

Johann Joseph Fux - Baroque Chamber Music at the Viennese Court (2005)

Written by bluesever

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Ouverture a 4, No. VI 1- I. Grave-Allegro-Grave [5:14] 2- II. Aria [1:27] 3- III. Menuet [0:50]
4- IV. Gavotte [0:44] 5- V. Sarabande [1:40] 6- VI. Guigue, en Rondeau [1:02] 7- VII. Finale [1:19]
Canzon a 3 8- I. Tempo giusto/ Canzona- Largetto- Tempo giusto/ Canzona [4:21] 9- II. Aria/ Presto [1:25] 10- III. Menuet- Duetto- Menuet [2:29] 11- IV. Il Libertino [0:36] 12- V. Gigue alla Siciliana [1:19]
Parthia Trio
13- I. Capriccio/Presto- Grave- Capriccio/Presto [4:59] 14- II. Vivace [1:43] 15- III. Menuet-Trio- Menuet [2:33] 16- IV. Finale [0:58]
Partita a 3
17- I. Sonata/Andante [2:36] 18- II. Allegro-Adagio [2:06] 19- III. Sarabande [2:51] 20- IV. Passacaglia [2:58]
Synfonia a 3
21- I. Turcaria [2:02] 22- II. Passacaglia/Andante [1:48] 23- III. Janitschara [1:28] 24- IV. Posta turcica [1:36]
Ouverture a 4, No. III
25- I. Grave-Allegro-Grave [4:30] 26- II. Aire [1:19] 27- III. Menuet [1:11] 28- IV. Follie/Allegro [0:48] 29- V. Bouree [1:22] 30- VI. Guigue/Prestissimo [0:55]
Clemencic Consort René Clemencic – Harpsichord

The name of Johann Joseph Fux struck fear into the hearts of generations of music students, who attached his name to the vexing task of learning to write Palestrinian counterpoint. He is best known for his masses, which reflect his contrapuntal skills, but as a Viennese court composer around 1700 he also wrote a good deal of lighter instrumental music. The venerable René Clemencic and his Clemencic Consort historical-instrument ensemble have done a real service by bringing some of it to renewed attention with this disc. The variously designated suites on this album were written around 1700. They reflect influences from across Europe and beyond -- there are French dances, movements marked with Italian tempo indications, and movements with specific titles (one wonders exactly why the 36 seconds of "Il Libertino," track 11, connoted a playboy). Most fascinating of all is the Synfonia à 3, K. 331 (track 21-24), which marks an unusually early example of Western engagement with Turkish music. All four

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movements reflect the sound of the Janissary bands, but of particular interest is the "Janitschara" (track 23), in which the cello goes into full slapping mode to evoke the sound of Turkish drums. The more conventional suites have an appealing way of playing off Fux's characteristically dense counterpoint with limpid dances like the Bourée of the Ouverture à 4 (track 29). Several of them open with a fairly large, multi-sectional movement with a contrapuntal Allegro middle section, and then reel off attractive foot-tappers that are a minute long or less. Clemencic, as usual, offers dry readings that highlight unusual details. In the booklet he is quoted as saying: "I try to introduce into my works sound and tonal complexes as acoustic emblems and values representing cosmic structures....I am not so concerned with the production of an opus, an artifact in the usual sense, but rather with the unveiling of certain hidden semantics in what is audibly perceived." Got that? The abstract approach, however, works well in the case of the learned Fux, who let himself loose on the playground of contemporary styles in these delightful works but didn't totally relinquish his intellectual qualities. The music is beautifully recorded by Oehms, and in all this is one of the finds of the year for lovers of Baroque music. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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