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## STEFAN ENGELS Press Notices

2006 AGO national convention recital (Chicago)

“This recital was a highlight of the convention, and this artist was received most warmly by the appreciative audience. It was apparent from the outset that Mr. Engels is very much “at home” with the German Romantic repertoire ... His ability to allow Reger, in particular, to “jump off of the page” and into the ears of the listener is uncanny.”

*The American Organist, October 2006*

2006 AGO national convention recital (Chicago)

“The other stellar recital of the morning was that given by Stefan Engels at the Fourth Presbyterian Church. Here was the perfect marriage of organist and instrument. In Karg-Elert’s *Partita Retrospectiva III* ... It was simply the right piece on the right organ played by the right person. The program concluded with Max Reger’s little-known *Fantasie über den Choral ‘Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn’* ... In Engels’ capable hands it unfolded in a wave of tumultuous sound. It was nothing short of thrilling.”

*The Diapason, December 2006*

“Always stylistically assured and most tastefully executed, Engels impressed with his flexibility and his sense of colours and nuances, and his interpretations of the most delicate transitions to opulent passages ... Impressive was also his rendering of Reger’s *Fantasie über den Choral ‘Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn’*.”

*Mannheimer Tageszeitung, March 2006*

2002 Royal Canadian College of Organists National Convention

“... one of the world’s finest young artists. Engels showed a clarity of articulation and marvelous use of color ... a truly memorable recital.”

*The American Organist*

“Engels held the audience in a recital of extraordinary communicative power ... serving up richly varied colours and intricate pianistic textures that sounded effortless.”

*The American Organist*

“Mr. Engels presented a fascinating program of works ... [he] handled the kaleidoscopic registrational requirements with utter confidence, keeping the lines moving and alive through the use of a very subtle and flexible rubato ... it was truly a most enjoyable evening.”

*RCCO Ottawa Centre newsletter – April 2005*

“Engels presented a marvelous achievement ... his distinct sense for tonal monumentalism, for great rhythmic attacks and hymn-like extravagance let us recognize the artist’s secure instincts for Messiaen’s vision of organ sounds ... His racing virtuosity was demonstrated one more time in Dupré’s Second Symphony Op. 26.”

*Rheinische Post, Viersen, Germany, September 18, 1997*

“Engels combined thrilling interpretations with virtuosic technique ... In Franck’s *Chorale in E Major*, he was able to fascinate the audience in every moment of the piece ... Not less impressive were his interpretations of Bach’s three chorale preludes on *Nun komm’ der Heiden Heiland*. His playing was always inspired and strong.”

*Westfälischer Anzeiger, Hamm, Germany, December 16, 1997*

“In Vierne’s *Pièces de Fantaisie* the extraordinary artistic creativity of the performer was apparent ... Engels received extended applause after a breath-taking concert!”

*Stadtzeitung Kevelaer, Kevelaer, Germany, March 5, 1998*

“Stefan Engels let musical sparks fly! In Reger’s fantasia on *Halleluja, Gott zu loben*, Engels skillfully used all of the instrument’s tonal resources and presented the work with bravado ... Karg-Elert’s bombastic *Introduction, Passacaglia, and Fugue on B-A-C-H* was performed absolutely brilliantly ... The excited audience thanked Stefan Engels with a standing ovation for a memorable evening.”

*Werner Zeitung, Werne, Germany, March 10, 1998*

“An ethereal evening for the audience in Eberbach. Stefan Engels proved himself as an artist of uncommon capability ... a memorized recital played with unflinching technique and impressive stylistic knowledge and musicality ... amazing was Engels’ great experience in how to deal with unfamiliar organs ... Great organ works, performed by a grandiose organist!”

*Rhein Westfälische Zeitung, Eberbach, Germany, June 29, 1998*

“It was evident ... that we were in the presence of a master in the art of interpretation as well as one possessing technical brilliance ... a rare artistic talent.”

*The Karg-Elert Archive*

## **RECORDING REVIEWS**

### **Karg-Elert Complete Organ Works, Volume 12**

The Steinmeyer Organ at the Marienkirche, Landau/Pfalz, Germany

“... this series will surely stand as the greatest project the gramophone has achieved in organ music for very many years ... the Partita, masterpiece receives here a quite splendid performance from Stefan Engels and the whole disc is superbly recorded. One must also commend the extensive and highly informative booklet ... this CD is a very fine addition to the discography of Sigfrid Karg-Elert.”

