

Out of Darkness is an assemblage of song-cycles of sorts, starting with the monodrama *Another Sunrise*, depicting an Auschwitz survivor struggling to tape-record her experiences amid massive survivor's guilt. Though Heggie's music is completely available to the shifting moods of Scheer's text, most of it is written in the same vocal register – one reason why the promising, lustrous soprano Caitlin Lynch delivers an undifferentiated, full-voiced tone that leaves the ear weary. Semi-comprehensible diction further limits the performance's expressive range.

In the second part, *Farewell, Auschwitz*, Scheer adapts Polish lyrics written by the real-life version of the *Another Sunrise* camp survivor, often steeped in irony, particularly in the keenly observed portrait of the camp's order-obsessed typist. This is the most successful of the three parts. All three vocalists are used in various configurations, sometimes in a 1940s version of European scat singing. The even balance of wind and strings in the small Music of Remembrance ensemble suggests Kurt Weill's German cabaret mode – particularly apt in the 'Farewell, Auschwitz' song with trudging rhythms suggesting that survival comes with the challenge of living out one's life having seen too much.

For *a Look or a Touch*, the third part, is a revised version of Heggie's 2007 work of the same name about the plight of gay people in concentration camps. The spoken oral history between songs is cut, as are several songs, though this version retains the stomach-turning portrait of a man stripped of his clothing and ripped to pieces by dogs. Baritone Morgan Smith is vocally polished, though the addition of his own emotionalism (and vibrato) doesn't always allow the music and text of these highly charged scenes to speak for themselves. **David Patrick Stearns**

Isaac · Josquin · Ycart

'Miserere mei Deus – Music

for Passiontide around 1500'

Isaac Proprium de Sancta Cruce

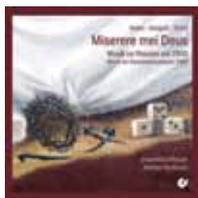
Josquin Miserere mei Deus

Ycart Lamentationes Hieremiae Prophetae

Ensemble Officium / Wilfried Rombach

Christophorus (M) CHE0194-2 (69' • DDD)

From CHR77253



This is a reissue of a CD first published in 2002 with the title 'Lamentatio' and

now given an intriguing new front cover. Perhaps its main distinction is as containing

the complete *Lamentations* of Bernhard Ycart, a composer paid at the Aragonese court of Naples in 1478-80 but not otherwise documented. Two music theorists of the time refer to him as a substantial figure; but there is no longer any trace of the two Mass cycles he is reported to have composed, so the *Lamentations* are by a substantial margin his largest surviving work. They are sensible music, composed without apparent show, but plainly effective for the Holy Week liturgy, perhaps at the court of Naples. The mixed-voice Ensemble Officium give persuasive performances: nicely balanced, well tuned and above all keeping the music moving.

For the rest, they have a neatly controlled performance of one of Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus* cycles, that for the Feast of the Holy Cross, in which they add chants as appropriate. The main feature of Isaac's cycle is its enormous sequence, 'Laudes crucis attolamus', lasting over 15 minutes and not quite managing to keep its head above water in this recording, but nevertheless welcome as another rarity.

They conclude with one of those pieces that cannot be recorded too often, Josquin's great *Miserere*. This is an eloquent performance, full of colour and giving life to music that is hard to do because it can easily seem to overstay its welcome. The odd detail is that the reissue retains the enormous breaks between the three sections of the motet, seriously getting in the way of the continuity that is otherwise so well achieved. **David Fallows**

G Jackson

Airplane Cantata^a. Choral Symphony. Ruchill Linn. The Voice of the Bard. Winter Heavens

BBC Singers / David Hill, ^aJames Morgan with

^a**Rex Lawson** *pianola*

Signum (F) SIGCD381 (69' • DDD • T)



Between 2010 and 2013 Gabriel Jackson was Associate

Composer at the BBC

Singers and in that time produced eight works for them, four of which are recorded for the first time here. The fifth, *The Voice of the Bard*, has already appeared on disc in a vivid performance by the State Choir Latvia (Hyperion, 3/13). The BBC Singers certainly give that outstanding choir a run for their money, although under Māris Sirmāis the Latvians seem to communicate the piece rather more compellingly.

