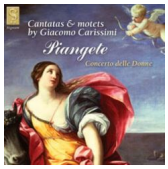
Giacomo Carissimi - Piangete: Cantatas & Motets (2003)



Giacomo CARISSIMI (1605-1674) 1.Cum reverteretur David, motet for 3 voices and bc [04:09] 2.Benedictus Deus et Pater, motet for 3 voices and bc [[04:30] Girolamo FRESCOBALDI (1583-1643) 3.Partite sopra La Monicha for keyboard [07:17] Giacomo CARISSIMI 4.Exulta, gaude, filia Sion, motet for two voices and bc/*** [05:07] Giovanni Girolamo KAPSBERGER (c1580-1651) 5.Toccata XI for chitarrone [02:01] Giacomo CARISSIMI 6.Va dimanda al mio pensiero, cantata for solo voice and bc [05:38] Giovanni Girolamo KAPSBERGER 7.Prelude XI for chitarrone [00:36] Giacomo CARISSIMI 8.O dulcissimum Mariae nomen, motet for two voices and bc*/** [03:31] 9.Siam tre miseri piangenti, cantata for three voices and bc [08:16] Michelangelo ROSSI (1601/02-1656) 10.Toccata VII for keyboard [04:07] Giacomo CARISSIMI 11.Surrexit pastor bonus, motet for three voices and bc [02:23] 12.Ahi, non torna, cantata for two voices and bc**/*** [05:06] 13.Piangete, ohimè piangete, cantata for solo voice and bc* [05:42] Giovanni Girolamo KAPSBERGER 14.Prelude X for chitarrone [00:54] Giacomo CARISSIMI 15.Si dia bando, alla speranza, cantata for solo voice and bc** [03:47] 16.Omnes gentes gaudete cum victore, motet for three voices and bc [03:39]* Concerto delle Donne: Gill Ross - soprano Donna Deam - soprano Elin Manahan Thomas - soprano Alastair Ross - keyboards David Miller - chitarrone

Three sopranos, whose voices blend delightfully together, make up the latter day Concerto delle Donne to specialise in the late 16th & early 17th Century repertoire of court ladies in Ferrara. They concentrate on cantatas and motets by Giacomo Carissimi (1605-74), the secular items intense settings of texts about the torments and joys of love. Several by Carissimi are in the library of Christ Church Oxford; the cantata Siam tre miseri piangenti is full of pain, suffering and anger, with three equal voices intertwining and reacting to one another. Donna Deam's solo Piangete and Gill Ross' and Elin Thomas's duet Ahi, non torna are in like mood, with 'highly emotional, self-obsessed texts', but Va dimanda al mio pensiero and Si dia bando, alla speranza are lighter – attractive, tuneful pieces.

The church music includes Cum reverteretur David, a virtuosic account of the rivalry between

David and Saul. Exulta, gaude, filia Sion celebrates Christmas and may be the only item recorded previously, and Benedictus Deus et Pater weaves rich dissonances, as does Michelangelo Rossi in the most extraordinary of the instrumental items, his dissonant chromatic Toccata Settima for harpsichord. The accompaniments are varied with harpsichord and organ (their coding on p. 26 of the otherwise excellent booklet reversed with respect to the identification of performers on p. 2) and citarrone; there are also a few short solo pieces by Kapsberger for that eye-catching bass lute, usually seen but little heard in period orchestras.

In one of the solos there are signs of a little stress in highest tessitura, but nothing to put you off. Recommended for all collectors of the exuberant Italian vocal music of this period. ---Peter Grahame Woolf, classical.net

Carissimi is sometimes thought of as a "one-work composer" known to the average music-lover only for his oratorio Jephte. Choral Societies looking for 17th century music earlier than Purcell are therefore likely to choose Jephte.

Alastair Ross first became interested in Carissimi’s music for the 3-soprano Concerto delle Donne line-up when he was asked to prepare a programme “Handel and his predecessors in Italy” for the 1977 Göttingen Festival. A review of Carissimi's oeuvre showed that there were several pieces by Carissimi in the library of Christ Church Oxford just waiting to be performed by the group! He chose the cantata Siam tre miseri piangenti which has become a regular item in their concerts and which is central to this recording. It’s a marvellous piece, full of pain, suffering and anger. The three voices really are equal in the way they intertwine and react to one another. Donna Deam’s solo Piangete and Gill Ross' and Elin Thomas’s duet Ahi, non torna are similar in mood. Maybe in our cynical 21st century we find it difficult to relate to these highly emotional, self-obsessed, texts, but there’s no denying that they inspired some wonderful music! Va dimanda al mio pensiero’ and Si dia bando, alla speranza are lighter in mood – both attractive, tuneful pieces.

There is plenty of variety in the church music as well. Cum reverteretur David, which begins the CD, is brilliant and virtuosic, a dramatic account of the rivalry between David and Saul. The duet Exulta, gaude, filia Sion is a joyful celebration of Christmas. In Benedictus Deus et Pater the voices weave rich dissonances to convey the suffering of the text; there’s something of the mood of Allegri’s Miserere here.

In addition to the vocal pieces the disc includes a set of variations by Frescobaldi and Michelangelo Rossi's flamboyant and chromatic Toccata Settima for harpsichord, together with Kapspereger's charming improvisations for chittarone.

We believe that only one of the Carissimi pieces on this CD, Exulta, gaude, filia Sion, has been recorded before, so the disc will be an important event in the recorded-music world, and one which we hope will revive interest in this unjustly neglected composer. ---music-island.pl

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