

DAVID HIGGS Press Notices

NEW YORK CITY

“David Higgs, one of the brightest, most promising young concert organists to have appeared on the American music scene in years, gave a recital ... that offered abundant evidence of his remarkable talents. If he were only a superior technician, however, he would merely be one among many ... but Mr. Higgs has something else – a feeling for music and the shaping of it in interpretation that is instinctive rather than learned. The concluding work in his recital was Liszt’s *Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H* ... Mr. Higgs played it spectacularly.”

The New York Times

“As associate organist (Riverside Church) he clearly knows its huge Aeolian-Skinner instrument intimately, and the result was a beautifully judged, coloristic array of registrations. Mr. Higgs’ elegant response to this quietly ecstatic music (Durufle *Suite, Op. 5*) was a joy to hear.”

The New York Times

“Mr. Higgs’ outstanding virtues are three: very secure finger work, an unusual sense of tempo that is at once buoyant and rock-steady, and an imaginative judgment of organ registrations that subtly exploits a wide range of effects but never insists on showing us the whole range within a single piece. Of these, the rhythmic security is perhaps most remarkable. One felt it immediately in the athletic flow of Bach’s *D Major Prelude*.”

The New York Times

LOS ANGELES

“DISNEY HALL ORGAN SPECTACULAR A LESSON FOR THE ARTS: ENGAGE!”

“Higgs’ playing was “immaculate,” in the words of one onlooker, while Thelen’s voice soared, and Hooten trumpeted like an archangel. But that goes without saying at Disney Hall. What mattered last night was the way all three — notably Higgs, as the leader — interacted with the audience. Higgs was our host for the evening, and he made sure it was a party.”

“Speaking into a wireless mike (something I’d build into every soloist’s contract if I were the boss), Higgs engaged with the audience. But he wasn’t just explaining the music. What Higgs was doing was making sure we spread the word about this concert and how wonderful the Disney Hall experience is. He was selling tickets to next week’s concerts, and next year’s. He was ensuring that kids will see that classical music is vital, and fun, and emotional, and that they’ll buy tickets themselves 10 or 20 years from now.”

John Rabe, SCPR.ORG (89.3 KPCC–Off Ramp program), December 2013

“HOLIDAY ORGAN SPECTACULAR OPENS SERIES AT WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL”

“Virtuosic performances by concert organist David Higgs, harpist Mindy Ball, soprano Lisa Vroman and drummer Bernie Dresel, in a program of traditional holiday carols as well as Bach, Wright, Dupré and Adam, delighted the near capacity audience with sing-alongs, ensemble and solo performances.”

“As glorious and impressive as the soprano voice of Ms. Vroman, the delicate harp playing of Ms. Ball and the versatile drumming of Mr. Dresel were, there was no doubt as to whom the audience came to hear. Famous for his virtuosity on the organ, David Higgs was astounding in his workout of the organ’s 6,134 pipes! His lively feet blithely leapt from pedal to pedal in a literal dance ...” “Higgs was a joy to watch and hear ...”

Suite101.com, December 2009

ANNAPOLIS, MD (Concert for the American Guild of Organists National Convention held in Washington DC – the first ever “St. Cecilia Concert” for the Guild.)

“The recital by David Higgs was flawless, so very musical, and the audience of organists was breathtakingly attentive ...” “... Higgs playing of the *Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582*, was a masterpiece of performance and pure musicality. His drive and care given to the monumental work was simply thrilling.” ... “The final piece on the programmed recital, Widor’s *Symphony VI in G minor, op 42*, ‘brought the house down’ with the audience’s immediate standing ovation.”

The Diapason (January 2011)

ANN ARBOR, MI “DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA DELIVERS LIVELY ORGAN PROGRAM AT HILL AUDITORIUM”

“Samuel Barber’s *Toccata Festiva for Organ and Orchestra* (1960) was the highlight of the afternoon.” ... “The virtuoso organ part was handled with great flair by David Higgs, who was especially impressive in the cadenzas, including a powerful display for the foot pedals only that had his feet moving at a tap-dancer-like blur. Slatkin kept all of many moving parts in the score clear and balanced.”

Mark Stryker, Detroit Free Press, January 2013

PORTLAND, OR “BACH + LISZT + HIGGS + THE ROSALES ORGAN = WOW!”

