

moments. Here the choral sound is warm and wide without any congestive blasting, with crisp enunciation.

The solo quartet take over for the second movement, an E minor sarabande with a little Bachian lilt as well as an extraordinary passage of soft brass-writing (at 'Pro peccatis suae gentis') which seems to pre-echo a similar patch in Jongen's Mass (written some 70 years later). The choral 'Tui nati vulnerati' movement (one of the few passages in a major key) is beautifully effective and makes an excellent 'sample track' for the uninitiated. The Royal Flemish Philharmonic's playing is beyond reproach save for a slightly eager double-bass player who comes in a bar early in the introduction to the 'Fac, ut portem Christi mortem' duet – a bizarre blemish that should surely have been edited out.

What is especially pleasing is the soloists' contribution. They really listen to each other and achieve a subtle blend with plenty of non-competitive 'give and take'. Top prize goes to the tenor Maximilian Schmitt, who is always strain-free and equally magnificent whether leading the chorus in the 'Fac me vere tecum flere' movement or as part of the balanced quartet. Michaela Selinger relishes her big alto solo 'Inflamatus et accensus' with none of the swooping haughtiness of Dagmar Pecková for Järvi, and Ilse Eerens's top Bs crown the choral texture with a bell-like clarity.

This new release must be the top choice. **G**

Selected comparison:

LPO, N Järvi (9/12) (LPO) LPO0062



Philippe Herreweghe conducts his Collegium Vocale

PHOTOGRAPHY: NIAN MELVILLE

July Gramophone Choices



BEETHOVEN
Triple Concerto;
Archduke Trio
Storioni Trio; Netherlands
Symphony Orchestra /
Jan Willem de Vriend
Challenge Classics CC72579
'The striking feature, first of all, is the power, incisiveness and sense of purpose that de Vriend inspires in the orchestra.'



BOWEN
Works for Violin and Piano
Chloë Hanslip *vn*
Danny Driver *pf*
Hyperion CDA67991/2
'I was particularly smitten with the 1917 diptych of *Serenade* and *Valse harmonique*, the latter a captivating morsel of exquisite grace and capricious charm.'



QUILTER
'Quilter Songbook, Vol 1'
Mark Stone *bar*
Stephen Barlow *pf*
Stone Records 5060192
'Mark Stone could not be more sensitive in his response to the words with his remarkably clear diction and Stephen Barlow is comparably understanding.'



HOLMBOE
'Concertos'
Erik Heide *vn* Lars Anders
Tomter *va* Norrköping
Symphony Orchestra /
Dima Slobodeniouk
Dacapo 6 220599
'That this is one of the finest viola concertos ever penned I have not the slightest doubt, and it is thrown off with dazzling virtuosity.'



SCHNITTKE
String Trio; Piano Quartet;
Piano Quintet
Molinari Quartet;
Marcin Swoboda *va*
Louise Bessette *pf*
ATMA Classique
ACD2 2669
'That any group could play this music better than the Montreal-based Molinari Quartet is inconceivable.'



'A TRIBUTE TO FAUSTINA BORDONI'
Opera Arias
Vivica Genaux *mez*
Cappella Gabetta /
Andrés Gabetta
DHM 88691 94459-2
'Cappella Gabetta accompany with considerable warmth. I cannot remember enjoying Genaux's singing more than this.'



BEETHOVEN. SHOSTAKOVICH
String Quartets
Valentin Berlinsky Quartet
Avie AV2273
'The Berlinskys manage to make distinct the vastly contrasting characters of both composers without detracting from either.'



MILANO
'Il Divino'
Paul O'Dette *lute*
Harmonia Mundi HMU90 7557
'A truly ravishing programme in which Milano's masterly control of drama is fully brought out by O'Dette's highly expressive, *cantabile* and colouristic playing.'



'I VIAGGI DI FAUSTINA'
Roberta Invernizzi *sop*
I Turchini / Antonio Florio
Glossa GCD922606
'Invernizzi's beautiful slow singing and the sensitive string band are breathtaking in the siciliano "Un guardo solo ancor" from Vinci's *Il trionfo di Camilla*.'