

Orchestral

while the tenth Concerto is "a Pastorale" and the twelfth "a Tempesta di mare"; the first work is perhaps, rather unnecessarily subtitled "Introduction", though via the heading Zavateri declares a cohesive purpose.

Dedicated to his pupil and patron, Count Cornelio Popoli Musotti, the 12 concertos contain enough individual gestures and a sufficient diversity of ideas to hold our attention without difficulty. But perhaps it is those readers with a taste for stylistic pluralism, whose ears savour that Janus-like stance characteristic of vocabulary which draws upon the obsolescent and the new, who will derive the most constant pleasure from the music. There is little in the way of set formulae.

Four of the works are ripieno concertos while two others, as I have mentioned, are opera *sinfonias* in character and layout. The remaining six occupy a middle ground between *concerto grosso* and solo violin concerto – one of them, No. 10, is for two violins – and it is these which, on balance, make a deeper impression. There is frequently a contrapuntal interest in Zavateri's concertos, sometimes an element of dazzling, if short-winded virtuosity, and at other times an affecting expressive intimacy. Like so many Italian composers of his generation and earlier, Zavateri embraces a tradition of including a 12/8 "Pastorale" movement within the set. Perhaps the tradition began with his teacher Torelli who included such a movement among the concertos of his Op. 8 (1709). Yet though not at that time published, it may have been Corelli's well-known *Christmas Concerto* (Op. 6 No. 8) which set the trend. Zavateri's "Pastorale" is an altogether more *galant* affair than those of his fellow Italians, airier in character, with trio episodes for two solo violins and continuo, and containing some striking key shifts. Of a completely different character is the splendidly vibrant *Tempesta di mare* which concludes the set. There are some telling contrasts here with rhythmically undulating passages juxtaposed with thrashing waves depicted chordally. Following a lyrical binary *Adagio* – the boat in calm waters – the tempest is unleashed with only modest ferocity.

Almost all is played with imagination and finesse – the Concerto No. 11 in G minor has a few rough moments – by the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra under their leader and solo violinist Gottfried von der Goltz. A fascinating release and one to which I am eager to return. **NA**

③ In a Monastery Garden ^bJosef Sakonov (vn);

^bLondon Festival Orchestra; ^aRoyal Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra / Eric Rogers.

Decca London Phase 4 © 444 786-2LPF (77 minutes; ADD). Items marked ^a from PFS4170 (11/69), ^bPFS4265 (3/73).

Ketelbey^a: In a Monastery Garden. Wedgwood blue. In the Mystic Land of Egypt. Bells across the meadows. In a Chinese Temple Garden. Sanctuary of the Heart. Cockney Suite – Bank Holiday ('Appy' Ampstead). Phantom melody. In a Persian Market. **Hubay** (arr. Sax): Scènes de la Csárda – Hejre Kati^b. **Godard** (arr. Sax): Jocelyn – Oh! ne t'éveille pas encor^b. **Tchaikovsky** (arr. Sax): Valse sentimentale in F minor, Op. 51 No. 6^b. None but the lonely heart, Op. 6 No. 6^b. **Sternhold**: Fêtes tziganes^b. **Massenet** (arr. Sax): Thaïs – Méditation^b. **Heuberger** (arr. Sax): Der Opernball – Im chambre séparée^b. **Korngold**: Much Ado About Nothing – Garden scene^b. **Monti** (arr. Sax): Csárdás^b.

Ketelbey – selected comparison:

Philh, Lanchbery (3/94) (CFP) CD-CFP4637

After almost 30 years the Decca Phase 4 collection of nine of Ketelbey's best-known pieces is still a source of delight both in terms of quality and performance. The big tunes come across irresistibly, the performances never descending into vulgarity, with strongly sung choral contributions adding a welcome extra dimension. The inclusion of pieces in contrasted style – the raucous 'Appy' Ampstead and the utterly charming *Wedgwood blue* – helps confirm that there was more than one aspect to Ketelbey's rich invention.

In a *Persian Market* most particularly highlights Rogers's concentration on elegance and refinement by comparison with the rival collection from John Lanchbery, whose performances are generally brasher and more passionate. If overall there is little to choose between the two, viewed simply as Ketelbey collections, their fill-ups contrast sharply. In the Decca collection of violin showpieces the Garden scene from Korngold's *Much Ado About Nothing* stands out as something of an oasis among Sidney Sax's souped-up orchestral arrangements of more familiar war-horses, which hardly gel with Ketelbey's well-tuned style as readily as Classics for Pleasure's coupling of Luigini's *Ballet égyptien* suite. That may be the determining factor in whether to go for this Decca collection. As far as the Ketelbey is concerned, it can certainly be warmly recommended. **AML**

④ Les Succès de la Danse Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bratislava / Jerome Cohen.

Marco Polo © 8 223801 (77 minutes; DDD).

P. Muller: Le roi malgré lui. L'infanterie française. Nuit étoilée. **Tavan**: Le carnaval viennois. **E. Marie**: La grande dame. **Gabriel-Marie**: Sous les frênes. **Frais minois**. **Ivanovici** (orch. Waldteufel): Flots du Danube. **Auvray**: Escapade. **I. Strauss**: Orphée aux enfers. **Métra**: La sérénade. *Espérance!*.

