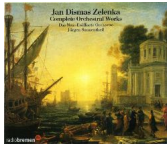


Jan Dismas Zelenka – Complete Orchestral Works (2001)

Written by bluesever

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CD1 1. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: I. Allegro* 3:46 2. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: II. Canarie: Alternativement avec l'Air* 0:58 3. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: III. Ario* 2:09 4. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: IV. Canarie da capo* 0:58 5. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: V. Gavotte* 1:23 6. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: VI. Rondeau* 1:09 7. *Capriccio No. 2 in G major, ZWV 183: VII. Minuetto - Trio - Minuetto da capo* 3:26 8. *Hiponcondrie a 7 in A major, ZWV 187: I. Lentement* 2:56 9. *Hiponcondrie a 7 in A major, ZWV 187: II. Fuge: Allegro - Lentement* 5:53 10. *Concerto a 8 in G major, ZWV 186: I. (Allegro)* 6:39 11. *Concerto a 8 in G major, ZWV 186: II. Largo* 4:17 12. *Concerto a 8 in G major, ZWV 186: III. Allegro* 7:06 13. *Capriccio No. 3 in F major, ZWV 184: I. Staccato e forte* 2:42 14. *Capriccio No. 3 in F major, ZWV 184: II. Allegro* 3:05 15. *Capriccio No. 3 in F major, ZWV 184: III. Allemande* 6:12 16. *Capriccio No. 3 in F major, ZWV 184: IV. Menuett - Trio - Menuett da capo* 5:30 17. *Capriccio No. 3 in F major, ZWV 184: V. (Allegro)* 2:22 CD2
1. *Capriccio No.5 in G, ZWV.190: (Allegro)* 2. *Capriccio No.5 in G, ZWV.190: Menuett 1-Menuett 2-Menuett 1 Da Capo* 3. *Capriccio No.5 in G, ZWV.190: Il Contento-Trio-II Contento Da Capo* 4. *Capriccio No.5 in G, ZWV.190: Il Furibundo* 5. *Capriccio No.5 in G, ZWV.190: Villanella-Trio-Villanella Da Capo* 6. *Sym in a, ZWV.189: (Allegro)* 7. *Sym in a, ZWV.189: Andante* 8. *Sym in a, ZWV.189: Capriccio. Tempo Di Gavotta* 9. *Sym in a, ZWV.189: Aria Da Capriccio (Andante-Allegro-Andante-Allegro)* 10. *Sym in a, ZWV.189: (Menuett 1)-(Menuett 2)-(Menuett 1 Da Capo)* 11. *Capriccio No.1 in D, ZWV.182: Andante-(Allegro)* 12. *Capriccio No.1 in D, ZWV.182: Paysan* 13. *Capriccio No.1 in D, ZWV.182: Aria* 14. *Capriccio No.1 in D, ZWV.182: Bourree* 15. *Capriccio No.1 in D, ZWV.182: Menuett 1-Menuett 2-Menuett 1 Da Capo*
CD3
1. *Ouverture a 7 in F Major, ZWV 188: I. Overture* 9:01 2. *Ouverture a 7 in F Major, ZWV 188: II. Aria* 6:04 3. *Ouverture a 7 in F Major, ZWV 188: III. Muenet* 2:39 4. *Ouverture a 7 in F Major, ZWV 188: IV. [Siciliano]* 6:05 5. *Ouverture a 7 in F Major, ZWV 188: V. Folie* 2:04 6. *Melodrama de Sancto Wenceslao in D Major, ZWV 175: Symphonia* 7:04 7. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: I. Allegro assai* 7:25 8. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: II. Adagio* 2:08 9. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: III. Aria* 6:11 10. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: IV. En tempo de canarie* 2:11 11. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: V. Muenet I-II* 2:31 12. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: VI. Andante* 2:02 13. *Capriccio in A Major, ZWV 185: VII. Paysan I-II* 2:25
Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre Jurgen Sonnentheil - conductor

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Zelenka's orchestral music, like that of Bach and Handel, is only a tiny fraction of his complete output, most of it being vocal--church music in particular. It's some of the most original and enjoyable music of the Baroque period. Bach himself was a colleague and admirer of Zelenka, and other contemporaries praised both his contrapuntal ingenuity, which makes for fascinating combinations of melodies, and the harmonic daring and "spice" of the tunes themselves. In the two Capriccios, the only thing that keeps them from being "greatest hits" is the appalling difficulty of playing them. The horn parts, in particular, are among the most challenging ever composed. Listening to these warm, witty, comfortable performances, you'd never know it. Essential listening for Baroque fans. ---David Hurwitz, amazon.com

CPO has collected the three volumes of their Zelenka orchestral series and released them in a handy three CD box, complete with three individual booklets. The works covered are the five Capriccios, the Concerto and Simphonie for eight instruments, the Overture and Hipocondrie for seven and the Symphonia taken from Zelenka's Prague Melodrama on St Wenceslas.

The Prague born contemporary of Bach and Telemann was one of the most cosmopolitan of composers. Whilst he lived in Vienna and Prague he spent much of his adult life in Dresden and embodied the westward drift of the Bohemian diaspora. The Instrumental Zelenka is a much less known composer than the Choral; his instrumental works were, in the main, though not exclusively, confined to a five-year period around 1718-23, though the compositional origin and exact dating of many of these works remains somewhat problematical. They have in any case always been overshadowed - as have the exceptionally difficult trio sonatas – by Zelenka's standing as a leading composer of liturgical music.

