for there is another, almost forgotten, symphony: the Study Symphony. This work from the end of Bruckner's studies in 1863 is brought back to life and transformed into an organ symphony in an arrangement by Erlberhard Klotz. The album opens with a speculative reconstruction by Erwin Horn of Bruckner's improvisation to mark the reopening of the organ in Vienna Cathedral in 1886. Cleverly bridging the gap between these early and late works is Alpha and Omega by Enjott Schneider. This work, drawing on the Te Deum, provides an opportunity to explore more colours from the organ of St Etienne du Mont in Paris. It's not clear why this organ is chosen for this album but Albrecht's skilful handling of the instrument makes it sound finer on this recording than any other I have heard.

RUPERT GOUGH

The Classical Organ

Robert Costin; Gray and Davison/Tickell organ, Sherborne Abbey

FIRST HAND RECORDS FHR173

★★★



Robert Costin offers a charming recital of music from the organ's unfashionable period between

Bach and Mendelssohn. Five of CPE Bach's Princess Amalia sonatas (why not all six?) are heard alongside music for mechanical clock; a selection of Haydn's ever-popular miniatures and Mozart's Andante in F, K616. The organ at Sherborne Abbey maintains, recognisably, a significant portion of its mid-19th century tonal character. It transpires that the music presented here shows up Gray and Davison's choruses and flutes most favourably. Costin meanwhile plays with sensitivity and grace. Sometimes his staccato touch is too short for either the pipework or the room to respond satisfactorily and I miss some gestural *souplesse* in the slow movements of the Carl Philipp sonatas. An enjoyable disc nevertheless.

CHRIS BRAGG

Dobrich: A Bulgarian Odyssey

Gail Archer (org)

Mayer Media MM25060

★★★



Gail Archer's exploration of Bulgarian organ music reveals a wealth of contemporary styles across nine works written since 1972. Some pieces clearly have more traditional roots, especially Radosveta Hurkova's *Variations on a traditional Bulgarian folk song*. Many of the other composers write with typical atonal neo-classicism, though not without charm. Neva Krysteva is regarded as the 'matriarch' of the Bulgarian Organ School and her *Victimae Pachali Laudes*, the largest work here, is a daringly brutalist and powerful work. Gail Archer has to work hard in the dry acoustic of Dobrich's Concert Hall but

delivers these compositions with great conviction. The really poor tuning of the organ though is a rather unwelcome distraction.

RUPERT GOUGH

Rihards Dubra: Music for Organ

Aigars Reinis, Ilke Reine (org)

Skani LMIC168

★★★★★



This double album is a welcome introduction to some fine organ works by a Latvian composer better known for his choral music. Dubra's unashamedly diatonic style is evident, but so is his fascination of fugal form. This nod to the past is evident with two works subtitled 'A view of the baroque era'. Dubra is not afraid to paint on a large canvas with the music evolving in ceremonial or theatrical fashion in the glorious resonance of Riga Cathedral. The vast historic Walcker organ brings everything to life with clarity and gravitas in equal measure. The music is shared between husband and wife Aigars Reinis and Ilze Reine with both joining forces for a most enchanting *Petite Symphonie* for organ duet and percussion. Performances and recording quality are superb and there is much to discover and enjoy here.

RUPERT GOUGH

Marie-Joseph Erb: Organ Works Vol 2

Jan Lehtola (org)

TOCCATA CLASSICS

TOCC0698

★★★★★



Marie-Joseph Erb is a name almost completely forgotten today but

his significance to the musical culture of the Alsace was considerable. Like his father before him, he was organist of St Jean in Strasbourg, eschewing professional opportunities in Paris following his studies at the École Niedermeyer to return to his native city. An exceptionally prolific composer, his status is perhaps one of 'local hero' even if such an epithet was at least partly the result of personal choices. The often-rhapsodic music heard here, a Sonata and six liturgical pieces all based on Gregorian themes, and a Suite pour Grand Orgue, show some obvious synergy with Widor's two final organ symphonies (likewise on Gregorian melodies) written shortly beforehand; indeed Erb studied with Widor and remained a close friend. Like Vierne, a certain darkness cast by personal tragedy and near-blindness also seems to hang in the air. Jan Lehtola's advocacy for lesser-known Romantic repertoire deserves admiration; his playing is typically eloquent. The large Kangasala organ at Tampere sounds splendidly balanced for an instrument of the period, though the reeds lack any French accent.

CHRIS BRAGG

CHORAL CDS

Johann Sebastian Bach: Easter Oratorio / Magnificat

Nola Richardson (s); Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen (c-t); Thomas Cooley (t); Harrison Hintzsche (bar) / Cantata Collective, Nicholas McGegan (dir)

Avie AV2756

★★★



No other piece of music conveys the human drama as well as the