

CLASSICAL



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Das Wohltemperirte Clavier, Buch I & II – Roger Woodward (Celestial Harmonies)

Since his move to the US a few years ago, Roger Woodward's resurgence of creative productivity has delighted and astonished.

This five-CD set of Bach's 48 preludes and fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier, in two boxed sets complete with facsimiles of the original manuscripts, is recorded with the same mixture of textural clarity and rich piano sound as characterised in Woodward's recent Debussy and Chopin recordings. It captures the spontaneous

quickenning of a creative spirit in motion. Yet although his artistic personality is strong, there is no imposed

interpretative manner. Rather, there is a sense of a player with a lifetime of experience, with the music stepping back differentially to reveal its intricacies.

Highlights include the five-part C-sharp minor fugue from Book 1 on three subjects and the glorious E major fugue from Book 2. In the truculent fugue in G minor, Book 2, Woodward avoids predictable assertiveness for quiet understatement that builds. You can imagine eavesdropping on a master playing these works to himself in deep contemplation.
Peter McCallum