

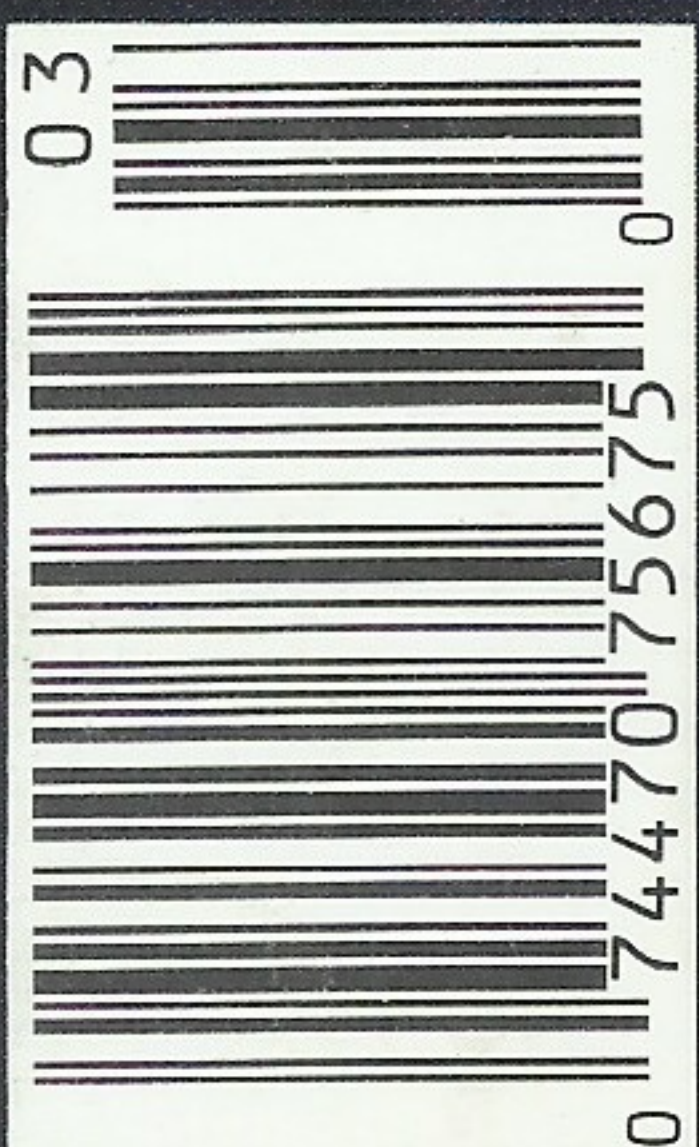
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As a whole, however, I can't in good faith recommend this release. Listeners seeking a one-disc introduction to the lute song would be better advised to look for the Dowland collections by Kirkby and Rogers on Virgin, or Julianne Baird's discs for Dorian. **Tom Moore**

THE SACRED BRIDGE. Joel Cohen directing the Boston Camerata. ERATO 2292-45513-2 [DDD]; 65:21. Produced by Ysabelle Van Wersch-Cot.

NOËL, NOËL! Joel Cohen directing the Boston Camerata; with the Boston Shawn and Sacbut Ensemble. ERATO 2292-45420-2 [DDD]; 62:53. Produced by Ysabelle Van Wersch-Cot.

The busy Boston ensemble continues to generate programs developed around interesting themes. The first disc, subtitled "Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe," takes its title from the work of Eric Werner (volume 1, 1959; volume 2, 1984), who followed a line of thought pursued by Abraham Idelsohn earlier in this century and published voluminous articles on the subject of links between Jewish and Christian music. This is not the place to examine the older question of the supposed development of the Liturgy of the Word of the Roman Mass from a synagogue service that the first Christians might have known. That widely held supposition (found in virtually all historians of liturgy and church music) was thoroughly demolished by James McKinnon in an article, "On the question of psalmody in the ancient synagogue," *Early Music History* 6 (1986), especially p. 181; see also his "The fourth-century origin of the Gradual," *EMH* 7 (1987).

Idelsohn and Werner were more concerned with supposed links between sacred music as it developed in church and in synagogue in a later era. The thesis is so attractive to anyone seeking greater understanding between religions that Werner's writings are often cited without comment in recent articles and books. Refuting him outright also requires expertise in so many abstruse areas of research that few have attempted to do so. But such an effort was made when the 1984 volume was reviewed by Peter Jeffrey in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 77 (1987), 283-298.

Theories aside, there are some gorgeous examples among the twenty-two selections in this program. I found Lynn Torgrove's solo in *Cuando el Rey Nimrod* stimulating and the song delightful. It's placed in a group of cantigas of Alfonso el Sabio, doubtless to suggest a similarity of style. The most explicit effort to illustrate the Werner thesis is heard in Psalm 113 (114), *In exitu*, sung in Latin and Hebrew in alternate verses; unfortunately, Cohen writes: "This melodic fragment is in all probability the oldest music on this, or anyone else's, compact disc!" This is based on the supposition, now proved to be false, that psalms were sung in some kind of religious service in the synagogue "from (at the latest) the period just preceding the exile of 70 A.D.," as Cohen puts it, a service that would have been adopted into early Christian liturgy, another supposition now proved to be unfounded.

The singing and engineering are very fine. The notes consist of brief comments for each selection, along with texts and translations. Several of the texts are in Hebrew script, but the last two (tracks 20 and 22) are printed upside down. Enjoy the unusual selections and lovely singing, but beware of the underlying theories.

