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## **Passacaglia: ‘Bach, Buxtehude, Couperin, Kerll, Mendelssohn, Reger, Shostakovich and Welmers – organ music to delight the ear’**



by [Rob Schrijver](#), 6 September 2012

As a jazz musician would put it, take a bass riff of 4 or 8 bars, repeat this as often as you like (basso ostinato) and keep building a different melodic variant on it. So there is nothing new under the sun, because the musical construction, like the related chaconne, has been in existence since the Renaissance.

Anyone who has listened intently to Bach's Passacaglia will never forget that 'theme' and from that moment will instantly recognise any piece of music based on a Passacaglia. It can even go so far that you think to recognise a variant on Bach's piece in almost every Passacaglia you hear. There is nothing wrong with that, in my opinion; for me, Bach's is and will always remain the most beautiful.

There are a number of them on this CD, ranging in time from before Bach's era to the first half of the 20th Century and in composition from pieces originally composed for the organ to variations on harpsichord pieces and entr'acte music from an opera. When you listen to them in chronological order, you get a good impression of how the construction has developed.

All the pieces on the CD, however, have one thing in common: they are all played superbly.

There are some on which one might make minor criticisms; for example, I find Bach's passacaglia played at a tempo that is just a little too fast for the space in which it is played. On the other hand, I have never heard the piece by Mendelssohn performed so beautifully or so well. It has a kind of 'drive' that compels you to listen to the same piece again immediately.

The organist is still very young but already has a well-deserved list of awards to his name. This CD will certainly add to his fame. The fact that he can also make use of a very high quality organ is simply a bonus.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the CD is accompanied by an excellent booklet that even contains the scores for the passacaglia themes.