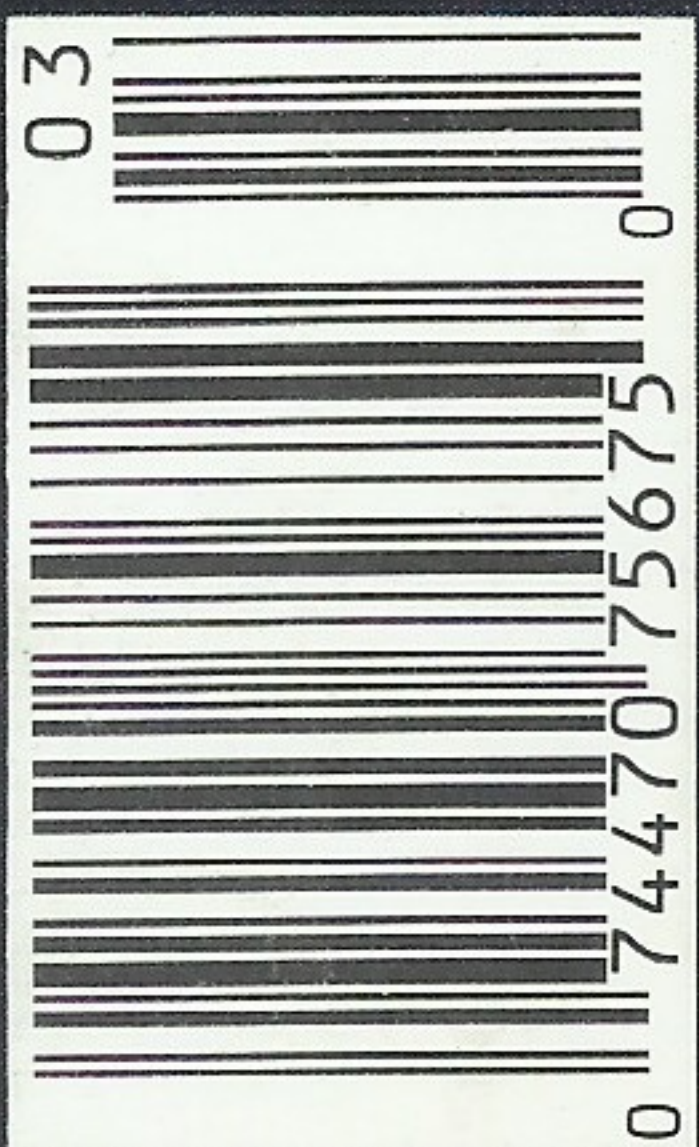


THE MAGAZINE FOR SERIOUS RECORD COLLECTORS
March/April 1991 \$5.00

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within a predominantly *legato* manner. (Liszt tells us that Field practiced with coins on the backs of his hands; if they slipped off, he knew his touch had become too percussive.)

I have been critical of John O'Connor's recording of the Field nocturnes in these pages, much preferring that of Míceál O'Rourke. But O'Connor has the concertos all to himself, not a single challenger having arisen since his complete set came out. Of the pre-O'Connor recordings mentioned earlier, only the Kyriakou makes a legitimate claim. I should much like to hear what Ian Hobson or Stephen Hough would make of these works. It would also be interesting to hear several of them played on early-nineteenth-century fortepianos and accompanied by an authentic-instruments band. But one must be enormously grateful to O'Connor for learning this extensive body of neglected work and for playing it so well, even if his technique is not always up to Field's requirements.

There are cuts in some of the longer, more repetitive movements (acknowledged in Piggott's notes). A "missing" slow movement in the Third Concerto has been supplied by use of the Fifth Nocturne in a piano-orchestral arrangement by Field himself. An "intrusive" loud chord that Field introduced after a poetic passage has been "removed." This is hardly the Urtext of the concertos but it is and has long been the *only* edition, and we are lucky to have it. The strings of the New Irish Orchestra are exemplary, the woodwinds a little less so, and Janos Fürst should have restrained the trumpets and drums in the tuttis. The digitalization has produced a rather too bright and brittle sound. The extended bell-ringing in the Fifth Concerto after the violent storm begins to subside (the subtitle of the concerto is "Conflagration Caused by a Storm") was completely inaudible to me. The separate movements of the concertos are not listed, either on the jewel box or in the booklet, nor are their timings given, nor are they individually tracked. They are indexed, however, which is better than nothing (if your machine reads out index as well as track numbers). The sequencing of the seven concertos is curious: No. 6 is given first on the first compact disc; thereafter the concertos follow numerical order but only the first two movements of the Second Concerto appear on the first disc, the finale being placed first on the second disc. One cannot entirely fault Onyx for breaking the Second Concerto in two like this, since the timings are very long. There was a way, however, to avoid this break without exceeding the seventy-eight minutes that appears now to be the maximum recommended playing time for a compact disc—namely, by programming Concertos 1, 4, and 5 on Disc I, Concertos 2 and 3 on Disc II, and Concertos 6 and 7 on Disc III. But that would have been even more disruptive of the numerical and chronological order.

David Johnson

✕ **FIOCCO: *Pièces de clavecin*.** Diana Petech, harpsichord. FONÈ 90 F 02 CD [DDD]; 63:54. (Distributed by Allegro.)

This seems to be Diane Petech's debut on disc. She can boast impressive credentials (study with Ross, van Asperen, Leonhardt, Gilbert), and in Fiocco's *Pièces* she has chosen neglected but worthy repertoire. (Her only competition on CD is Koopman's 1978 recording for Astrée, E7731, 2 CDs, highly recommended by yours truly in Vol. 13, no. 4). Unfortunately the musical qualities of her playing are betrayed by the technical limitations of Fonè's recorded sound, which has captured far too much of the ambience of a very live room, with the result that the harpsichord sounds distant and foggy, and the detail of the sound is obscured. Koopman's instrument, in contrast, is beautifully captured, with a warm, intimate sound. What one can hear of Petech sounds quite good, though she doesn't lavish as much care on the ornaments as Koopman does—her slow tempos are somewhat faster than his.

In addition to cleaning up their sound recording Fonè owes it to the English-speaking buyer to find a native speaker to edit the liner notes, in which solecisms abound.

Tom Moore

FRANÇAIX: *Jeu poétique*. See HANDEL.

FRANÇOIS: . . . un regard oblique. . .¹ *Deuxième Récit*². *Sonnet*³. *Reflets II*⁴. *Tu/les Écoutes*⁵. *Les Chemins de la Nuit*⁶. Paul Méfano conducting the Ensemble 2e2m^{1,3,4}; Pierre-Yves Artaud, Renaud François, flutes^{1,5}; Carlos Roqué Alsina², Jacqueline Méfano^{3,4}, pianos; Boris Carmelli, voice³; Alain Meunier, cello⁶. SALABERT SCD 8802 [ADD]; 61:13. Produced by Costin Mioreanu. (Distributed by Harmonia Mundi USA.)