

Perla Barocca

Fontana, Uccellini, Castello, Marini, Frescobaldi, Pandolfi, Leonarda, Gabrieli, Cima, Bertali
Rachel Podger, v; Marcin Swiatkiewicz, hpsi & org; Daniele Caminiti, theorbo
Channel 36014 [SACD] 70 minutes

Except for a piece by the 16th-Century composer Andrea Gabrieli, all of the works collected here date from the 17th Century. Of all the composers for violin from this era, the only one that appeals to me is Biber. The style of most music from this time is too elementary for my taste. Another thing that doesn't appeal to me is the fairly consistent tempos of the works collected here. There is not enough variety of mood; it is almost consistently somber. I know that the list of composers reads like an honor roll from that time, but I find that I cannot sit and listen to this straight through. The performances and sound are first-rate.

MAGIL

Czech Chamber Pieces

MARTINU: *Duo*; **JANACEK:** *Violin Sonata*; **SUK:** *Elegy for Trio*; **SMETANA:** *From My Homeland*; **DVORAK:** *Romance*; **BODOROVA:** *Sine Dolore*
Dana Vlachova, v; Petr Nouzovsky, vc; Miroslav Sekera, p—ArcoDiva 146—57 minutes

There are some wonderful performances in this survey of chamber music of prominent Czech composers. Violinist Dana Vlachova and cellist Petr Nouzovsky engage in a gripping, intense musical dialog in Martinu's *Duo*, a work that presents supreme technical and interpretive challenges to the performers. In two pieces from Smetana's *From My Homeland*, Vlachova and pianist Miroslav Sekera deliver performances that are intimate and sweetly sensitive.

Janacek's sonata is the most substantial work here, and it is filled with appealing melodies derived from folk music. Vlachova and Sekera play it with zesty vigor. Dvorak's *Romance* in F minor is performed with heart-felt lyricism.

Vlachova is the daughter of Josef Vlach, who was leader of the Vlach Quartet. The final piece on the album, Sylvie Bodorova's 'Sine Dolore' for violin and cello, is a tribute to Vlach. It is wistful and melancholy, and Vlachova and Nouzovsky play it with sincere emotion.

PITCHER

Stella Maris

Marches from Sea & Shore
Norwegian Navy Band/ Ingar Bergby
LAWO 1062—56 minutes

This album commemorates the Norwegian Navy's 200th birthday, offering 18 excellent marches from a number of nations. The program opens with three German marches. Wilhelm Zehle's 'Army and Marine' (1901) is crisp and snappy and with a trombones-centered trio. Friedrich Spohr's 'Gruss an Kiel' (1863), first heard during the war between Denmark and Germany, is by turns genial and strutting. And Carl Latann's 'Admiral Stosch March' (1874) is notable for an abbreviated but tuneful trio. Also from Germany is Ernst Urbach's 'Regina March' (1929), named for its publisher. I cannot help but marvel that a Norwegian band would play German marches with such snap and style, given what happened to Norway in World War II. Well, that was 70 years ago, and enmity can fade.

Czech composer Julius Fucik wrote 'Unter der Admirals Flagge' for the 1911 launch of a battleship that was sunk in World War I. From England are Kenneth Alford's 'HM Jollies' and 'On the Quarterdeck' (1916), honoring the British victory over Germany in World War I's largest naval battle. Two marches by Norway's Oscar Borg are played, including the ingenious 'America-Norge'—incorporating portions of the Norwegian and American national anthems—composed for the 1913 opening of a passenger route between Norway and New York.

Navy-themed marches include three by John Philip Sousa ('Hands Across the Sea' among them) and Bob Sharples's oddly commercial arrangements of Offenbach's 'Marines' Hymn' (1859) and Charles Zimmerman's 'Anchors Aweigh' (1906).

The album ends with a new march, 'Jubileumsmarsj' (2014), composed by Svein Giske. At 4:29, it is longer than any of the other marches, and it has an unusual structure. After a brief introduction, the first strain introduces a lyrical melody in A-flat, founded on a descending major triad. The second strain, rather than continuing in the same key like most marches, has the trombones in a strident form of the melody in C minor. Then, after a modulatory transition, the trio begins with the same melody in G-flat. The break strain switches from 4/4 time to 6/8, and then the trio melody (which has been the main melody of the entire march) returns, complete with a

host of countermelodies. This very enjoyable and stirring march manages to do all this in a dignified, rather natural way.

