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## **Johann Gottlob SCHNEIDER (1789-1864)**

### ***Der Orgelkönig***

*Dank - und Jubelpräludium* (1861) [4:51]

*Fantasie und Fuge* Op. 1 (pub. 1825) [13:14]

*Fantasie und Fuge* Op. 3 (pub. 1831) [13:15]

*Zwölf Leichte Orgelstücke* Op. 4 (pub. 1833) [21:10]

*Thema mit Variationen* [23:38]

Halgeir Schiager (organ)

rec. 23-26 April 2013, Steinkjer Church.

**LAWO CLASSICS LWC1090** [61:23]

Johann Gottlob Schneider occupies that supposed 'dark age' of German organ music between the death of J.S. Bach and the rejuvenation of interest caused by Mendelssohn. Schneider's father was an organist and a former pupil of Bach, and his son's career took him from Leipzig to the famous "Sun Organ" at Görlitz, the largest such instrument in Saxony. Schneider's reputation as an organist gained acclaim from Mendelssohn and others, including the American writer Henry Chorley, who compared his skills to those of Paganini and Liszt. The title "Der Orgelkönig" is derived from this list of accolades.

Schneider's repertoire had Bach at its centre, and any burgeoning romantic temperament to his composing is balanced by 18<sup>th</sup> as well as 19<sup>th</sup> century qualities. The rousing *Dank - und Jubelpräludium* is based on the chorale *Nun danket alle Gott* and quotes Bach, but while the contrapuntal content of the two multi-movement *Fantasie und Fuge* works indicate similar origins these pieces explore remote keys and are more forward-looking than you might expect.

The *Zwölf Leichte Orgelstücke* have a more lyrical style and would certainly have been used during the liturgy in those non-verbal moments of transition in church services. The *Thema mit Variationen* has previously been ascribed to Bach pupil Johann Schneider in a no doubt understandable mix-up with names. Evidence such as registers specific to the Görlitz organ and reports of a performance by Johann Gottlob in 1816 seem to clinch his authorship however, and this is his earliest documented organ work. Both this and the *Zwölf Leichte Orgelstücke* have a more melodic, galant style, though the variations have entertainingly virtuoso touches including flourishes, flashy pedal technique and artful registration that would have been delightful for audiences of the day.

All superbly performed by Halgeir Schiager and recorded to the Lawo label's consistently high standard, this is an interesting and rewarding artifact for organ enthusiasts. The organ in Steinkjer Church was chosen for a sound inspired by instruments by Silberman, and references to original manuscripts where possible and the documented performing style of the time make this both a scholarly as well as a nicely produced and entertaining recording.

### ***Dominy Clements***

[http://musicweb-international.com/classrev/2016/Feb/Schneider\\_organikonig\\_LWC1090.htm](http://musicweb-international.com/classrev/2016/Feb/Schneider_organikonig_LWC1090.htm)