

VIVALDI (arr. Bach): **Concerto in A minor**, RV 552 (BWV 593). **Concerto in D minor**, RV 565 (BWV 596). **Concerto in C**, RV 208 (BWV 594) **VIVALDI** (arr. Rost): **Concerto in G**, RV 383a. **Concerto in A minor**, RV 580. **Concerto in F**, RV 310 • Gunther Rost (org) • OEHMS 642 (72:00)

It is a well-known fact that J. S. Bach derived great inspiration from the music of Antonio Vivaldi. Of Bach's numerous arrangements of Vivaldi concerti, the most often performed in regular recital are likely the three transcriptions for solo organ. Some scholars believe that there were more such organ transcriptions that have since been lost. (Bach's first biographer Forkel even claimed that Bach wanted to transcribe all of Vivaldi's myriad violin concerti for keyboard instruments!) Working from this hypothesis, organist Gunther Rost transcribed three more Vivaldi concerti for solo organ. The Vivaldi concerti Rost has chosen were also transcribed by Bach in other forms (harpsichord BWV 980 and 978; four harpsichord BWV 1065), and Rost has drawn on those Bach transcriptions when making his own.

The Vivaldi-Bach transcriptions are part of the organ standard repertoire, and as such I have heard them countless times (particularly BWV 593). However, Rost's performances on this new release are so compelling and exciting that it made me feel like I was hearing these works for the first time. I had previously encountered Rost's excellent performances (in a different genre) in his series devoted to the complete organ music of Petr Eben, the greatest 20th century Czech organ composer. Rost's style in this early repertoire is impeccable, and it is the sense of freedom and fantasy (particularly in terms of rhythm and touch) in these performances that makes the release so thoroughly enjoyable from beginning to end.

The beautifully-recorded organ is a significant instrument: the Hildebrandt organ in St. Wenzel's in Naumburg, Germany. In 1746, J. S. Bach was asked to serve as consultant to the Naumburg city council in making recommendations for repair and restoration of the organ. This restoration was carried out to his personal specifications and, as such, it proves an ideal instrument for realizing Bach's music. Sonically, it is a superbly characterful organ that Rost employs to create a dazzling variety of colors. For those interested in this repertoire, this release is strongly recommended. **Carson Cooman**