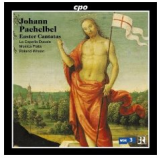


Johann Pachelbel – Easter Cantatas (2004)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 25 October 2009 10:52 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 March 2014 13:44

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1. *Deus In Adjutorium* 2. *Christ Lag In Todesbanden* 3. *Halleluja! Lobet Den Herrn* 4. *Christ Ist Erstanden* 5. *Jauchzet Dem Herrn* 6. *Magnificat In C Major* La Capella Ducale Musica Fiata Roland Wilson - conductor

While the ubiquitous Canon and Gigue in D refuses to suffer in obscurity--or even to stop reproducing and multiplying like a rampant tumor--recordings devoted to Johann Pachelbel's vocal music are extremely rare. It's a shame because Pachelbel's vocal works are often remarkably heartfelt and stirring. J.S. Bach was certainly impressed. Listen for instance to Pachelbel's richly textured, contrapuntal chorale cantata *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (Christ lay in the bonds of death) and compare it to Bach's famous later treatment (BWV 4). Bach's harmonic structure and thematic development throughout are remarkably similar to Pachelbel's earlier model. In fact, Pachelbel's subtler, seamless gradations between vocal and instrumental parts arguably heighten the solemn nature of Luther's familiar hymn more effectively than the master. For those who missed Rolf Schweizer's stunning, reverential, and long-deleted performance on Da Camera Magna (with Bachorchester Pforzheim), this leaner, more focused rendering by Roland Wilson with La Capella Ducale and Musica Fiata serves Pachelbel equally well. Like his nearly exact contemporary Heinrich Biber, Pachelbel was regarded in his day as quite the progressive, often extravagantly augmenting his vocal scores with antiphonal choirs and plenty of rousing brass and percussion. Though every work on this program incorporates these elements to some extent, the cantata *Halleluja! Lobet den Herrn* (Praise the Lord) offers the grandest, most celebratory display. The splendor of this unusually large setting for five trumpets, trombone, timpani, bells, strings, two oboes, harp, dulcian, full concertante and ripieno voices, and basso continuo is further complemented by Pachelbel's frequent use of permutation fugues (two or three contrasting themes played simultaneously in revolving cycles) that Wilson and his forces effortlessly negotiate. The disc's concluding *Magnificat* in C major, though longer and with slightly less instrumentation, equally impresses.

CPO's warmly reverberant, spacious yet detailed sound ideally suits the grand scale and often

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colorful scoring of these very appealing works. Pachelbel's vocal music is highly underrated, and listeners who are even remotely interested in music of this period are strongly encouraged to take a chance here. --John Greene, ClassicsToday.com

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