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As might be expected in a song-cycle, the voice takes centre stage, and *Noise Uprising* benefits from the contribution of two exceptional singers in Sophia Burgos and Sofia Jernberg. Burgos's fragile melody in the Skip James-inspired 'Clarksdale (Blues)' is weighed down with restrained emotion and loss, before the music shifts effortlessly to 'Seville (Flamenco)' featuring the extraordinary vocal prowess of Jernberg. It is testimony to the talents of both singers that they manage to imbue each song with a particular character and identity without ever resorting to ersatz ethnomusicological mannerism or cliché.

The ethnomusicological landscape may have changed radically since the early years of the 20th century, when folk-song collectors would embark on field trips in far-flung regions, but it's possible to see Trapani as a latter-day, postmodernist Bartók, repurposing his sources to creative and imaginative ends and, in doing so, changing and challenging the musical landscape of his own day. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

'The Krasiński Codex'

'Fifteenth-Century Music from Cracow'
Ensemble Peregrina; Ensemble Dragma / Agnieszka Budzińska-Bennett
 Raumklang (RK4402) • 3h • T/t



Recording the contents of an entire 15th-century manuscript is a huge undertaking. There have been only two such projects as far as I know: the Consort of Musicke's Chansonnier Cordiforme (L'Oiseau-Lyre, 11/80) and, in the past decade, the Leuven Chansonnier by Ensemble Sollazzo (Passacaille, 9/24). This new project innovates in several ways; most notably, the Krasiński Codex contains both sacred and secular music and a far broader range of repertory. Copied in the mid-1420s at the Royal Polish court (then based in Kraków), it transmits music by local composers, most notably Nicholas of Radom, alongside works by Ciconia, Zachara da Teramo and Estienne Grossin. This variety reflects the reach of Italian and French music throughout Europe, but the proportion of music that reflects local practice, though typical of manuscripts like this one, often goes unrepresented in discography: that is one reason to welcome this enterprise. Also typical is the sometimes piecemeal transmission of some of the music, which ranges from a tiny Alleluia and untexted pieces (probably songs) to lengthy Mass

movements and Magnificat settings. This is not necessarily carelessness but reflects the adaptation of pieces from elsewhere to suit local practice (not least by supplying new words or omitting them altogether). This calls for a greater range of performance situations than the stable repertory of the chansonniers, not to mention a fair amount of intervention by the performers, many of whom are also established scholars. A simple example: the short three-voice *Salve thronus Trinitatis* is performed first by male singers and later on harp and a gittern. The men bring a solid, tranquil power to this simple polyphony, but the second time around Marc Lewon executes the nattiest diminutions on the top line, whip-sharp and bracingly snappy. Completing this sonic panorama, the penultimate track draws on the tradition of polyphony improvised upon plainchant, and a couple of others sound as though they might.

To dwell on the project piece by piece is unnecessary, but the main points are easily made. First, Lewon, Agnieszka Budzińska-Bennett and Grace Newcombe sing and play several instruments, and they all excel. Newcombe's voice has many admirers, but she's also very canny on the organetto (those crunchy leading-notes!) and the harp. The instrumental playing stands out for its fluency and precision and the vocal soloists are generally on great form, whether as an ensemble (in the *Gloria Ad ongni vento* by Zachara) or singly (the *Regina gloriosa* attributed to Ciconia, with Lorenza Donadini on the cantus line). A little less distinctive are the Mass movements by Zachara and Ciconia done with several sopranos on the cantus line and voices and trombones on the lower parts, channelling too directly past performances by the Italian ensembles Sine Nomine and La Reverdie. But most importantly, the lion's share of music that's recorded here for the first time is superbly done. Mostly known only to specialists of Central European music, Nicholas of Radom gets a proper outing here, his unfussy, stylish music beautifully showcased.

The manuscript's contents are parsed into three CD-length programmes, each of which can be heard on its own since their themes overlap almost entirely. They are a handy way into a project that succeeds in being more than the sum of its parts: we glimpse the variegated polyphonic soundscape of a major 15th-century court at its cultural and historical peak. It's early in the year, but this will surely be a contender for my Critics' Choice in December. **Fabrice Fitch**

'Una poesia muta'

'Art in Early Cinquecento Venice'

Bossinensis Ricercar 2 Capirola Ricercar 8 Caprioli Non si vedra gia mai Dammonis Adoramus te Festa Ab oriente venerunt Magi. Nunc dimittis Josquin Ave Maria (arr Spinacino). Missa Pange lingua - Gloria. O bone et dulcis Domine Jesu Lhéritier Ave Domina mea Mouton Ave virgo caeli porta. Corde et animo Tromboncino Ave Maria, regina in cielo. Suspirio temo Venetus Volgi gli occhi Willaert Beatus Stephanus. Pater noster & Ave Maria The Marian Consort / Rory McCleery
 Linn (CKD750 • 65' • T/t)



This album is the product of a collaboration between the

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and the radio station SWR to mark an exhibition of Italian art based mainly around the work of Vittore Carpaccio. The result is a surprising anthology of music that was known in Venice in the first quarter of the 16th century, including mostly pieces that have not previously been recorded: works by lesser Venetian composers, music by Josquin, Mouton and other *oltremontani*, two items by the only Italian composer to have been prominent in sacred music of these years, Costanzo Festa, and of course two motets by Willaert, who served no fewer than 35 years at St Mark's Basilica. The only oddment here is the *Gloria* (alone) of Josquin's Mass *Pange lingua*.

The Marian Consort field eight singers (four men, four women) under the marvellously controlled direction of Rory McCleery. Their sound is pure, their intonation unflappable, their balance immaculate. My only reservation is that they sound the same in everything: Willaert's great motet *Beatus Stephanus*, included because Carpaccio's canvas of his martyrdom is one of the prize pictures in the exhibition, betrays nothing of the text's anger and could just as well be a description of a peaceful countryside. Willaert's music is hard enough to convey at the best of times; but we surely need to get a little closer to the mark.

For the solo songs the miraculous Sarah Anne Champion is joined by the equally flawless lutenist Kristiina Watt. An engaging booklet note by Tim Shephard puts everything into the perspective of art and music of the time in Venice.

David Fallows