

◁ *Prelude, Scherzo & Passacaglia* on a Walker & Son is both dexterous and detailed.

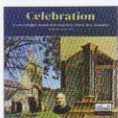
MICHAEL QUINN

Celebration

David Hill, Speechly organ,
St Lawrence, Alton

Herald HAVPCD 416 [79:34]

★★★★★



'Celebration' is the right word: with this CD, the Organ Society of St Lawrence, Alton in Hampshire marks over 55 years of its recital programmes; its Henry Speechly organ of 1866 remains tonally unaltered; the dedication of its long-term curators – founder, the late Cyril Diplock, and Peter Ashworth (chairman for over 40 years) – and the warm hospitality extended to recitalists has ensured a steady stream of international organists who have considered an invitation to Alton to be an honour. Not least of them is David Hill, initially lured over to St Lawrence in 1988 when director of music at Winchester Cathedral, and soon to become a patron of the Society. 'The most exciting aspect of playing for the Society,' he writes, 'is knowing you are among lovers of the art, serious aficionados of the organ and its canon of music.' Hill's 15-item programme has been carefully chosen to highlight the organ's famed versatility. First up is *Diversion for Mixtures* by Francis Jackson, the Society's first recitalist in 1966 and another former patron. Representative works by Bach, Buxtehude, Duruflé, Franck, Vaughan Williams, Howells, and Lefébure-Wély follow. The organ has a tonal homogeneity which adds a smooth richness and class to everything played on it, even the acerbic snarl generated by Langlais's *Te Deum*. Quiet

registrations have a sumptuous, velvety quality, heard to good effect in Thalben-Ball's *Elegy* and two Brahms chorale preludes. In the whole of this programme, not least in Guilmant's *March on Handel's 'Lift up your heads'*, and the concluding Toccata by Lanquetuit, David Hill offers a masterclass in articulation. Once again, restoration beckons for the Speechly organ – so caps off to all involved in creating this snapshot of a 150-plus-year-old organ still in its prime.

GRAEME KAY

Yon: Complete Organ Music, vol.2

Tommaso Mazzoletti, Brondino Vegezzi-Bossi organ, Opus 376 (2021), St Paul Church, Gland, Switzerland

Brilliant Classics 96202 (2CDs)
[43:17; 43:45]

★★★★★



Tommaso Mazzoletti continues his championing of Pietro Alessandro Yon with this two-disc second volume focusing on music for Christmas. Yon's ability to filter popular tastes through his signature virtuosity produces engaging music deserving of greater attention. Originally composed for organ and orchestra, *Concerto Gregoriano* loses none of its spiritual sincerity and imposing grandeur in its arrangement for solo organ, rousingly played by Mazzoletti. The five-part *Advent Suite* is a neo-Romantic crowd-pleaser waiting to be discovered, *Hymn to Glory* as stirring as it is moving, and *Gesù Bambino* (beloved by Pavarotti), at the other end of the scale, a delicious, dainty bon-bon. In all: attractive, articulate music ardently performed.

MICHAEL QUINN