

## Georg Christoph Wagenseil - Concertos for organ (Elisabeth Ullmann) [2012]

Written by bluesever

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## Georg Christoph Wagenseil - Concertos for organ (Elisabeth Ullmann) [2012]



01. Concerto No.3 in F major - I. Allegro [0:05:28.24] 02. Concerto No.3 in F major - II. Andante [0:06:09.46] 03. Concerto No.3 in F major - III. Tempo di Menuetto [0:06:19.73] 04. Concerto No.5 in G major - I. Allegro moderato [0:05:13.08] 05. Concerto No.5 in G major - II. Andante [0:06:12.28] 06. Concerto No.5 in G major - III. Allegro [0:03:48.28] 07. Concerto No.2 in C major - I. Allegro [0:03:27.05] 08. Concerto No.2 in C major - II. Andante [0:05:30.63] 09. Concerto No.2 in C major - III. Tempo di Menuetto [0:03:41.14] 10. Concerto No.6 in A major - I. Vivace [0:04:51.04] 11. Concerto No.6 in A major - II. Larghetto [0:08:23.44] 12. Concerto No.6 in A major - III. Tempo di Menuetto [0:05:03.04] Elisabeth Ullmann - organ Piccolo Concerto Wien Roberto Sensi – conductor

Georg Wagenseil is one of those myriad composers who lurk at the peripheries of the 18th century repertoire. One or other work of his - usually the Alto Trombone Concerto in E flat or the Harp Concerto in G - pops up here and there on various recordings, whereas monographs like this new Accent release are few and far between. Half a dozen years ago CPO committed a mini-series of two volumes to some of his Symphonies, and one or two other labels have recorded clusters of Concertos, including indeed Accent: ACC 24186 featured Wagenseil's imaginative Concerto for oboe, bassoon, winds, strings and continuo in E flat.

There seems to be one other CD of Organ Concertos, issued by the German label EBS (6089) in the 1990s, still available over the internet and despite the numbering system used, all different works to those in the present recording. This is in fact a re-release, having originally been issued on the Italian Symphonia label a decade ago (SY 01194).

Wagenseil's relative neglect - or reputation for mediocrity - is something of a puzzle, because he was not only a renowned keyboard virtuoso and pedagogue, but his music was held in considerable esteem in his lifetime - by the likes of Charles Burney, Haydn and Mozart.

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Undoubtedly, his prolific production played a role in later critical hubris: unless going by the name of Haydn, anyone who writes nearly a hundred Symphonies, the same number again of Concertos, liturgical works, keyboard pieces and more, must surely be writing by numbers to some degree. There is also the consideration that Wagenseil's mature music is almost quintessentially galant in style - for some critics a musical Buridan's Ass conservatively static between the Baroque and the Classical.

Yet in fairness to Wagenseil, he was a teacher and there is understandably an element of didacticism in his numerous keyboard Concertos. The 'orchestra' is thus usually a chamber ensemble - Piccolo Concerto Wien employs seven players for this recording - that plays a fairly subsidiary role to the soloist, who provides flourishes of figurations over chiefly pedagogic rhythms and harmonies. Wagenseil's keyboard Concertos include at least two sets of six that might be performed on the organ. The present set are taken from the 'Six Concertos for the Harpsichord or Organ with Accompaniments for Two Violins and a Bass', published in London around 1765 by John Walsh, who also published Handel's Organ Concertos, with which Wagenseil's are loosely contemporaneous.

The four works heard here, splendidly performed on period instruments by the hugely experienced Austrian organist Elisabeth Ullmann and 18th-century specialists Piccolo Concerto Wien, are structurally and harmonically similar to each other - an upbeat major key mood, three movements, a fast opener and minuet finale sandwiching a longer andante, even dynamics etc. Yet for all their undoubted textbook straightforwardness, they are utterly winsome, with an appealing stylistic tisane of the German/Austrian, Italian and French piling the foot-tapping rhythms and catchy melodies high.

The music is lovingly recorded in an intimate acoustic. The well-written booklet notes are in English, French and German and offer a decent biographical summary of the composer. Rather surprisingly there is no information on Ullmann or Piccolo Concerto Wien. ---Byzantion, musicweb-international.com

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