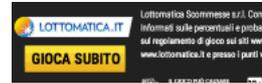


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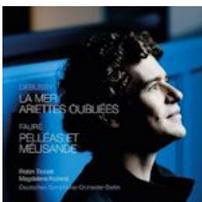
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Some items  
to consider



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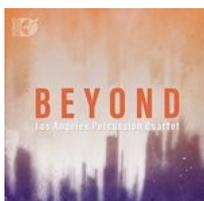
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Jaw-dropping

### Biagio MARINI (1594 - 1663)

#### Madrigali & Symphonie op. II

I Musici Affetti/Fabio Missaggia  
RossoPorpora Ensemble/Walter Testolin  
rec. 2016, Chiesetta delle Monache, Vicenza, Italy  
Texts and translations available online  
DVD documentary [31:22]  
**TACTUS TC591304** [73:33]

Biagio Marini was one of the main representatives of the *stile nuovo*, which emerged in Italy around 1600. He was born in Brescia and was educated as a violinist, His first position as a professional musician was that of the violin at St Mark's in Venice in 1615. During his career he worked at many places, such as Parma, Neuburg an die Donau, Brussels, Milan, Bergamo, Düsseldorf and Ferrara. He moved back and forth between various cities, which undoubtedly tells us something about his reputation.

Marini was also a prolific composer. His Op. 1 was printed in 1617, his Op. 22 in 1655. At least seven volumes are lost, which makes it impossible to say whether instrumental or vocal music took the most important role in his oeuvre. Among his extant works the collections with only instrumental music are by far in the minority. Even so, that is virtually the only part of his oeuvre, which is performed and recorded. His vocal music is badly represented on disc. The present recording focuses on this second collection. The *Madrigali e symphonie op. 2* of 1618 are recorded here for the very first time. That is not surprising: the basso continuo part was missing, and only a recent reconstruction of this part made it possible to record the 25 pieces it includes.

Notable is the mixture of vocal and instrumental pieces. Thirteen pieces are vocal, and they show a wide variety of forms. *Se nel sereno viso* is a madrigal in the *stile antico*, for five voices. *Le carte in ch'io primier scrissi*, on the other hand, is a madrigal for solo voice in *stile recitativo*. There are more specimens of the modern monodic style, such as *Perché fuggi tra' salci*, again for solo voice. *Perché credi o mio core* is an example of a duet, *Misero me non morto* is for three voices. *Deh non coglier più fiori* is called a *dialogo*; it is scored for soprano and tenor, representing a nymph and a shepherd respectively. The vocal part of this collection is historically important. *Chi quella bella bocca* is the first example in history of a *lettera amorosa*; its inclusion here means that it precedes Monteverdi's piece with that title, which was included in his 7th book of madrigals (*Concerto*, 1619). The latter collection is considered the first with *concertato* madrigals: the role of the instruments is not confined to the playing of *sinfonias* and *ritornellos*, but plays along with the voices. Again Marini preceded Monteverdi: *Chi quella bella bocca* includes parts for two violins, which enter the proceedings halfway.

The instrumental part of this collection has also some historical importance. Marini is the first, who connects the term *affetti* to instrumental music, whereas before it was only used for vocal music. Technically it also has something new to offer: Marini is the first, who makes use of double stopping. Later composers who used this technique were influenced by developments in the German-Austrian violin school. The instrumental pieces show considerable variety, not unlike the vocal section. Several pieces consist of a *sinfonia*, followed by a *balletto*. Other pieces are called *gagliarda*, *corrente* or *canzon*. The scoring also differs: *Il Seccho* is for a treble instrument and bass, *La Cominciuola* for two treble instruments and bass. The bass refers here to the basso continuo. In some pieces Marini specifies the instruments: *La Roccha* is for violin and bass, *La Bombarda* for a violin and a cornett, and *La Malipiera* for a treble instrument and sackbut. *La Rizza* is a *canzona a quattro*: the four instrumental parts are specified as violin, cornett, sackbut and dulcian.

Considering the historical importance of this collection of music by Marini, this is a ground-breaking production. For the first time the complete Op. 2 is available on disc, and its importance cannot be overstated. That is underlined by the way it has been released by Tactus. I have often complained about a lack of translations of vocal music, but in this case a file with the lyrics and English translations is available from the Tactus website. Moreover, the English translation of the liner-notes is exemplary, in contrast to many other booklets on this label. And we also get a DVD-Video with a documentary about Marini and this particular collection. Unfortunately it is almost entirely filled by two talking heads; I would have liked to hear more musical illustrations. However, these two people have many interesting things to tell, and both sound and picture are very good as are the English subtitles. So we should not complain.

There is also nothing to complain about the instrumentalists of I Musicali Affetti. The playing is technically



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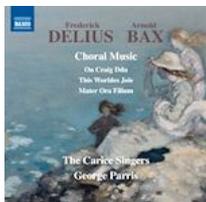


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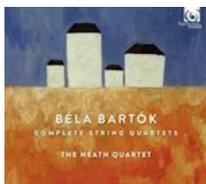
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immaculate and the interpretation is lively and full of zest. The contrasts within the various pieces is explored to the full. I am mostly positive about the vocal part of this disc as well. Especially the tenors are very good; the monodic pieces and the duets are particularly well sung. The sopranos allow themselves a bit too much vibrato. It is rather odd that soprano Lucia Napoli uses quite a lot of vibrato in *Non te'n fuggir deh spira* but hardly any in the duet *Questi languidi fiori*. I don't understand this kind of inconsistency.

These flaws in the vocal part of this disc prevent me from labelling it Recording of the Month. That would be justified on the basis of the historical importance of Marini's Op. 2. Even so, if you are interested in this kind of repertoire, don't hesitate to add it to your collection.

**Johan van Veen**

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