*Choir and Organ*

### **Karg-Elert Complete Organ Works, Volume 6**

Schulze organ, Armley Parish church, Leeds, United Kingdom

“Stefan Engels, clearly immersed in the idiom, is a persuasive advocate for even the most introspective of these works, conjuring a perfumed atmosphere whilst adroitly avoiding religiosity and seizing moments of direction and purpose in the extended movements with aplomb ... The two *Sequenz* are particularly fine essays in bringing this elusive music off the page ... Engels plays with poise ... with the composer being well served by the excellent playing of Stefan Engels.”

*Thomas Leech, The Organist's Review, September 2012*

### **Karg-Elert Complete Organ Works, Volume 4**

Sauer organ, Michaeliskirche Leipzig, Germany

“... Stefan Engels opens with a virtuoso account of the *Phantasie and Fugue*, performed with panache and musicianship ... Engels' performances are so musically and stylishly conveyed that every piece has something interesting to say ... Engels' love of this repertoire shines through in his performances.”

*Nicholas Johnson, The Organist's Review, October 2009*

### **Karg-Elert Complete Organ Works, Volume 2 (Priory PRCD819)**

E.M. Skinner organ – Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH

“Stefan Engels is so in tune with Karg-Elert's varied musical personality it's as if he was born to play this composer ... Engels delivers interpretations that may never be bettered ... A magnificent disc.”

*Christopher Nickol, Gramophone, April 2006*

### **Karg-Elert: Complete Organ Works, Volume 1 (Priory PRCD816)**

III/68 Organ (1997) St.Georgskirche, Riedlingen, Germany; Hartwigspaeth, Freiburger Orgelbau

“Engels is a player of exceptional talent and in his hands Karg-Elert receives as sympathetic an advocacy as one could ever imagine. ... Engels's manual technique positively fizzes. And at all times he is in command of the lengthy, more grandiose works.

*Warwick Cole, International Record Guide, April 2005*

“He is a superb player and makes this a stunning performance.”

*Ralph Blakely, American Record Guide, Jan/Feb 2007*

“For much of his career, Stefan Engels has been associated with the music of Karg-Elert, with which he has an obvious affinity, and for which he is a recognized authority. ... Engels successfully elicits the multifarious colors and dynamic shadings required by the composer. We will eagerly await the next installment of this most welcome recording project.”

*The American Organist*

Great European Organs, No. 69 (Priory PRCD790)

“Engels’ technical prowess shines in his exciting rendering of the Reger *Halleluja! Gott zu Loben, bleibe meine Seelenfreud*. He plows through the score with all of the ease and virtuosity that anyone could hope to achieve in this difficult composition, yet he plays with a sublime musical sensitivity ... virtuosic interpreter.”

*The Diapason*, April 2006

“Engels emerges as a splendid performer, exhibiting all the attributes one looks for at this level of proficiency.”

*Metz, American Record Guide*, July/August 2004

“Stefan Engels is certainly a player of considerable virtuosity.”

*Marc Rochester, Gramophone*, March 2004

“Stefan Engels’s skilful and idiomatic playing of this virtuoso repertoire is richly satisfying.”

5 stars, *Choir & Organ*, January/February 2004

“Stefan Engels is one of the finest organists of his generation. His technical facility enables him to spin off demanding passage-work with apparent ease. He plays with a naturalness that reveals his deep affinity for this music. The instrument is ideal for this repertoire, blessed by an abundant acoustic that provides the necessary ambience.”

*The American Organist*, May 2005

“Engels ... is both a sensitive virtuosic interpreter of the selections on this recording ... Engels’ technical prowess shines in his exciting rendering of the Reger *Halleluja! Gott zu loben, bleibe meine Seelenfreud*. He plows through the score with all of the ease and virtuosity that anyone could hope for to achieve in this difficult composition, yet he plays with a sublime musical sensitivity in the softer sections of this work ... Engels achieves a fine balance of panache and introspection in the fifth movement of Messiaen’s *Meditations sur le Mystere de la Sainte Trinite* ... Engels is a fine organist in every respect, and this reviewer looks forward to hearing him in future recordings.”

*The American Organist*, April 2006

Marcel Dupré Works for Organ, Vol. 8

“Stefan Engels brings youthful vitality to these well-known scores ... lucid and intelligible ... Engels carefully articulates and sets off motives.”

*Haig Mardirosian, Cdnnow.com*

Marcel Dupré Works for Organ, Vol. 6

“... played ... with an undeniably exciting *detaché* articulation ...”

*Organists’ Review*