As technically challenging and vividly exhibitionist as *The Voice of the Bard* and

recorded on the same occasion (in 2011 in St Paul's Church Knightsbridge; the other tracks were recorded between 2013 and 2014 in Maida Vale studios), *Ruchill Linn* is a setting of words by Robin Bell evoking his native Perthshire. With the whole choir imitating the call of a curlew and the sopranos cascading to depict a waterfall, this is full of blatantly picturesque imagery, yet Jackson's wonderfully rich tapestry of choral textures makes it all musically convincing.

The two major works on the disc are the *Choral Symphony*, Jackson's homage both to the city of London and to the BBC Singers, who deliver its often monumental technical challenges with impressive self-assurance, and the *Airplane Cantata*, in which the singers are joined by a pianola (chosen, it would seem, since the rise of the pianola coincided with the development of powered flight which the text celebrates). Rex Lawson is an apt partner for the crisply precise choral singing James Morgan draws from his singers. Whether Jackson uses this material as anything more than an excuse to put the singers through a series of daunting technical hoops is open to question; but, with such luminous diction and an enchanting collective buoyancy, the sound of the BBC Singers here is, in itself, something not to be missed. **Marc Rochester**

Janáček

Glagolitic Mass^a. The Eternal Gospel^b

^a**Andrea Danková, ^bAlžběta Poláčková** *sops* ^a**Jana**

Sýkorová *contr* ^a**Tomáš Juhás, ^bPavel Černocho** *tens*

^a**Jozef Benci** *bass* **Prague Philharmonic Choir;**

Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra /

Tomáš Netopil

Supraphon (C) SU4150-2 (58' • DDD)



That the *Glagolitic Mass* has a complex history is by now common knowledge.

Not long ago a score of the so-called 'original version' emerged: interesting but not authentic, more a compendium of elements from various versions. The new edition from Bärenreiter Prague contains two printings of the piece, the last authorised version (the one that the composer prepared for print) and this so-called September 1927 alternative (the one used at the Brno premiere), which most accurately reflects the original, excluding later edits made during or following the preparations for the first performance. Cataloguing the differences between the two would be tedious, so suffice to say that the (true) original

amounts at times to a quite different work, both more dramatic and more colourful than the familiar revision and where altered detail immediately arrests our attention, sometimes harmonic, at other times rhythmic or concerning the Mass's actual notation. Tomáš Netopil's performance seethes with nervous energy, his soloists are dedicated, and so are his chorus and orchestra.

The Eternal Gospel (1914) first saw the light of day in part because of the success achieved by Janáček's opera *Jenůfa*. In general more stylistically conventional than the much later Mass (it's all but a mini-oratorio), *The Eternal Gospel* hasn't been recorded in aeons. Based on a poem by Jaroslav Vrchlický, the text's theme is one of universal love. Some of Janáček's closest associates believed that the war in the Balkans may have proved an inspiration, principally because of his pacifist attitudes. The opening *Con moto* immediately ushers in among strange spectres, at times glancing sideways at Sibelius, the ensuing movements alternating mystery and drama. Again, the performance is excellent.

Rob Cowan

D Lang

Love Fail

Anonymous 4

Cantaloupe © CA21100 (49' • DDD)



Anonymous 4 have announced that the 2015-16 season will be their last. This is a

source of great regret to those of us who have enjoyed the ensemble's interpretations of music from the early reaches of the vocal repertoire. This new disc offers something different, but not always so radically different as you might imagine. The American composer David Lang, who was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2008 for *The Little Match Girl Passion*, has now written *Love Fail*, a sequence of 14 reflections on love's trials, pains and (occasionally) joys, mainly unaccompanied save for sporadic bells and with a brief instrumental break between Nos 9 and 11. Anonymous 4 gave the work's premiere in New Haven, Connecticut, in 2012.

Prompted by the story of Tristan and Isolde, Lang has adapted texts by various writers through the ages (Gottfried von Strassburg, Thomas Malory and Wagner among them), stripped them down and interspersed them with pithy expositions on tiffs, misunderstandings and other hazards that bestrew the path of true love by the

American writer Lydia Davis. Lang's understanding of medieval vocal writing comes through in the rhythmic bite of such numbers as 'Dureth' (No 3), overlaid, as elsewhere, with his contemporary harmonic palette and consistently testifying to his appreciation of the voice's natural expressive potential, whether solo or as a quartet. With its mix of simplicity and complexity, *Love Fail* is both haunting and thought-provoking. **Geoffrey Norris**

Lassus

'Biographie musicale, Vol 3'

Anime mea liquefacta est. Anna mihi dilecta.

