

In the accompanying booklet, Brian Crimp makes some rather extravagant claims for these recordings which cannot be endorsed. One hears supremely confident, secure playing of often spectacular technical accomplishment that frequently seems aloof, detached, and uninvolved. The pianist seems to have little or no emotional response to the music he is playing, as if the music is processed rather than felt. At first, in the Chopin Nocturnes, his extreme understatement is refreshing, but it becomes all too predictable after a while. The sense of pathos, color, and drama that others such as Cortot, Rubenstein, Arrau, and Lipatti have in their very different ways found in this music is absent. The result is flippant and bland to the point of awkwardness.

While Godowsky certainly avoids the extreme mannerisms of many of his contemporaries, this is replaced by an equally extreme literalism that seems strangely alien to his nineteenth century repertoire. Much of the *Carnival* is rather odd, as if he plays the notes as unimaginatively as possible. He apparently did not think about this very personal and descriptive work in any sort of responsive manner. His apparent refusal or inability to shape, inflect, or phrase a melodic line is very damaging. The opening of Rubenstein's "Rêve angelique" in this deadpan approach sounds almost like Phillip Glass. Most of the salon pieces similarly are lacking in charm, character, and style. How one would love to hear Rosenthal perform this music.

The recordings also include instances where one can enjoy Godowsky's playing. Most of the Liszt pieces are technically dazzling. He clearly had one of the great techniques of his or any era. One can only marvel at his finger control in "Gnomengereigen" or the thirds in Mendelssohn's "Rondo capriccioso." In all fairness, there are moments when the pianist seems to come alive, as in the Grieg Ballade and the first movement of the Chopin Sonata. One must mention also his own transcription of Schubert's "Morgengruss." This is truly magical playing with wondrous shadings and a sense of musical progression that is missing from most of the other performances on these discs. One suspects that this is the kind of playing that earned Godowsky his reputation.

These reactions may be extreme. Piano buffs and historical collectors should listen for themselves. These two collections are essential acquisitions for libraries. The work of APR is certainly deserving of our support. Josef Hofmann, Harold Bauer, and Ignaz Friedman also need and deserve APR's attention. Let us hope that someone is listening.
Reviewed by Walter Pate

VERDI: Il trovatore.

Montserrat Caballé, soprano (Leonora); Franca Mattiucci, mezzo-soprano (Azucena); Richard Tucker, tenor (Manrico); Mario Zanasi, baritone (Count di Luna); Ivo Vinco, bass (Ferrando); supporting cast; unidentified chorus and orchestra conducted by Thomas Schippers (recorded from live performance, perhaps broadcast, Florence, October 1968). *Un Ballo in maschera*: Excerpts. Richard Tucker, tenor (Riccardo); Montserrat Caballé, soprano (Amelia); unidentified chorus, orchestra, and conductor (recorded live, perhaps from broadcast, December 3, 1971). Legato Classics LCD 123 (AAD), 2 compact discs (timings: 72:19 & 74:48).

Lyric Distribution, in its present and former corporate identities, has striven over the years to provide a far-ranging documentation of Richard Tucker's work and

Sound Recording Reviews

repertoire. Tucker's presence in the cast is presumably the *raison d'être* for releasing this performance, his photograph gracing the cover of the booklet inside the case. Having Montserrat Caballé's Leonora among its assets will not inhibit sales either. The real reason to cherish this performance, however, lies elsewhere in the credits.

The achievements of Tucker and Caballé as Manrico and Leonora, respectively, have been documented more adequately elsewhere. Tucker sang (before having performed the role on stage) in the fine 1959 R.C.A. Victor recording (AGL3 4146), a set which was notable for Leontyne Price's first complete assay on record, and for Leonard Warren's final statement on record as di Luna, his last studio recording of any role. For her part, Caballé is among the cast of a superb 1970 live performance, formerly available on MRF Records (MRF 134). Of particular interest is its inclusion of a 1975 rendition of the alternative ending that Verdi provided for Paris, as well as Bianca Berini's Azucena (1970 and 1975), a portrayal of awesome power that is the most stunning element of perhaps the best cast and finest live or studio *Trovatore* released to date.

In this 1968 performance, Tucker projects his singing forcefully, but with more leather than juice in his tone, although he gains in suppleness by Act 3. Tucker often sounds better earlier in his career, not due to appreciable diminution of his considerable vocal resources, but because of a tendency to settle into routine the more he sang a role. There are exceptions evident on many occasions, as live recordings demonstrate, but this *Trovatore* does not reverse his overall pattern.