Far from Vienna having a monopoly of nineteenth-century dance music, this admirably enterprising collection shows that Paris too had much to offer – and not only from Waldteufel. The opening waltz on themes from *Le roi malgré lui* joyously sets the mood, with the "Fête Polonaise" music giving way to some exquisitely turned Chabrier melodies. Waldteufel himself is represented by his orchestration of Isosif Ivanovici's familiar *Waves of the Danube*, showing the predilection for clarinet and cornet that gives a Gallic piquancy to this whole collection. The original compositions by unsung French composers are no less diverting. Besides his Chabrier arrangement, Pierre Muller has another graceful waltz, *Nuit étoilée* and the 'military polka' *L'infanterie française* that exhilaratingly depicts a French infantry parade. Gabriel-Marie, still remembered perhaps for his *La Cinquantaine*, contributes the melodious waltz *Sous les frênes* and the splendidly invigorating polka *Frais minois*. His father Ernest chips in with a jaunty *schottische* (misattributed on the insert card). Among the rest are two fine but contrasted waltzes by Olivier Métra and a stirring polka by Emile Tavan, best known for his operatic selections.

I have been underimpressed by some conductors in Marco Polo's Johann Strauss series; but the American conductor Jerome Cohen seems to have just the right approach to music such as this, allowing it to flow and surge with ease, grace and sparkle. This is a splendid collection, and I do hope that Cohen has more such repertory up his sleeve. **AML**

⑤ Twentieth-Century Harpsichord Concertos Eva Braitto (hpd); ^aChamber Orchestra of Bratislava Opera; ^bArtemis Ensemble, Vorarlberg / Paul Kantschieder.

Koch Schwann © 31422-2 (67 minutes; DDD).

Françaix: Concerto for Harpsichord and Chamber Orchestra^a. **Martinù**: Concerto for Harpsichord and Small Orchestra^b. **Farkas**: Concertino for Harpsichord and Orchestra^b. **Jelinek**: The Two Blue O's^b.

You wouldn't believe it, but while the booklet offers us a detailed curriculum vitae of the conductor here (who in the skittish Françaix does no more than beat time, without the slightest nuance of dynamics or concern for balance with the harpsichord), there's not even a mention of the soloist. Playing on a scrawny-sounding instrument against this insensitive accompaniment, the poor girl is swamped, even though the orchestra consists of only strings and one flute; and the Françaix, which should be as light as a soufflé (I know, because I

gave the UK première), becomes a heavy-handed bore. (The booklet-note's mention of its "profundity" is preposterous.)

Fortunately things are better in the more densely scored Martinù (of which, if I'm allowed to be personal, I also gave the first London performance); balance is fairly adjusted, and the harpsichord tone is more agreeable. I still wouldn't describe this as the most imaginative of performances – it's too stiff to catch the work's humour and sparkle – but it's efficient enough. The *Concertino* by the prolific Ferenc Farkas is a facile work that seems unwilling to make up its mind about which style to adopt – neo-baroque, idealized Hungarian folk (in the last two movements) or, fleetingly, atonal; but it gives Eva Braitto most opportunities to display her not inconsiderable ability. The most intriguing item here, though, is Jelinek's brief *jeu d'esprit* (I've no idea of the title's significance) for harpsichord, eight percussionists, harp and double-bass, in whose fragile repetitive sonorities dodecaphony comes to terms with near-jazz rhythms. **LS**

⑥ Mosaic Alexei Lubimov (pf); Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Bremen / Heinrich Schiff.

Erato © 0630-12709-2 (64 minutes; DDD).

Ustvol'skaya: Concerto for Piano, Strings and Timpani. **Gubaidulina**: Introitus: Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra. **Górecki**: Concerto for Piano and Strings, Op. 40. **Pelécis**: Concertino bianco for Piano and Chamber Orchestra.

Gubaidulina – comparative version:

A. Haefliger, N German Rad PO, Klee

(S/95) (SONY) SK53960

Górecki – selected comparison:

A. Górecka, Amadeus CO, Duczmal (CONI) CDCF246

These four *concertante* pieces actually make two contrasting pairs rather than a mosaic. Ustvol'skaya and Gubaidulina are the two prophets of the new Russian spiritualism, both seekers after truth by stony paths; the Pole Górecki and the Latvian Pelécis take a gentler minimalist route to Enlightenment, at least in these works.

The Ustvol'skaya Concerto dates from 1946 and bears clear hallmarks of Shostakovich, her teacher at the time, along with signs of the gritty intransigence which was to be her own destiny later on. This is not quite the world première recording Erato claim – there was a more than serviceable Melodiya LP with Pavel Serebryakov as soloist – but Lubimov and Schiff certainly make a fine team, lacking nothing in commitment and understanding.

I remain unsure whether Gubaidulina's *Introitus* succeeds in making as much from its materials as it clearly sets out to. Certainly the sub-Ligetian 'discovery-of-the-single-note' passages sound terribly dated. Nevertheless this performance certainly communicates the music's searching qualities more vividly than the (admirable) Sony Classical rival version; I fancy the recording is a notch clearer too.

At four minutes each the two movements of Górecki's Concerto certainly do not outstay their welcome; that is, if you welcome this Nymanesque pattern-making at all (the undertone of aggression and the mildly intriguing metrical shifts are about the only signs of higher ambitions). The piece is enjoying some popularity on disc – this is at least its fourth appearance on CD (two being the harpsichord version, in addition to the listed comparison with the composer's daughter as soloist). Once again it is the new recording I marginally prefer.

To take the line of least resistance seems to be Georgs Pelécis's main concern. His *Concertino bianco* dates from 1984, just a few years after the Gubaidulina and Górecki, but so mild is its manner that it seems to be aspiring to the status of a backing track to an entry for the Eurovision Song Contest. If nothing else, the fact that this undeniably pleasant mood music is played by distinguished artists and placed in the company of such distinguished composers is an interesting sociological phenomenon. Or am I missing something? **DJF**