**Franz Hauk plays Franz Liszt and Max Reger**

**Franz LISZT (1811-1886)**

*Prelude and Fugue on BACH* (1855/1869) 12:31]

**Max REGER (1873-1916)**

Fantasy and Fugue in D minor, Op.135b (1914-15) [17:29]

*Easy Chorale Preludes*, Op.67 (1902-03); Janchz, Erd und Himmel, juble hell, Op.67 No.15 [3:45]: Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein, Op.67 No.30 [1:47]: Wer Weiss, wie nah emir mein Ende, Op.67 No.50 [2:29]: Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht, Op.67 No.26 [1:59]

Fantasie on the chorale Halleluja! Gott zu loben bleibe meine Seelenfreud, Op.52 No.3 (1900) [15:24]

Fantasie on the chorale Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, Op.52 No.2 (1900) [19:07]

Franz Hauk (organ)

rec. Selby Abbey

**SELBY SAOM005** [74:41]

For all that he has made particular studies of Bach, Reger and French organ music, it’s been his extensive and ongoing Naxos exploration of the music of Simon Mayr that has brought Franz Hauk’s name to prominence. To the extent that his conducting duties have begun to eclipse – at least on disc – his established prowess as an organist, this latest release brings a pleasing and salutary reminder as to his gifts as a performer.

He takes his place in a roster of prominent organists recently recorded at Selby Abbey and he plays on its Hill organ. Apart from Liszt’s not inconsiderable *Prelude and Fugue on BACH* – played with utter control of its rhetoric, bravura and colouristic fantasy - the recital is devoted wholly to Reger. His *Fantasy and Fugue in D minor* was dedicated to Richard Strauss and constitutes possibly the greatest – and certainly the last – of his late organ works. It receives a reading of considerable skill here, an example of the virtuosity of refinement of which Hauk is so eloquent a master, as he navigates its moments of filigree and controlled power alike. He has selected and interspersed a small selection of the 52 Easy Chorale Preludes, Op.67 that Reger composed between 1902 and 1903. Two of the most striking of the four selected are *Wer Weiss, wie nah emir mein Ende* and *Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht,* both compact settings but both equally affecting, limpid and reserved.

For the centre-pieces Hauk selects two of the three Op.52 settings, expansive works written quickly in 1900. The *Fantasie and Fugue on the chorale Halleluja! Gott zu loben bleibe meine Seelenfreud* shows sophisticated employment of the soprano and tenor voices as well as the dynamic variance and depth Hauk can generate from the Hill. The exceptionally quiet playing in the Fantasia is also very well captured by the astute microphone placement – a feature of the recital as a whole, in fact. Unsurprisingly Hauk is commanding in the Fugue. Similarly, there is a grandeur but sensitivity too in the companion *Fantasie on the chorale Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* that opens in the Stygian depths before the chorale emerges as a kind of tone poem, the Fugue ending the recital in a blaze of glory.

The only thing missing in the documentation, which is written by Hauk, is the date of recording. Chalk this up as another decided success in Selby’s Organ Masters series.

***Jonathan Woolf***