

Bartłomiej Pekieli – Messes, Motets (2013)

Written by bluesever

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Missa a14 1. *Kyrie* 2. *Gloria* 3. *Resonet in laudibus* 4. *Dulcis amor Jesu* 5. *Magnum nomen Domini* 6. *Audite mortales* 7. *O adoranda Trinitas* 8. *Nativitas tua* Missa
Concertata La Lombardesca
9. *Kyrie* 10. *Gloria* 11. *Assumpta est Maria*
Missa Concertata La Lombardesca
12. *Credo* 13. *Ave Maria*
Missa Concertata La Lombardesca
14. *Sanctus* 15. *Benedictus* 16. *Agnus Dei*
The Sixteen Eamonn Dougan – conductor

This is a distant excursion from home base for the British choir the Sixteen, for which familiarity of repertory is generally part of the plan. The music heard here, by composer Bartłomiej Pekieli (active 1633-1670), is little known outside Poland. Indeed, the Polish Baroque, which attracted plenty of Italian composers in its day, provides fertile ground for choirs looking to perform unknown masterpieces. The style of the music is in general what you would expect from a composer keeping close tabs on the latest music from Italy; Pekieli was the first native-born Polish composer to crack what had been a scene dominated by imports. There are several short motets in Renaissance *stile antico*, as well as masses in the newer concerted style, with solos and various contrasts of massed groups accompanied by a small continuo-based instrumental ensemble. Pekieli's realizations of these styles are unique. Most interesting is the torso of the *Missa à 14*, of which only the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* have survived. To hear the entire mass -- with no solo lines, only constantly shifting relationships among its 14 parts -- must have been a thrilling experience. In the other masses there are some striking dissonances. The motets are more conservative, but there is one unclassifiable piece, *Audite morales*, that somewhat resembles the Roman dialogue pieces, little quasi-dramas from which the oratorio emerged. The music is all in Latin. The Sixteen does not really specialize in the early Baroque, and the *Missa à 14* might have worked better with a larger group, but the choir, conducted not by leader Harry Christophers but by associate conductor Eamonn Dougan, achieves its usual clarity and brightness, all to the good. The big picture: very few people, if any, have recorded this music, and Baroque enthusiasts will be glad to have the album. ---James Manheim,

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