

Girl' and 'The Canary Jigg' which precedes it, and also to whip up the waves in 'Fear a' Bhata' ('The Boatman') which Sanabras sings with great intensity, again with superb ornamentation which makes up for a slight lack of warmth at the very top of the vocal range. The use of Gaelic, sung with relish and conviction, is an added bonus, both in 'The Boatman' and in the Irish 'Slan chun Carraig an Eide' with its gamba drone. Two of the greatest English ballads, 'The Three Ravens' and 'Lord Rendall' become strong emotional experiences, while lesser known songs like 'The Jug of Punch' and 'Adieu Dundee' are so attractive as to make one kick oneself as to make one kick oneself for not discovering them before.

Bill Carter's accompanying is ever aware of his partner and of the emotions of the poem's protagonist; and in his solos, warmly and elegantly phrased, the music comes from the heart and the head, and not from the fingers—what more can you ask? He includes 'Bonny swete boy / Robin', and some fine variations on 'Go from my window', followed by 'The scolding woman' (a title somewhat belied by the wistful mood of the music). 'I cannot keep my wife at home' sounds suspiciously cheerful (how hard had he tried?) and 'The Mouse Hunt' must win the prize as the shortest fragment in the history of 'back-of-an-envelope' lute composition. He also plays some delightful introductions, for example, a misty improvisation introducing 'The Magic Mist', and a poignant preview of the tune 'Green Bushes'. When youthful suppleness, beautiful sound and fine musical taste are governed by such lively imagination, the result is likely to satisfy the most fastidious palate.

*Jilly Spencer*

*Master of Musicians, Songs and Instrumental Pieces by Josquin des Pres, his pupils and contemporaries*, Musica Antiqua of London, with Jacob Heringman (lute), Signum SIGCD 025

Serendipitously, I have been given two Josquin discs to review, giving two contrasting perspectives on the work of this great composer, this is the first, and the other is reviewed below. Josquin des Pres was one of the first composers to benefit from the invention of music printing. His genius has assured him a place of pre-eminence in music history, but it was printing which helped to spread his music and reputation among his contemporaries and later generations. Although the number of pieces firmly attributed to him is shrinking in the light of new evidence, there is no shortage of music by his fellow musicians and pupils, based on his own works, to attest to the esteem in which he was held. It is this repertoire of arrangements, intabulations and Josquin originals which forms the basis of this recording by Musica Antiqua of London, directed by Josquin enthusiast Philip Thorby.

The programme groups together pieces of the same provenance. For example, Josquin's beautiful chanson 'Mille regretz' is preceded by its anonymous model 'Plusieurs Regretz', and then followed by three adaptations—one by Gerle for solo lute (played by Jacob Heringman) and two by Susato (a duet for lute and harp, and a quartet for recorders).

The works are performed on various combinations of voices and instruments. Although the lute only makes a few appearances, it offers a welcome contrast to the sound of the viols and crumhorns. A vocal quartet performs chansons as well as some pieces which sound remarkably like madrigals, and there is some lovely solo singing from mezzo Jennie Cassidy.

Josquin's mastery of counterpoint meant that he could compose complex canons and imitations but always make them

subservient to the emotional content of the words. It is indeed, his sensitive word setting which is the most striking feature of this music.

Some of the connections between the groups of pieces on the CD may seem to be of academic rather than musical interest, and I found it easier just to judge each work on its own merits. The list of composers is impressive—Agricola, Isaac, Willaert—but it is the works of Josquin himself that really shine through.

Apart from some rather 'rustic' crumhorn playing, the performances are professional, without being breathtaking. The singing sounds slightly unpolished at times, and the singers occasionally struggle to be heard above the viol consort; for this reason, the solo songs fare better than the ensemble pieces. For me the high points are the solo songs, the lute solos, and Josquin's chanson 'Mille Regretz'.

Although this is not a 'lute' CD as such, it gives a fascinating insight into the compositional practices of these 16th century musicians, and evokes the soundworld which renaissance lutenists surely inhabited.

*Jeremy White*

*Josquin des Prez, Sixteenth-century lute settings*, Jacob Heringman (lute and vihuela) DGM 006

Few composers have been held in such high esteem by contemporaries and later generations as Josquin des Prez; the sheer quantity of arrangements, parodies and intabulations of his music bear witness to this. Certainly lutenists had no qualms about arranging his vocal music for the unlikely medium of the solo lute. In the hands of a master, the lute is capable of holding three or four polyphonic voices convincingly, but the instrument's inherent lack of sustain seems to me a real handicap when intabulating vocal music. Lutenists in the past attempted to overcome this problem by using devices such as melodic and cadential ornamentation.

Jacob Heringman, in the introduction to his CD of Josquin, points out that the largest body of extant lute music from the renaissance consists of intabulations—these have been largely ignored by modern performers, both in the concert hall and on record. Heringman has started to redress the balance, giving us the first CD devoted entirely to lute intabulations of Josquin.

The list of composers is impressive: Bakfark, Capirola, da Ripa, Mudarra, Newsidler; and the intabulations are varied, ranging from chansons to Mass movements. The mood, however, is predominantly serious and elevated. This is not light, tuneful music—it requires concentration from the listener to tease out the subtleties of its polyphonic soundworld.

The high points, for me, are the works by Alberto da Ripa, and the Spanish vihuelists de Narvaez and Mudarra. They seem to be able to transform Josquin's original into something with a life of its own. (Heringman says he prefers to think of them as translations rather than arrangements of Josquin's music.)

In contrast, some of the other pieces seem to get tangled in a mass of ornamentation, or rumble along in the bass register of the lute without ever taking flight.

Anyone who has performed this type of intabulation will know that they are often fiendishly difficult to play, but Heringman makes light work of them. The quality of the performance and recording are high, and Heringman really puts his heart into the endeavour.

There is so much here to take in that for many it may be a CD to dip into rather than listen to all the way through at one