Secular Songs & Dances From The Middle Age Part I (2006)



Carmina Burana Part I *1-1 Ich Was Ein Chint So Wolgetan CB 185 4:00 1-2 Axe Phebus Aureo CB 71 2:29 1-3 Bache Bene Venies CB 200 4:22 1-4 Dulce Solum CB 119 9:41 1-5 In Taberna Quando Sumus CB 196 3:09 1-6 Veris Dulcis In Tempore CB 85 E 159 3:02 1-7 Alte Clamat Epicurus CB 211 E 211 5:02 1-8 Exiit Dilucolo Rustica Puella CB 90 3:13 1-9 Olim Sudor Herculis CB 63 9:36 1-10 Virent Prata Hiemata CB 151 3:38 1-11 Sic Mea Fata CB 116 6:18 1-12 Walthers Ton (Da CB 211) 1:10 1-13 Tempus Transit Gelidum (CB 153) 3:12* Modo Antiquo (Ensemble) Bettina Hoffmann - conductor

The Italian early music ensemble Modo Antiquo travels, so to speak, on two different rails: Under the directorship of Federico Maria Sardelli the group has produced a number of Vivaldi and Corelli recordings for labels such as Tactus, Opus 111 and cpo - recordings which have been highly praised by the critical press. Under the directorship of Bettina Hoffmann, Modo Antiquo here acquaints us with the fruits of its labours in the medieval repertoire during the 1990's. CD 6 ("Danca Amorosa") was recorded in 1994 and released soon after by the French label Opus 111. This is a superb recording. 16 Italian dances (unfortunately, the Brilliant Classics edition gives no sources) are here played on an endless list of historical instruments (recorder, gemshorn, chalumeau, crumhorn, fiddle, rebec, tromba marina, cittern, lute, portative organ, cornemuse, bagpipes, harp, darbukka, nakers, drums, bells, jew's harp ...); the recording was made in the Santa Maria Casa church, Vecchio, San Cascaiano, Italy, and produced by Klaus L. Neumann and Yolanta Skura, the whole being a co-production with the WDR, the state radio in Northrhine-Westphalia, Germany. Perhaps this explains the excellent sound quality and the audible professionality of this disc.

CDs 1 and 2 "Carmina Burana" were recorded next, in Florence, in the Oratorio di San Francesco Poverino. With Elena Cecchi Fedi, Lucia Sciannimanico, Paolo Fanciullacci and Marco Scavazza, a vocal quartet was added, assisted by F. M. Sardelli, Ugo Galasso, Gian Luca Lastraioli and Daniele Poli. The Carmina Burana is a collection of religious and secular songs from 13th century Benediktbeuren (Germany), and here a selection of these is sung with

uncommon vivacity and energy; the drinking songs really do sound as though they were recorded in a medieval tavern, drunken cries and all. The instrumental accompaniment is extremely colourful; however, I had the feeling that the singing did not quite match up to the achievement of Catherine Bott and Michael George on the 4 CD Carmina Burana set by Philip Pickett and his New London Consort on Decca. The sound, though doubtless good, needed a little getting used to: the solo voices seemed rather too soft in comparison with the loud instrumental passages. The exceedingly energetic use of drums and bells may mean that this recording is not for those who have weak nerves; however, I can imagine that it would appeal to many young people who have recently begun to get interested in the medieval music scene. These two CDs were never available commercially elsewhere; they originally appeared as a free gift with an Italian music magazine.

In September 1999 the fifth CD was recorded, "French and English Instrumental Songs in the Middle Ages". As with "Danca Amorosa" there is here a wide range of medieval instruments to be heard; the dances are from manuscripts kept in London, Oxford and Paris, and despite their well-known names, I have not heard them on other medieval recordings before, which gives this box an additional repertoire value. The sound quality, although still good, does not match up to the brilliant recording on the sixth CD.

The newest recordings to be heard here were made in the year 2000. Again in Florence (Chiesa della Compagnia, Calenzano), Modo Antiquo recorded songs and instrumental pieces which are associated with the crusades. Most of these pieces are, as one would expect, by anonymous composers, but we do also learn of Thibaut de Champagne, Le Chastelain de Couci, Chardon de Croisilles de Reims, Huon d'Oisi, Guiot de Dijon, Riccardo di San Germano and Walter von der Vogelweide in addition to King Richard Lionheart whose "Ja nuns hons pris" opens the second of the two CDs. The soprano part here is sung by Santina Tomasello. Here, too, the arrangements are very colorful and reflect differing moods from sadness and wistfulness through to exaltation and joy. The first CD begins with a version of "Crudifigat omens" from the Carmina burana, but in an unparalleled arrangement: It is sung so loudly, and the drums and cymbals are crashed so aggressively, that I was almost afraid that my loudspeakers would be damaged. Thankfully, the other tracks of these two CDs are played much more sensitively, leaving a very positive impression in the end, even if I still think that some of the effects here are a trifle overdone.

The Brilliant Classics edition is offered at an extremely low price, and this should motivate everyone who is interested in medieval music to purchase immediately. The booklet is only in English and contains two essays but no texts whatsoever, so that anyone who wants to understand something of these admittedly difficult texts will be forced to look elsewhere. - The individual CDs are held in lightweight cardboard sleeves; the box containing the whole is stable and attractively printed. ---Brexit_Gegner_aus_England, amazon.com

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