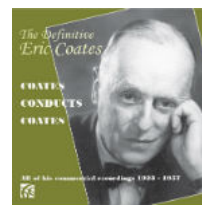


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Hoffnung Symphony

Archipel Machaut - Medieval Music and New Music

Mixtura; Katharina Bäuml (shawm); Margit Kern (accordion)
 rec. 5-8 November 2012, Hainsfarth Synagogue, Hainsfarth, Germany
 Full track-list at end of review
GENUIN GEN13284 [66:39]

This disc is an attempt to bring together ancient and modern through a rather unconventional medium - the pairing of the accordion and the shawm; the latter a medieval and Renaissance musical instrument of the woodwind family.

There are two main themes: A selection of the music of Guillaume Machaut, but with a twist, and an exploration of the role of Machaut's music as a source of inspiration for modern composers. Included we find pieces by Sidney Corbett, Sarah Nemtsov and Samir Odeh-Tamir.

These themes are treated roughly equally which creates a very nice balance indeed. The links between the two became very clear, not least because of the way the tracks are split - ancient and modern being evenly interspersed. This helped clarify whence the modern composers found their inspiration.

The arrangement of Machaut's "Messe de Nostre Dame" is wonderful. As a choral singer, I first looked at the disc and had my reservations but these were instantly dispelled when the music began. With flowing lines, well-articulated melodies and a rich sense of harmony despite the relative textural thinness, the original spirit of the music remained. I enjoyed it very much indeed.

Nemtsov's "Briefe - Heloisa" really stood out. The most experimental piece on the disc, the performers are encouraged to use their voices and move around the room, constantly handling, shuffling and rustling papers, creating a number of acoustic effects outside conventional music sounds. The technical ability of Bäuml (shawm) really shone. Absolutely terrific.

Throughout the disc, the playing is consistently remarkable. Crystal clear, expertly phrased and musically sensitive, these are evidently musicians who are not only in full technical control but also have creative mastery of their instruments. The sheer complexity of some of the pieces - particularly in the shawm part - requires nothing short of first-class musicianship, and it was delivered here in abundance.

Not only is the musicianship brilliant but the acoustic, the programming of the tracks and the superb programme notes make this disc a comprehensive musical experience. The modern music may not be to everybody's taste, but I certainly enjoyed it, and I am certain that I shall be listening to all of this disc multiple times in the future.

In a sentence? Astonishing musicianship, brimming with atmosphere. A disc very much worthy of attention.

Jake Barlow
www.twitter.com/countertenor_j

Track-List

1. Guillaume de Machaut - "Messe de Nostre Dame - Kyrie"
2. Guillaume de Machaut - "Messe de Nostre Dame - Gloria"
3. Sidney Corbett - "Archipel Machaut"
4. Guillaume de Machaut - "Messe de Nostre Dame - Sanctus"
5. Guillaume de Machaut - "Messe de Nostre Dame - Agnus Dei"
6. Guillaume de Machaut - "Douce dame jolie" (accordion solo)
7. Guillaume de Machaut - "Puis qu'en oubli"



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Hoffnung Music Festival

8. Guillaume de Machaut - "Douce dame jolie" (shawm solo)
9. Guillaume de Machaut - "Moult sui de bonne heure née"
10. Sarah Nemtsov - "Briefe - Heloisa"
11. Guillaume de Machaut - "Douce dame jolie" (accordion solo)
12. Guillaume de Machaut - "Très douce dame"
13. Guillaume de Machaut - "Douce dame jolie" (shawm solo)
14. Samir Odeh-Tamimi - "ÒD"
15. Guillaume de Machaut - "Ma fin est mon commencement"

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