The most striking thing about his instrumental works is a kind of textual agility. This is spiced with a highly personalized sense of instrumental colour and to this can be added a sense of form that admits widely diverse material. This produces sometimes astringent sonorities and instrumental juxtapositions that are again both exceptionally individual and characterful. He manages both to reflect contemporary influence and also to exhibit a winning sense of adventure. If this sometimes leads to severe demands on his players – the horn writing in these Capriccios is famously taxing – he at least had a virtuoso body of players to write for. It's tempting to see him dovetailing sonority, compass and technique to particular musicians; certainly he's not quite as startling in this regard as is Telemann but Zelenka's instrumental works are worth more than a mere detour as they contain compact but expressive qualities that

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both entertain – a primary function of the more utilitarian works written for performance – and also have the power still to move.

Taking them in the order presented in the CD set, which infiltrates the Capriccios amongst the other works, we therefore find that Zelenka, notwithstanding his high position in setting liturgical music, can also spin an affectingly plangent line here, as he does in the Aria of the Second Capriccio. These works, as befits their title, were inherently receptive to almost humorous expansion and Zelenka isn't afraid to populate them with widely differing stylistic and dance based musics; if one thinks him formally slack or incapable of composing a cohesive suite-like structure one is probably judging him by the wrong standard. These are generously welcoming pieces in which Gavotte, Rondeau and Canarie da Capo, for example, take their place in his scheme of things. In this second Capriccio there is some merciless sounding exposed horn writing and also some amusing dialogue for the instrumentation of horns (Corni da caccia), two oboes, two violins, viola and basso continuo. The sonority is especially appealing and fresh and Zelenka is able to play off sections against each other; he keeps instrumental textures alive through contrast and almost dichotomous abrasion and ones interest is always piqued by those niceties of contrast he so naughtily introduces.

The Hipocondrie whilst attractive is a two movement nine-minute work that does tend toward the discursive whilst the Capriccio for eight instruments (oboe, violin, two violins in ripieno, viola, cello, bassoon and basso continuo) has an extensive series of parts for solo instruments. Thus there is a big, strong part for solo violin in the opening Allegro in which Zelenka constantly elongates and pulls back phrase lengths to impart a sense of strain and expectancy to the music; it seldom settles to a regularized metre. Beautiful bassoon cantilena animates the Largo, with the oboe adding its own very particular plangency and the heavy tread underscoring the music's deepening textures. But when Zelenka wants to he can certainly indulge an extensive Allegro movement as he does here to conclude a work that flirts with quasi-concerto formalities but manages to retain its independence through a compound of rhythmic liveliness and colouristic imagination. The Third Capriccio was written, as were the others, primarily to entertain – in this case Prince Friedrich August who went to Vienna in 1717-18: a keen huntsman Zelenka obligingly expands the horns' part and opens the work with a stately and gallant Overture – staccato e forte as marked. Those stentorian horn flourishes in the Allegro are followed by the wandering charm of an Allemande and conclude with a horn dominated Allegro, sturdy, manly, taken here at a solid allegro and slyly taxing the two horn players with some more ferocious demands.

The pattern thus set, most of the remainder of the Capriccios and other pieces conform to Zelenka's essential plan. Vaunting horns animate the Allegro of No 5 in G Major and a superb series of dynamics, most excellently conveyed by Das Neu-Eröffnete under Jürgen Sonnentheil using original instruments, enliven the concluding Villanella with its fresh air directness to which

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is added a sense of almost directional "distance." The antiphonal writing of the *Simphonie* for eight is notable, especially the expanded role for violin and the athletic virtuosity of the oboes – often apt to be forgotten when it comes to acknowledging the demands he makes on his players. Whilst the horn writing is especially tricky Zelenka must have had a most capable brace of oboists at his disposal if the writing here and elsewhere is anything to go by. The entwining sonorities of the *Andante* in this work are particularly pleasurable and it has something of a vocal resonance to it as well. Affectionate lyricism accompanies the finale and when it comes to the *First Capriccio* we find even more of the splendidly florid horn parts, fluid elegant writing for the two strings and an ascending line at a well-maintained *andante* in the opening movement.

Admirable is the delightful gravity of the *Ouverture* for seven instruments with its stream-flowing *Siciliano* and delicious sonorities. The *Symphonia* from Zelenka's *Melodrama* is a grand and spacious sonorous one – it prefaced spoken Latin passages in performance, though it wasn't an oratorio in the conventional sense. The final *Capriccio*, No 4 in A Major that concludes this CD set makes, if anything, even more demands on the horns but counterbalances this with some attractively lyrical intimacies for oboes in the *Arias* of the third movement. As elsewhere with Zelenka's orchestral works an equipoise between shameless virtuosity and lyrical expressivity is realized which produces a whole greater even than the sum of its parts. These apparently unwieldy and loose structures are actually judged to perfection and are teeming with instrumental felicities. The recordings are admirably faithful and the musicians fluent and adept; they are splendid exponents and I recommend their traversal with real enthusiasm. ---Jonathan Woolf, musicweb-international.com

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