Caballé's singing has less brilliance and fine-grained articulation than she brought to the *Trovatore* Leonora. She sounds a bit logy, especially in the coloratura writing. Caballé seems short of breath in the *cabaletta* to "Tacea la notte placida," and her phrasing is often more labored than one expects from her. Listeners are not likely to find Caballé's work displeasing, anymore than they will Tucker's, but both singers are heard to better advantage in other recordings. As for the excerpts from *Un Ballo in maschera*, Caballé, ideal as Amelia, sings wonderfully, while Tucker is as competent as ever but lacking in the grace and charm that Verdi wrote into Riccardo's music. For discographers wishing to take note, the selections, (recitatives and arias) from *Ballo* include: "Ecco l'orrido campo ... Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa" (Caballé), "Teco io sto ... Non sai tu che se l'anima mia" (Tucker, Caballé), "Forse la soglia attinse ... Ma se m'è orza perderti" (Tucker), and "Ah, dessa è la ... Si, rivederti, Amelia" (Tucker).

Returning to *Trovatore*, one of the lesser-known singers in the cast steals the show and makes this Legato Classics set required listening. Franca Mattiucci was barely a name to this listener before hearing this *Trovatore*. What a surprise! There have been several fine Azucenas on record over the years, but Mattiucci rivals even Bianca Berini as perhaps the most exciting. When cast this strongly, Azucena becomes the focal point of the opera, and Mattiucci truly rivets the listener's attention. She possesses a voice of monumental size, power, and penetrating timbre and solidity that is secure from top to bottom range. Mattiucci also possesses the temperament and dramatic acuity to employ such a resource to almost fearsomely dramatic effect. Her delivery is strikingly incisive, yet she never pushes her voice beyond the weight or force that it should bear.

After exhausting superlatives on Mattiucci, it is easy to dispatch the rest of the cast. Mario Zanasi has good as well as mediocre moments as di Luna, the brightness of his tone only sullied by applying too much vibrato at times and by barking his way through

some of the music. Yet, there is a sweet clarity and airiness to his singing most of the time, especially after he has warmed up by Act 2. Ivo Vinco sings capably, but lacks a major-league voice for this small role with its one big moment.

The technical quality of this release leaves something to be desired. Problems, such as occasional dropout, are due to the source used, but the disconcerting inequalities between channels probably could have been avoided since this is a mono recording. The prompter only rarely intrudes on the listener's attention. Such faults are no more than what the seasoned collector expects. Those interested in high voltage singing should lose no time acquiring this set. May Franca Mattiucci's work be documented in many more releases to come! *Reviewed by C.-P. Gerald Parker*

DUFAY: Missa Ave Regina Caelorum.

Dominique Vellard directing the Ensemble Cantus Figuratus of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. STIL 0710 SAN 85.

SCHÜTZ: 13 Sacred Works (SWV 381, 388, 383, 35, 378, 450, 443, 56, 57, 58, 24, 433, 494).

Michel Lapleinie directing the Vocal Ensemble Sagittarius. STIL 1410 SAN 87. (Available from: Stil Editions, 5 rue de Charonne, F 75011 Paris.)

Record labels of high quality and great interest are not always regularly available. Such is Stil, once distributed as an audiophile line by AudioSource, mostly through equipment dealers. Like so many single proprietors, Alain Villain puts out records one by one, controlling the quality of every element along the way. His two latest are also important additions to the repertoire.

In 1974, the 500th anniversary of Dufay's death, his seven masses were all represented on records. Just a few years later, scarcely any of those issues are close enough to the style of today's performance practice to warrant reissue on CD (David Munrow's EMI/Seraphim recording of the *Missa Se la face ay pale* is one exception), and only the Hilliard Ensemble's *Missa L'homme armé* has been newly recorded for CD. Hence this new version of the composer's last Mass (now dated 1472) is an important addition to the catalogue, not to be overlooked by anyone who wants to keep current on the early Renaissance.

The polyphony is unaccompanied, as required in the cathedral of Cambrai, for which this was written (Dufay was a canon there). The chant for the feast of Pentecost is sung at the appropriate places along the way, rendered in equalist rhythm as appropriate for the period. Vellard, an important singer and director for music from Gregorian chant to the early Renaissance (including all sorts of unfamiliar areas in between), uses ten singers, and his style is impeccable. The analogue engineering makes a superb CD. Notes are useful, but no texts are printed. An essential record.

The title of the other issue is "The Three Ages of the Father of German Music," as Heinrich Schütz is justly described. His three ages are represented by some *Psalms of David* and *Cantiones Sacrae* from his twenties, four of the superb *Geistliche Chormusik* published in 1648, and his final work, the *German Magnificat* from his *Opus Ultimum*. The selection of pieces much recorded in the past makes this a collection of outstanding works spanning most of his life, but there are three rare selections that make this a