

sitting, but it provides a welcome exploration of a neglected part of the lute repertoire.

Jeremy White

*Jane Pickeringe's Lute Book*, Jacob Heringman, AVIE AV002

Lutenists today owe a debt of gratitude to Jane Pickeringe. Her lute book, copied in her own hand, contains a wealth of music by the great names of her day: Dowland, Bacheler, Rosseter, Cutting, and Johnson, along with simple dance tunes and exercises, mostly for 6-course lute. The manuscript, which bears the shelfmark Egerton 2046, also contains pieces added at a later date by two musicians writing for the then more fashionable 9 or 10-course instruments, in a variety of the new tunings. All this creates a most felicitous opportunity to make a recording based on a single manuscript source, but which at the same time allows a good, varied programme.

Using his own performing editions of the pieces, Jacob Heringman presents a beguiling selection of anonymous dances and arrangements of popular songs, as well as more serious works by the five great lutenists listed above. The 'toyes' which begin the CD will be familiar to anyone who has worked through student material on the lute. There is a simple but haunting arrangement of the song 'Draw near me and love me' which has a distinctly Scottish flavour with its cluster of ornaments.

The high points of the CD, for me, are the works by Philip Rosseter. Played on a darkly resonant 10-course lute, they display his great gift for melodic invention and ornamentation. His fantasia is a complex piece of chromatic polyphony (attributed to Dowland until recently), and the pavan is, by turns, majestic and wistful.

It is interesting to hear the pieces for 6 to 8-course lutes alongside the more progressive sounds of the 10-course instrument. Until now I have always preferred the clear voice of the earlier instrument, but hearing the later works played so convincingly by Heringman, I can feel a certain inexorable logic in the addition of those extra bass strings.

The playing is of the highest standard throughout, and Heringman's interpretations are always innately responsive to the character of the music. The recorded sound is excellent, and the whole project has a feeling of commitment and integrity.

This is one of the most satisfying CDs I have heard for a long time, and I recommend it to anyone who loves English lute music.

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*A Renaissance Portrait*, Mutsumi Hatano (soprano), Takashi Tsunoda (lute) with Kaori Uemera (treble and bass viol), Hiroshi Fukuzawa (bass viol), Kazauo Hanaoka (recorder), Dowland and Co. CDCR-97THP99

'A renaissance portrait' is a slightly misleading title, for this recital of lute-accompanied songs ignores Campian, Morley, and Rosseter (and indeed Dowland's more cheerful side) and is therefore short on humour—surely, an essential part of the renaissance character? But through a handful of the finest songs of the period 1597 to 1623 (the dates of the first and last English ayre prints) the disc shows how song-writing developed, and is desirable for that—and for the quality of the performance. It includes early and late Dowland, John Danyel, some beautifully arranged and performed folk songs, and culminates in Monteverdi's searing 'Lamento d'Arianna'.

'Come again, sweet love doth now invite' is pristinely and beautifully poised, but disobediently (if musically) phrased! It is some way from conveying the passionate youth, panting through those sighing rests, protesting that he is 'dying' when he means something rather more agreeable! And perhaps the point is missed that Dowland was already using musical means to characterise, and to convey musical feeling. Yet the coolness has its charm.

Miss Hatano's command of pronunciation is good apart from an occasional final 's', and the diphthong 'ai' (as in 'die'), which sometimes loses its tail altogether! Her style is better suited to 'Flow my tears'—the second 'Hark! you shadows' courageously using silence to magical effect. 'Can she excuse my wrongs' was probably chosen as one of Dowland's best songs, and an interesting example of folk song woven into art song—but, for the record, I always find it difficult to equate a soprano voice with the Earl of Essex, striding up and down on his Wanstead estate, to the tune of 'Shall I go walk the woods so wild'!

All four folk songs are raised to the status of art songs by their treatment and performance here; each is lovingly realised and sung, with an accompaniment, perfectly suited to its individual character.

There is an immediacy about Takashi Tsunoda's Dowland 'Prelude'; you feel you can hear the composer's improvisatory though process as it works through the piece, hesitant for a moment, searching for a short but perfect form and finding it with a flourish of relief. 'Willoughby's Welcome Home' is somewhat sedate for a war hero, but Hieronymus Kasberger's 'Toccatà' acknowledging its German ancestry by veering from fanciful improvisation to stem counterpoint and back again, was splendidly played.

In Dowland's 'Go nightly cares' the treble viol part weaves its ghostly counterpoint around the slow-moving voice, the lute flows along the middle while the bass voice, the lute flows along in the middle while the bass viol underpins it all. The viols are very sensitively played in this performance, but it seemed a little too slow in the 4/2 sections, and to lack fervour and dynamic contrast. I wish the final 'adieu' had been pronounced to rhyme with 'untrue'.

The poem of John Danyel's 'Grief, keep within' says, in effect, that tears often indulged in for minor sadness or even for moments of joy, are inadequate to express the desolation of the loss of a husband. There are three different through-composed sections, each followed by a 'refrain' which ends in a rising major scale in which the inner anguish, hitherto kept in check, wells up and overflows to a climax on the word 'die'. The refrain gets progressively elongated each time it is heard. A fine and inventive framework, within which Danyel, like Dowland, exploits harmonic and rhythmic devices to colour words and phrases. In the last refrain the major scale is used for the final descent on the words 'pine, fret, consume and die'—a crowning stroke of pathos. This is where we, the audience, cry. The artists adopt an extremely slow tempo for the opening, making the most of 'grief' in a manner at odds with the injunction of the words! A slight flatness on the third 'grief' may be intentional but is agitating. Added to this, the gaps between sections all seem a touch too long, which puts us in danger of losing the musical and poetic thread and reduces the impact of the very effective form, so lovingly constructed. A sort of inner stillness is the strength of this duo, and can be very effective, but it needs counterbalancing liveliness and forward thinking.

The 'Lament of Arianna' shows how volatile the Italians are compared with us Northerners! Colours are brighter, gestures