“It was about time for the Oregon Bach Festival to bring a world-class organist to Portland, and the 41-year old festival made up for the deficit in a hurry by presenting one of the nation’s top organists David Higgs in concert at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. That’s where Higgs, playing the cathedral’s magnificent Rosales Organ, delivered a concert that made organ-playing the coolest thing on earth. It wasn’t just the Higgs’ impeccable playing of a program stuffed with gems by Bach and Higgs’ out-of-this-world performance of a Franz Liszt piece that was inspired by Bach, it was also the tremendous volume and variety of sounds that Higgs created from the 54-stop tracker organ that reverberated so marvelously.”

Oregon Music News, July 12, 2011

BOSTON, MA (Harvard Memorial Church inaugural recital)

“C. B. Fisk Opus 139 was publicly inaugurated [by David Higgs] in a most distinguished recital. ... His program was eclectic, reflecting the scope and abilities of the organ superbly; mostly performed from memory, it notably contained a rather large amount of both contemporary and American music. ... Finally, Higgs performed Duruflé’s *Suite op. 5*, a mountain of a work that many organists attempt to climb but very few attain. His performance showed a carefree disdain of difficulty that was aerobically dazzling.”

The Boston Musical Intelligencer, April 2012

BIRMINGHAM, AL “... a brilliant performance by David Higgs. Higgs’s playing was crisp, bright and filled with surprises. His programming was eclectic – in turns fun and whimsical, and serious and searching. In between pieces, Higgs, who chairs the organ department at the Eastman School of Music, offered accessible, engaging commentary.”

The Birmingham News

DENVER (National Convention, The American Guild of Organists) “David Higgs played a stunning recital ... He played the Reubke with an effortless demeanor, shaping lyrical phrases with a subtle rubato and providing a fiendish drive to the difficult manual figurations and scale passages.”

The American Organist

HOUSTON (National Convention, The American Guild of Organists) “David Higgs made a sensational national convention debut ... Playing from memory with a security, musicality and aplomb that would grace any musical stage, Higgs gave brilliant performances of everything ... spontaneous, well-deserved standing ovation.”

The American Organist

SAN FRANCISCO (with the San Francisco Symphony)

“... the finest performance of this run came not from the recorded material, but from Samuel Barber’s *Toccata Festiva*. Here organist David Higgs stirred up a storm and Blomstedt provided attentive and loving support.”

(From article on live, then recorded series by San Francisco Symphony) San Francisco Sentinel

“Thursday’s performance, with organist David Higgs [and the San Francisco Symphony] ... was superbly persuasive.”

San Francisco Chronicle

COLUMBUS (AGO region V convention recital 2007) “David Higgs’ concert at St. Joseph Cathedral on the magnificent Paul Fritts organ was stunning. He presented a spine-tingling program to a capacity crowd.”

The American Organist

CLEVELAND “A gifted young musician who communicates warm affection for the pipe organ and its literature, Higgs met difficult technical challenges with ease and played his repertoire with an irresistible feeling of joy.”

The Plain Dealer

SKANEATELES FESTIVAL 2006 “Cellist Alisa Weilerstein, violinist Corinne Stillwell and organist David Higgs filled their interpretation of Josef Rheinberger’s *Suite in C Minor for Organ, Violin and Cello* with so much unbridled emotion that once the last chord of the piece died away, the audience jumped up with applause.”

The Post Standard, Syracuse, NY

SANTA FE “... organist David Higgs blended technique and taste to wonderful musical effect.”
Pasttempo, The New Mexican’s Weekly Magazine of Arts, Entertainment & Culture

SARASOTA “There is something uncanny about organist David Higgs. He seems able to play music of any style with equal flair, giving each composition the full impact of his musical intelligence and formidable technique. This was Higgs’ second appearance in Sarasota. We need an ordinance mandating an annual visit.”

Sarasota Herald-Tribune

CHARLESTON (Piccolo Spoleto Festival) “ORGANIST’S PERFORMANCE DAZZLES AUDIENCE ... Playing a difficult program from memory, Higgs dazzled the audience with his flawless technique and musical command.”

