

JS Bach · Liszt · Reger

'A Tribute to JS Bach'

JS Bach Cantata No 29 – Sinfonia. Solo Violin Partita No 2, BWV1004 – Chaconne. Partita, BWV831 – Echo. Inventions – BWV777; BWV783

Liszt Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, S180

Reger Fantasy and Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H, Op 46

Kristian Krogsøe *org*

Danacord © DACOCD773 (65' • DDD)

Played on the organ of Aarhus Cathedral, Denmark



This CD's ingenious programme celebrates the influence of Bach on 19th- and

20th-century composers, and its seven pieces fall neatly into three categories. First, Liszt's and Reger's compositions take themes by Bach for their musical inspiration; namely, the basso ostinato from the cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* and the four-note motif derived from Bach's initials. Kristian Krogsøe's virtuoso performances make light work of the technical demands but at the expense of some of the drama in Liszt's atmospheric quieter passages and Reger's epic fantasia. Secondly, the category of a straightforward transcription gives us the Sinfonia from Cantata No 29 in the arrangement by Guilmant – strikingly similar to the better-known version by his pupil Marcel Dupré.

The third category is arguably the most satisfying, with Bach's music being arranged for late-19th-century Romantic organs. Reger's skill in turning the Two-Part Inventions into trio sonatas via the addition of a third part for the left hand results in harmonies that are occasionally more akin to Reger than Bach. In the 'Echo' from the B minor Partita, Karg-Elert's enrichment of the original keyboard textures works well. Even better is Middelschulte's stunning arrangement of the magnificent solo violin Chaconne – a triumphant synthesis of ancient and modern.

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The Aarhus organ is a good choice for this repertoire, but sadly the close-up recording does it a disservice. The cathedral's generous acoustic is hardly in evidence, and the *tutti* sounds rather brittle and shrill. Fortunately, other recordings of this organ provide a more rounded and better balanced sound; meanwhile, on this CD we can enjoy Krogsøe's lively and colourful performances of some glorious music.

Christopher Nickol