



Johann Valentin Rathgeber: Messe von Muri & Concertos

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The earliest known concerto written for clarinet was written by the very successful German composer, Johann Valentin Rathgeber (1682-1750). He was born in Fulda in Lower Franconia and studied theology in Würzburg, where he became a schoolmaster and an organist. In 1707 he entered the monastery at Banz as a chamber musician and was ordained there in 1711. In the same year he was appointed choirmaster, a post he held until his death. As a composer he concentrated on writing sacred music for churches which could not afford professional singers and players. His music is melodious and technically not too demanding - the main reason it became so popular throughout Germany. The tuneful 'Muri Mass', here released for the first time, was discovered in the library of the abbey at Einsiedeln. It was catalogued there as the anonymous 'Muri Mass' but was recently identified as a work by Johann Valentin Rathgeber. The present recording restores the music to its place of origin as it was recorded in the beautiful abbey church of Muri, with its outstanding acoustics and splendid baroque architecture. The original sound of the composition and the interpretation with baroque instruments meet and form a unique whole. To complement the existing instruments from the baroque era, a number of replica historical instruments were reconstructed, including the trumpet marine, a monochord string instrument ingeniously designed to sound like a trumpet, and the chordophone drum whose sound is produced by striking a single string. Solo concertos taken from Johann Valentin Rathgeber's 'Chelys sonora' and recorded here as well present other historical instruments (baroque violin, baroque trumpet and baroque clarinet). The trumpet marine is also represented in a solo concerto by Rathgeber's contemporary, Christian Gottfried Telonius. The music is performed in energetic and authentic style by the excellent Cappella Murensis and the ensemble Arcimboldo, directed by Johannes Strobl and Thilo Hirsch. The SACD sound quality is outstanding and this unique release is highly recommended.