Superb playing by a band that knows how to make a march sound like concert music (Nov/Dec 2011).

KILPATRICK

Currents

Reason, Welcher, Cardoso, Childs
Oregon State University Wind Ensemble/
Christopher Chapman

Mark 51262—61 minutes

This album by the Oregon State University Wind Ensemble opens with big, energetic sounds in Dana Reason's 9-minute *Currents* (2011), which was inspired by surf pounding on the Pacific shore. Dan Welcher's 15-minute *Upriver* (2010) is based on tunes sung and played by fiddlers who took part in Lewis and Clark's early 19th-Century expedition. Billy Childs composed *Vistas of America* (2013) for this band and its conductor Christopher Chapman. The 21-minute work is in 5 movements ('Pacific Ocean', 'Mountains', 'The Plains', 'Cities', and 'Atlantic Ocean') and is quite enjoyable.

Then there is Luis Cardoso's rambling, very entertaining Double Concertino (2008), given a fine reading by tenor saxophonist Jeff Siegfried and tuba player Jattik Clark, about whom no information is given. They are good, and we should be told who they are. A web search reveals that Clark plays with the Oregon Symphony and a member of the OSU faculty. Siegfried is a graduate student at Northwestern University. As for the playing by the Oregon State Wind Ensemble, it is quite variable—often quite good, but often out of tune.

KILPATRICK

Russian Chamber Music for Winds

Balakirev, Glazounov, Glinka, Ippolitov-Ivanov
Andrei Korsakoff, v; Mikhail Tolpygo, va; Fyodor
Luzanov, vc; Rifat Komachkov, db; Valentin
Zverev, fl; Anatoli Lyubimov, ob; Vladimir Sokolov,
cl; Sergei Krasavin, bn; Boris Afanasiev, hn; Lev
Mikhailov, Alexander Oseichuk, Yuri Vorontsov,
Vladimir Yeryomin, sax; Emilia Moskvitina, hp;
Alexei Nasedkin, Lyubov Timofeyeva, p

Melodiya 2186—61 minutes

These four recordings made from 1975 to 1981. The program spans the romantic century, from its beginning in the fiery post-Beethoven era to its close in the refined neo-classicism of the early modernist period.

The works are the Glinka *Trio Pathetique*

(1832) for clarinet, bassoon, and piano; the Balakirev Octet (1855) for violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, horn, and piano; the Ippolitov-Ivanov *Evening in Georgia* (1926) for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and harp; and the Glazounov Saxophone Quartet (1932). The performers are some of the most prominent musicians from the twilight of the Soviet epoch.

The concert is a bumpy ride. Each score is delivered with verve and lyricism, but the skill levels and the recording quality are too variable. In general the pianists are excellent, yet while Timofeyeva's fingers are wonderfully fluid in the Glinka, Nasedkin's technique in the Balakirev is too labored. The strings in the Balakirev might sound warm and inviting, but the sound is too boxy. The winds are disappointing across the board, playing with foggy and honky timbres.

HANUDEL

Pilgrimage to Montserrat

Renaissance Players/ Winsome Evans
Tall Poppies 229 [2CD] 119 minutes

Llibre Vermell has been perennially popular among early music groups for its unique collection of music associated with the pilgrimage to the Benedictine monastery at Montserrat. Every few years one group or another attempts a complete recording of its songs and canons, and an overview of the ones I know was in an earlier review (May/June 2005: 215). This new release is in many respects very different from any earlier interpretation.

Winsome Evans has brought together a big band of 19 accomplished singers and instrumentalists for her own unique re-creation of the *Llibre Vermell*. In addition to the added drones, parallel organum in fifths and octaves (sometimes in extreme tessituras), ululations, and elaborate instrumental accompaniments, there is a mixing of very different vocal styles, extending from a classically refined sound to a nasal folk style—and sometimes both together. Perhaps more disconcerting to someone familiar with any of the earlier recordings is that Evans has put her own radical reinterpretations of rhythm on the melodies and notation, incorporating rhythmic patterns associated with widely divergent traditions; some to my ears sound Balkan and others North African. Her interpretation of the three-voice canon 'Laudemus Virginem' begins rather traditionally, with one group of voices following another; but after all three voices are singing