Aus meiner Sünden tiefe. Beau le cristal beau

l'albâtre et l'ivoire. Bestia curvafia. Ego sum

pauper. Eight Duets. Evehor invidia pressus. Ich

armer Mann. Io ho piu tempo. Je suis quasi prest

d'enrager. Magnificat secundi toni Las je n'iray.

Missa ad imitationem moduli O passi sparsi -

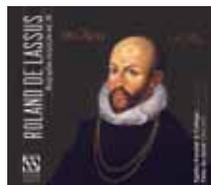
Kyrie; Gloria; Agnus Dei. Sancti mei. Si bene

perpendi. Susannen frumb

Egidius Kwartet and College /

Peter de Groot *countertenor*

Musique en Wallonie © MEW1369 (73' • DDD)



After an uncertain start, this five-volume 'discographical biography' of Lassus

has hit its stride. Each volume is entrusted to a different vocal ensemble, each from a different country. For this volume, covering the composer's career at its zenith in the 1570s, it's the turn of the Dutch Egidius Kwartet. As with the previous volume from the German ensemble Singer Pur, a mixture of genres sees Latin, German, Italian and French rub shoulders, as is appropriate for the famously polyglot Lassus. There's also an unusually broad range of styles. The *Magnificat* parody on *Las je n'iray* is classic Lassus, and the motet *Anna mihi dilecta* is as extreme in its chromaticism as anything in the *Prophetiae Sybillarum*. The sublimely lyrical *Beau le cristal*, written in the purest 'Parisian' vein, is surely one of his finest songs. Then there's a genuinely odd piece, the louche Latin verse *Bestia curvafia*, which Jacobus Gallus wouldn't have disowned. Another discographical rarity is a modal cycle of textless duos, performed here on viols, one of which is (in all but name) a virtuoso fantasia on the Josquinian motif la-sol-fa-re-mi. Lassus really could do it all.

Given such variety, it's a testament to these artists that the recital holds together so well. Egidius Kwartet is joined principally by two sopranos who add a welcome brightness, though one of them is

more secure technically than the other. For the most part the quality of the programme is matched by the performances: only the three Mass movements seem out of place, and their delivery is correspondingly tentative. **Fabrice Fitch**

Moulinié



'Meslanges pour la chapelle d'un prince'

Moulinié O bone Jesu (two versions). Lauda

Sion salvatorem. Caro mea vere est cibus.

Cantate Domino. Magi videntes stellam. O dulce

nomen. Ecce video. Ne reminiscaris Domine.

Ego flos campi. Dum esset rex. Veni sponsa mea.

O salutaris hostia. Flores apparuerunt. Litanies

de la Vierge **Boësset** Jesu nostra redemptio.

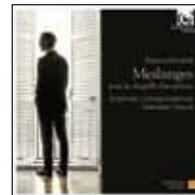
Popule meus quid fecit tibi. Pie Jesu **de Chancy**

Allemandes **Constantin** La Pacifique

Ensemble **Correspondances /**

Sébastien Daucé *hpd/org*

Harmonia Mundi © HMC90 2194 (66' • DDD)



Etienne Moulinié (1599-1676) was director of music to Louis XIII's rebellious

younger brother Duke Gaston of Orléans; he also served as music master to the duke's daughter Anne. In 1652 the troublesome duke was ordered to retire to the countryside permanently by his nephew Louis XIV, and reorganised his household at Blois. By this time Moulinié's *Meslanges de sujets chrétiens* was ready for publication, although in the event it was not printed until 1658, and was dedicated to Gaston's second wife Marguerite de Lorraine.

The miscellany contains 36 pieces such as motets, litanies, canticles and other 'Christian subjects', and the composer's preface expressed his wish to 'purify music and make it wholly chaste'. Sébastien Daucé configures Ensemble *Correspondances* approximately along the lines of the Duke of Orléans' musical establishment in its prime for this enthralling selection of short five-part motets. Assured soloists are drawn from the ranks of the dozen-strong choir, and their fluent solo passages and glorious choral textures combine sumptuously with a compact yet sonorously varied instrumental group of recorders, viols, lute, theorbo and organ. A magnificent setting of *Cantate Domino* and the madrigalian *Flores apparuerunt* suggest Moulinié's Italianate influences, and the quasi-Venetian 'Alleluia' refrain that concludes the Christmas motet *Magi videntes stellam* illuminates that such miniature pieces are capable of real grandeur in the right hands.

David Vickers