

NEWS & INFORMATION

From: Nat Silverman (708-328-4292)

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For: Cedille Records
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TOTAL TOCCATAS:
SCHRADER, WAUSAU ORGAN INSURE
PREMIUM BACH

To most people, Wausau, Wisc., brings to mind insurance, mostly the TV commercials where everyone mispronounces the town's name. But to organ aficionados, the town located amid central Wisconsin's farms and forests is the home of one of the finest north German-style organs in America -- the Jaeckel organ at Salem Lutheran Church.

Cedille Records, the new Chicago label with a policy of doing interesting things, chose the Wausau organ for its first non-studio recording and recruited Chicago keyboardist David Schrader to perform all five of Bach's toccatas and fugues. The result is the first complete set of these works on one compact disc, with Bach's E-minor prelude and fugue, BWV 548 ("Wedge") wedged in for a generous program of just under 73 minutes.

The new CD is Schrader's first solo organ recording. A versatile keyboard artist in the tradition of the "complete" continuo player, he previously recorded Soler harpsichord sonatas for Cedille. Schrader is a favorite of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with whom he made three recordings for London Records under Sir Georg Solti's direction. He is dean of the American Guild of Organists' Chicago chapter and organist at Chicago's Church of the Ascension.

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Schrader is a familiar figure to Chicago audiences, not only as an organist and harpsichordist but also as a fortepianist and pianist. He is keyboardist with the Rembrandt Chamber Players, whose members are among the city's best and most active musicians.

In contrast to many other Bach organ interpreters, Schrader presents an unromanticized, more authentically baroque performance -- crisp attacks, generally faster tempos, and tasteful ornamentation including a cadenza near the end of the C-major toccata. This style is particularly well-suited to the Jaeckel organ.

The new Cedille CD is the first commercial recording of the Wausau organ, which is modeled after the organs Bach knew quite well, particularly the beautiful instruments of Arp Schnitger (1648-1719). The Wausau organ was built by Daniel Jaeckel of Duluth, Minn.

Schrader says "its highly expressive winding heightens the vocal character on which Bach's contrapuntal music is based. On this organ, Bach's music sings as freshly today as it did when it was new."

Cedille's recording team aimed for a more focused sonic image than one often hears on organ recordings. Because the Jaeckel organ's pipes are massed at the front of the church near the keyboard, the engineer did not have to contend with music coming from side locations. This allowed the use of near-cardioid microphones, resulting in a more precise image than that usually obtained with omnidirectional mikes.

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Bach: Toccata & Fugue in D minor, BWV 565
Toccata & Fugue in E major, BWV 566
Toccata, Adagio & Fugue in C major, BWV 564
Toccata & Fugue in D minor, BWV 538 ("Dorian")
Toccata & Fugue in F major, BWV 540
Prelude & Fugue in E minor, BWV 548 ("Wedge")
David Schrader, organ
Cedille CDR 90000 006