

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

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mandatory choice for those who must have everything he wrote. *Herr nun lässest du* (his third setting of the canticle of Simeon), SWV 433, is given what may well be its first recording; dating from 1656, this counts as one of the late works. *Ach, Herr, du Schöpfer*, SWV 450, existed only in a Christmas program on Argo ZRG 590 until the recent Ensemble Clément Janequin version appeared on Harmonia Mundi HMC 901255. *Weib, was weinst du*, SWV 443, an Easter dialogue, likewise had only two obscure recordings until two more appeared recently on MD+G L 3299 and Bellaphon 690 01 031. While three *Cantiones Sacrae* (SWV 56, 57, 58) seem to show up only twice on records, those are in complete or comprehensive collections of that book and have been available widely, as has everything else on the disc.

Laplenie is familiar from many recordings by Ensemble Clément Janequin and Les Arts Florissants. His mostly French group of seventeen singers includes countertenors on the alto line, and the only accompaniment is organ with the usual continuo strings, more modest than some competing versions, but acceptable enough. Notes and texts are printed. Recommended. *Reviewed by J. F. Weber* 