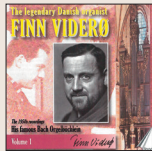
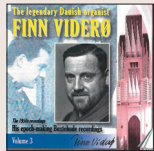


THE LEGENDARY DANISH ORGANIST FINN VIDERØ

Volume 1: Music by J.S. Bach (*Orgelbüchlein, Sei gegrüset, etc*), recorded 1950-58, Marcussen organs at Sorø and Frederiksborg

Volume 3: Music by Dieterich Buxtehude, recorded 1957-58, Frobenius organ at Vejle, Marcussen organ at Sorø
Danacord (vol.1) DACOCD 791, 792 [72:03; 73:33];
(vol.3) DACOCD 795, 796 [76:29; 75:54]

★★★★



'I simply could not believe how fabulous his playing was.' So writes Harald Vogel recalling his exposure to the playing of the Danish organist

Finn Viderø in the 1950s. Viderø was the most significant organist in Denmark in the mid-20th century, responsible for the early championing, through concerts and recordings, of the Frederiksborg Castle organ, among much else. That this was precisely at the time of the supremacy of Danish organ culture and, more especially, organ building, renders these re-releases of more than passing interest. Vogel additionally observes that Viderø's being overlooked for the position of professor of organ at the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen was emblematic of Denmark losing its pre-eminence (as, surely, can the untimely death of Sybrand Zachariassen in the middle of the 1960 Haarlem restoration). These recordings, made in the 1950s on organs by two of the most prominent builders of their time – Marcussen and

Frobenius – feature Bach and Buxtehude performed in a committed anti-romantic vein, providing a compelling glimpse into the epicentre of organ culture in mid 20th-century Europe. The organ at Sorø, built during the second world war by Marcussen, features prominently on both releases; this was the organ on which Poul-Gerhard Andersen cut, through necessity, his reed-making teeth, German supply houses being off-limits. The distinguished results of his kitchen table labour barely feature in the Buxtehude recording (it would be Vogel himself who would provide the interpretive revolution in this repertoire), but are very evident in the Bach.

Viderø is portrayed in the liner notes as a difficult character; elsewhere Harald Vogel has suggested that his failure to secure the Copenhagen professorship seemed to have prompted him to give up on his career, his name disappearing from view in the latter decades of his life. His playing is characterised by rock-solid rhythm, a *legato* touch (the articulation is provided by the prominent initial transient of the organs, perhaps partially illustrating the rationale for this voicing style) and a complete absence of rhythmic expression, dramatic accent and, in the Buxtehude, rhetorical gesture. Registrations are often sparse; Viderø's adherence to the notion of clarity, like all aspects of his playing, marks him out as an iconic child of the initial organ reform ideals. Danacord's presentation leaves something to be desired, but the notes are informative and the historic value of the recordings significant.

CHRIS BRAGG