
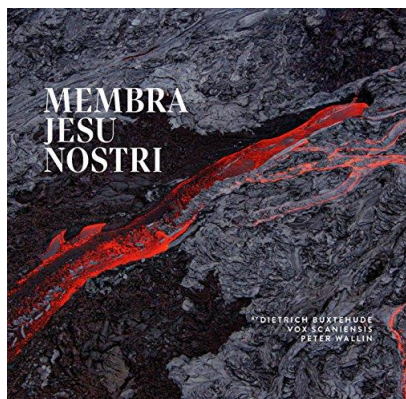


BUXTEHUDE *Membra Jesu Nostri* • Peter Wallin, cond; Vox Scaniensis • LAWO 010 (59:09 )



This set of seven cantatas devotes one to each of the seven parts of Christ's wounded body hanging on the Cross. The texts are Pietistic in nature, a form of devotion regarded as Lutheran at the time but reaching back to the Cistercian and Franciscan orders in the Middle Ages. All 120-plus choral works of Buxtehude have now been recorded in choral fashion by Ton Koopman, with this work reviewed in *Fanfare* 36:3. Among all the works referred to (incorrectly) as cantatas, it seems to have risen to the top of the heap (it fits a CD well), and this version, unlike Koopman's, will delight the most extreme advocates of

one-voice-to-a-part Baroque interpretation. Existing recordings (I've lost track after about 30) can be divided among solo voices like the new entry, solo voices with ripieno at the beginning and end of each part, and solos with full chorus like Koopman. A subset of the choral approach uses a chorus of men and boys. With five singers and seven players (including the conductor at the organ), this version is as minimal as it gets, comparable to Alexander Weimann's five singers and nine players (31:5), Sigiswald Kuijken's six singers and eight players (36:1), and Harry Christophers's five singers and 10 players (34:1). That is just a few of the minimalist versions, but it suggests that HIP is alive.

Peter Wallin and his ensemble are new to me, although the unfamiliar label produced an interesting chant CD that I had to purchase just last month. He formed the ensemble 15 years ago, performing a range of music from plainchant to contemporary composers, including some commissions. The singers and players are exquisite, their chosen tempos falling in the middle of their extant competitors. It is a superb rendition in the chosen style, the singing and playing quite lovely.

For a little more weight, with one or two singers added to the opening and closing of each cantata, I have always liked Erik Van Nevel (23:5) for his relaxed tempos, the longest version on records. Masaaki Suzuki (22:2) is similar, with medium tempos and an extraordinary countertenor. As a concession to the other approach, I might mention Daniel Hyde's choir of men and boys with a dozen players (38:1), not just a choral performance but a powerful one recorded up close, the opposite extreme from the present entry. Wallin's recorded sound has considerable presence, creating its own kind of power.

J. F. Weber