The News & Courier

SAN ANTONIO “ORGANIST DELIVERS MASTERFUL RECITAL ... This was pure musicianship, utterly unfettered and masterfully delivered. It was simply inspired.”

Express-News

HOUSTON “ORGANIST DAVID HIGGS GIVES BRILLIANT RECITAL ... His performance showed wonderful technical command and a clean, forthright style of playing.”

The Houston Post

AUSTIN “ORGAN FANS PACK SEASON PREMIERE ... David Higgs, a ... wonder organist ... demonstrated an inspired manner of playing that was honestly virtuosic and free of affectation.”

Austin-American Statesman

BUFFALO “ORGANIST SHOWS WHY HE’S TOPS ... David Higgs, associate organist of New York City’s Riverside Church, gave a recital ... proving the stuff of which such prestigious posts are made.”

The Buffalo News

MILWAUKEE “Mr. Higgs’ sensitive phrasing and appropriate registrations conveyed the spirit of these works admirably ... the general clarity and excitement of the playing carried the listeners through a truly musical experience. The audience was most enthusiastic in its response to Mr. Higgs’ performance.”

The Diapason

BIRMINGHAM, AL “INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN ORGAN SERIES OFF TO EXCELLENT START WITH DAVID HIGGS ... The young man has sterling technique and uses it with style. Dupré’s *Variations on a Noel* were offered with splendid registrations and a feeling of ease and authority.”

The Birmingham News

BRYN MAWR “‘Bravo!’ and ‘Bravo!’ was heard repeatedly ... This shining, bright talent seems large enough to push out the walls.”

Main Line Times

SARASOTA “ORGANIST HIGGS DELIVERS SUPERLATIVE PERFORMANCE ... a daunting reputation for dazzling virtuosity and solid musicianship ... there was no question that his fame is deserved.”

Sarasota Herald-Tribune

HAMILTON, BERMUDA “ORGANIST’S THRILLING RECITAL LEAVES HIS AUDIENCE IN AWE”

The Royal Gazette

EVANSVILLE, IN “... a tour de force by the brilliant David Higgs.”

The American Organist

SPRINGFIELD, MA “Performing from memory, Higgs owned the music. Every nuance bore a refreshing, exciting spontaneity bespeaking intimate knowledge of each composer’s score, style and intentions.”

Union News

RECORDING REVIEWS

David Higgs at Riverside (Gothic, 2001)

“...this disc reveals an artist whose seemingly unlimited facility is well upstaged by a delight in organ sonority and musical line. Never once does Higgs fail in finding just the right sound, moulding it with care, affection, sincerity, and intelligence.”

The Diapason

Bach at Bryn Mawr (Delos, 1988)

“Anyone who heard David Higgs’ note-perfect memorized recital playing in the presence of the many hundreds at the Houston AGO National Convention in 1988 will be captivated by this impeccable recording. ... The playing is simply astounding, with perfect technique and note accuracy, as well as musicianship.”

The American Organist

“David Higgs’ tempos lie somewhere near the end of the speed spectrum, usually without going up and out. His superb accuracy, vibrancy, rhythm, and wide variety of touches used intelligently make his playing a pleasure to hear. The tour-de-force of this CD is his superlative performance of the Vivaldi-Bach *Concerto*. The *Prelude in D* is quite magnificently played ... The *Sonata No. 5* is performed with jewel-like precision and clarity. The treacherous last movement is played with consummate mastery. The *Fantasia in G minor* is visceral and impressive ...”

American Record Guide

“In all of these works Higgs produces a bright, clean sound, always attractive and free of mannerism.”

San Francisco Chronicle

“David Higgs’ breathtaking performance of the *G minor Fantasia and Fugue* by itself is worth the price of this recording – it is hair-raising, dramatic and intense with an exquisite sense of phrasing.”

The Diapason

“Higgs plays an energetic and forceful Bach that is carefully controlled and technically perfect. He easily stands comparison with the best of today’s European Bach specialists.”

The Sunday Camera, Denver

“Like Heiller, David Higgs possesses a formidable technique that enables him to dash off the most difficult passages with ease.”

Cash Box

Meyerson Center Premier Recording of the C.B. Fisk Organ in Dallas, Texas (Delos, 1993)

“Best recording of 1993.”

Absolute Sound