The other Camerata issue is subtitled "French Christmas Music, 1200-1600." It's a wide-ranging assortment of thirty items, including a couple of Gregorian chants, several more done in macaronic style, some examples of high art such as a *Magnificat* in the sixth tone by Dufay (the one Konrad Ruhland included on Telefunken SAWT 9439), and all sorts of early-Renaissance vocal and instrumental pieces. The execution is sometimes by solo voice or unaccompanied vocal group, often lightly assisted by instruments, in addition to half a dozen instrumental pieces. The enthusiastic style, in contrast to the straight approach of the first record (made at the same time), is often reminiscent of René Clemencic or Gregorio Paniagua, especially in a section devoted to the Beauvais Feast of the Ass.

The notes consist of a brief essay and, again, comments on each piece printed with texts and translations. As Christmas programs go, this is more unusual and interesting than most.

J. F. Weber

DANIEL AND THE LIONS. *Ludus Danielis.* Frederick Renz directing the New York Ensemble for Early Music. FONÈ 88 F 09-29 [DDD]; 70:37. (Distributed by Allegro.)

The first "Play of Daniel" since the Schola Hungarica version (*Fanfare* 7:3, p. 297; CD in 9:3, p. 257; also discography in 11:3, p. 379), recorded in August 1982, has finally obtained major distribution. It was recorded at Santa Sabina in Rome in November 1986, apparently at a performance, judging by spatial effects and movement, although there is not a trace of audience noise. The label with the Greek name (*phonē*, sound) is based in Livorno and has done a fine job of packaging this release. It is billed as the beginning of a series of recordings on this label.

Recently Margot Fassler has developed a new insight into the relationship between the Feast of Fools (found in the same manuscript as the Play of Daniel, London, B. L. Egerton 2615; see 4:4, p. 225; CD in 11:1, p. 365), the St. Nicholas plays (also recorded by the present ensemble), and the play of Daniel. She sees the Beauvais Feast of the Ass as a reformed treatment of the Sens version (also reviewed in 4:4; no CD) and the Daniel play as a reformist treatment of the whole celebration of New Year's. She also sees Daniel as modeled on the various boys in the Nicholas plays. Since all of these are Christmas celebrations, this explains better the connection of Daniel to Christmas. The notes herewith cite among the "well-known episodes from the Book of Daniel" his prophecy of the advent of the Messiah, which is actually found only in the play, even if it is perhaps a reference to Daniel's prophecy of "one like a Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven," not originally seen as a messianic reference.

This transcription is credited to Renz, but the differences among the five versions (only Andres Mustonen uses an existing edition, the one prepared for Noah Greenberg) are not great. Rhythmic treatment is noteworthy; in a couple of places Renz employs a metrical rhythm which is just the reverse of Greenberg's. Renz adds five instrumental pieces before the initial "Estampie Daniel," but otherwise transcribes the work in straightforward fashion, unlike Mark Brown, who adds several extraneous selections throughout the play. A countertenor sings the Queen, as we heard on Brown's version (more commonly a female voice). There are some horrendous sound effects at the handwriting on the wall and, even more so, when Daniel is thrown into the lions' den. The play concludes with the same *Te Deum* used by Greenberg, Mustonen, and Brown, but I find its execution quite plodding.

(The engineering, both in its basic quality and in its handling of the spaces of Santa Sabina, is outstanding. Thirteen tracks are adequate, and the preliminary pieces are each indexed.) The notes by Luigi Bellingardi are adequate, although it's hardly fair to claim that Renz is "transforming *Daniel and the Lions* into a living and colourful reality after seven centuries of oblivion." Anyone who lived for almost a decade after January 1958 will remember how much Noah Greenberg fulfilled that claim on tour and in a television production based on his best-selling Decca/MCA recording, and Renz was a member of his ensemble. The text is printed, followed in the booklet by the English translation. (The six recordings of this important liturgical drama all offer something of interest, and one attraction of the newest entry is its superb engineering.) **J. F. Weber**

KURTISANE UND NONNE. Sephira Ensemble Stuttgart. BAYER BR 100 078/79 CD [DDD]; two discs: 41:37, 48:51. (Distributed by KOCH International.)

STROZZI: *Lagrima mie. Non occorre. Tradimento! Lilla dici. Miei pensieri. Luci belle. Soccorete luci avere. Apresso à i molli argenti. Hor che Apollo.* **LEONARDA:** *Sonata, op. 16, no. 2. Alta del ciel regina. Sonata, op. 16, no. 12. Veni amor, veni Jesu.*

Clearly, the title of the disc makes Barbara Strozzi a courtesan and Sister Isabella Leonarda a nun. Whether "courtesan" is used in its most disreputable sense is not clear from the German notes, but the two have more in common as female composers than they do in lifestyle in any case. Both of them have had a certain amount of attention on records lately. Strozzi's first recording was a full disc with Judith Nelson (*Fanfare* 7:2; no CD yet), followed by another with Glenda Simpson (13:2); other recordings have been made by Nella Anfuso (9:5, p. 286), Teresa Berganza, and Carol Plantamura, and the present artists duplicated two previously recorded pieces on the RBM label in Germany just two years ago. The nun is known only by a Mass (6:4, p. 324).

There are some interesting duplications here. *Tradimento* has been sung by Plantamura, *Luci belle* and *Apresso* by Nelson, and *Soccorete* by Anfuso and Simpson. Nelson's versions are remarkably similar to these, even if her voice is a shade lighter. Plantamura is also fine, although the