
NEWS & INFORMATION

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FLIGHT OF FANTASIES ON BACH ORGAN CD

A major portion of J. S. Bach's organ masterpieces -- his complete Fantasies, Fantasies & Fugues, and isolated Fugues -- is contained on a new CD from Cedille Records (CDR 90000 012).

Keyboard artist David Schrader's varied program -- almost 75 minutes long -- includes some lesser-known works, such as the Fugue in C Minor, BWV 575; Fantasy in C minor, BWV 562; Fantasy in B minor, BWV 563; and Fugue in B minor, BWV 579. Some demonstrate Bach's emerging interest in non-German music, such as the Fugue in C minor, BWV 574, based on a theme by Giovanni Legrenzi; and the aforementioned, mellifluous Fugue in B minor, BWV 579, based on a theme by Archangelo Corelli.

"The fantasies on this recording represent a wide range of composition, from the very freely composed to works that are obviously contrapuntal," writes Schrader in the liner notes.

In this, his second Bach organ recording for Cedille, Schrader returns to the Jaeckel organ at the Salem Lutheran Church in Wausau, Wisc. Modeled on the late 17th-century northwestern German organs of Arp Schnitger, it's the sort of instrument Bach knew well and made good use of during his career.

(MORE)

The organ is well suited to Schrader's "unusually light and rhythmically quick pace," writes Joseph Stevenson in Stevenson's Classical Compact Disc Guide (July-September 1992), in a perceptive review of Schrader's complete Bach Toccatas and Fugues (CDR 90000 006).

Critics have praised Schrader for eschewing the menacing, melodramatic, Phantom-of-the-Opera intonations of other Bach organists. Denver's Rocky Mountain News noted with pleasure the absence of "heaven-storming theatrics"; the San Jose Mercury News said Schrader's "minute rhythmic variations turn these familiar Bach works into a vivid listening experience"; and the Chicago Tribune lauded his "nimble-fingered panache."

Like the old instruments it's modeled on, the Jaeckel organ is not a cathedral behemoth; its main attribute is clarity rather than imposing weight. "I rather like the more human scale of this instrument," Stevenson wrote.

Since Schrader's last recording visit, the organ's builder, Daniel Jaeckel of Duluth, Minn., revoiced the pedal reeds for a more rounded tone. Also, for this highly varied program, Cedille chose omnidirectional mics to create a more classically ambient sound.

The new disc concludes Cedille's two-part survey of Bach organ music. According to label producer Jim Ginsburg, these recordings exemplify how Cedille, which specializes in off-the-beaten-path repertoire, also finds stimulating and valuable new ways to program music that's more familiar.

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J. S. Bach: Fantasies, Fantasies & Fugues,
and Isolated Fugues for Organ (complete);
Pastorale in F Major, BWV 590
David Schrader, organ
Cedille CDR 90000 012

Note to programmers: For lighthearted inventiveness, try the Fugue in C Minor, BWV 575 (Track No. 4, 4:19). The last section of the Piece d'orgue, BWV 572, provide a wonderful, almost dizzying virtuosic display (Track No. 6, 8:08). The diverse four-part Pastorale in F major, BWV 590 (Track NO. 14, 12:08), has an ethereal quality of celestial chimes in the second movement; the third movement is lyrical and songlike; the last movement is reminiscent of the Brandenburg Concertos.

Corrections: The CD tray card contains an incorrect catalog number for the Fugue in C minor ("Legrenzi"); the designation should be BWV 574. Due to a computer typesetting error, the CD booklet's stop list for the Jaeckel organ shows "fl" as "X," and "ff" as "V."