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### **Antonio Zacara da TERAMO (c. 1365-before 1416)**

Ferito Già d'un Amoro Dardo [5:08]

Movit' a Pietade [4:14]

Benché Lontan me Trov' in Altra Parte [4:56]

Plorans Ploravi Perché la Fortuna [8:28]

Nuda non Era, Preso Altro Vestito [5:36]

Le Temps Verrà Tamtoust Après [4:08]

Spinato Intorno al Cor (Instrumental) [4:35]

Un Fior Gentil m'Apparse [4:27]

Rosetta che non Canbi Mai Colore [6:32]

Spinato Intorno al Cor [5:58]

Kristin Mulders (soprano), Kjetil Almenning (tenor), Hans Lub (medieval fiddle), David Catalunya (clavisimbalum), Jostein Gundersen (recorders)

Currentes/Jostein Gundersen

rec. 8-10 October 2010, Hoff Church, Hoff Norway.

**LAWO CLASSICS LWC1026** [54:11]

Making the acquaintance of new composers is always intriguing. The mysteries surrounding such figures as Antonio da Teramo require more background reading than many. Despite being born with a growth-stunting congenital disorder and as a result being nicknamed 'Zàcara' or 'splash of mud', Antonio was a skilled painter of miniatures. He was, at the same time, a musician in the service of Popes, making him known in Rome and Florence. This ensured the preservation of his name despite the turbulent times in which he flourished. Further background reading can be found in Johan van Veen's approving review.

Recorded in Hoff Church, a well-preserved but oft-restored 11<sup>th</sup> century stone building, ensures ideal acoustics for this music, with its fragility of instrumentation, transparency of line, and gently sparkling clavisimbalum. More importantly, the environment is a gift for the human voice, and no doubt this would have been a factor in the design and proportions of such buildings. Kristin Mulders and Kjetil Almenning are very well matched, delivering eloquent dynamics and phrasing, vibrato as occasional ornament, and excellent diction.

Recorder and medieval fiddle are the only other instruments listed, and you might think the restrictions on sound colour might prove a little off-putting, but nothing could be further from the truth. The remarkable inventiveness of this music holds one in its spell throughout, and more spectacular but suspect instrumentation would doubtless prove a distraction. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the way this music would originally have sounded has long been lost. Any performance today has to be part guesswork, part taste and the fashion and perceptions of our own times as well as a big dollop of hard work researching contemporary illustrations and the manuscripts themselves. The sense of being transported back to a time long forgotten, but one with which we can empathise, is a powerful quality in these performances.

There is a temptation to hear this music as being part of dark devotional nights amongst flickering candles. However, the texts show a preoccupation with love, analogies with nature, emotional striving and no doubt a myriad hidden codes which would have been

messages as clear as day to Zacara's people. The texts are given in the booklet in their original versions as well as Norwegian and English translations but navigation amongst these is a bit of a nightmare. Track numbers would have helped in this section since the multilingual cross-referencing required is needlessly tricky.

If the idea of very early music and spotless performances of some incredible musical jewels attracts, then this CD is its manifestation.

***Dominy Clements***

Previous review: [Johan van Veen](#)