

musical logic by focusing instead on timbre, texture, sonority and chance, all filtered through a (to my ears, at any rate) unmistakably bluesy harmonic sensibility. This is a touching memorial to the modernist American composer who was García's close friend and colleague.

The performances under José Serebrier's lead have both enviable concentration and commitment in their favour. Decent sound and excellent presentation, too.

Andrew Achenbach

Goebbels • Zappa

'Perfect Strangers'

Goebbels Suite for Sampler and Orchestra from *Surrogate Cities* **Zappa** The Dog Breath Variations/Uncle Meat. Dupree's Paradise. The Perfect Stranger. G-Spot Tornado. Revised Music for Low Budget Orchestra **Norwegian Radio Orchestra** / **Thomas Søndergård** LAWO Classics (P) LWC1063 (69' • DDD)



Yet a further outfit intent on ringing the changes, the Norwegian Radio

Orchestra juxtaposes works by figures who are not so much on the periphery as who have created their own takes on the mainstream. Heiner Goebbels is second to none in his mixed-media conceptions, with *Surrogate Cities* among the most ambitious as an inclusive entity (and as recorded by ECM, 6/00). As one of its components, *Suite for Sampler and Orchestra* gives a fair indication of its basis in the rise of the urban metropolis with all the potential for human alienation which ensues. An alienation here objectified, moreover, by relating each of its 10 movements to a Baroque form such that the interplay between sampled and orchestral material feels the more ominous for its overall restraint – the 'cities' of the title evoked without being made explicit.

Whereas Goebbels provokes, Frank Zappa overwhelms in his desire to confront the listener with his pungent (and almost) invariably ironic worldview. This selection of five orchestral pieces, taken from across his multifarious output, underlines why this most assaultive of rock musicians has posthumously become a composer with whom to reckon – ranging as it does from the sardonic schmaltz of *Dog Breath Variations*, via the Boulezian textural intricacy of *The Perfect Stranger*, to the big-band anarchy of *Revised Music for Low Budget Orchestra*. Famously intolerant of 'dumbing down' on whatever level, Zappa demands a commitment from his players

such as the Norwegian forces meet admirably. The sound is commendably detailed and upfront, though it is a pity that the stylishness of LAWO's presentation is rather compromised by the booklet-notes – superficial for Goebbels, wholly inadequate for Zappa. **Richard Whitehouse**

Guinjoan

Percussion Concerto^a. In tribulatione mea invocavi Dominum^b. Pantonal^c

^aMiquel Bernat *perc* ^bPalau Chamber Choir;

^cOrfeó Català; ^aCadaqués Orchestra /

^cSir Neville Marriner, ^aJaime Martín; ^bGalicía Symphony Orchestra / Víctor Pablo Pérez Tritó (P) TDO103 (59' • DDD)



Born in 1931, Joan Guinjoan is one of Catalonia's most distinguished

composers, having been part of the establishment of what was then the avant-garde in Spain after his studies at the Schola Cantorum in France and founding the group Diabolus in Musica to that end. What was once avant-garde no longer seems so, of course; rather, Guinjoan is a representative of an established high-modernist tendency in Spain. This disc provides us with a survey of recent work.

His music is beautifully written, his facility with the orchestra (one of classical dimensions here) and his rather Gallic sense of colour evident at every turn. The Percussion Concerto plunges us into swathes of densely scored sound, from which single lines emerge intermittently, only to be swallowed up again, the timpani a constant, threatening presence, to be replaced by a wider variety of instruments, including marimba and vibraphone, when the mood changes – though the sense of threat does not abate. The central movement is mysterious and there is a reluctant lyricism in the solo writing that begins to infect the orchestra near the end; there is certainly a sense of a journey having been travelled, though still unfinished. Whether the final movement resolves that ambiguity is difficult to say. It is initially festive in feeling but gets caught up in yet another journey, complete with a cadenza that Miquel Bernat dispatches with magnificent aplomb, as he does the rest of the concerto, before rather suddenly deciding that it has run its course and coming to a buzzing close.

In tribulatione mea invocavi Dominum is scored for choir and orchestra but the two are nothing if not equal partners. It is quite different in character from the Percussion

Concerto, with far more melodic character. In any event, it has resulted in a striking work that more than occasionally glances backwards to parts of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*. The Cor de Cambra del Palau and the Orfeó Català are the choirs in this recording, and they do a superb job.

The style of *Pantonal* for orchestra, on the other hand, is initially more reminiscent of that of the Percussion Concerto but it gradually acquires an engaging dance-like character. A disc worth investigating; *In tribulatione* in particular is a hugely impressive work by a composer at the height of his powers.

Ivan Moody

Handel

Keyboard Concertos – No 13, 'The Cuckoo and the Nightingale', HWV295; No 14, HWV296; No 15, HWV304; No 16, HWV305a

Matthias Kirschnereit *pf* **Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss** / **Lavard Skou Larsen** CPO (P) CPO777 854-2 (56' • DDD/DSD)



Chronologically, these four concertos come between the first set of concertos published in

1738 as Op 4 (Nos 1-6) and the third set published in 1761 as Op 7 (Nos 7-12).

In between came a second set of six (HWV295-300), published in 1740, of which only the first two were designed by Handel as organ concertos, for the remaining four were arrangements by an unknown hand of concerti grossi from Op 6. These are sometimes referred to as Nos 13-18. Nos 15-18 of this set are not included here. Instead, we have the two independent concertos (HWV304 and 305a) which are also sometimes known as Nos 15 and 16. Are you still with me?

As with the earlier disc from the same forces, which I had the pleasure of reviewing in February, this is music-making with a smile on its face, even if only No 13, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, is on an equal level of inspiration with anything from the Opp 4 and 7 sets. Its *allegro* movements have a life-affirming charm, with the sparkling dialogue between soloist and orchestra batted back and forth with palpable glee, the *larghetts* reminding us that Handel wrote these concertos to be heard in conjunction with vocal works, ie his oratorios (in this case *Israel in Egypt*). Nos 15 and 16, not published until almost 40 years after Handel's death, have none of the memorable themes of the others but Larsen's skilful string phrasing of his (non-period) players and, above all,