
Adios mi amor Duets for vihuelas.

New

Anonymous Diez diferencias de Foliás. Diferencias de çaravanda. Fantasia de Lopez^a. Foliás en primer tono. Recercata^b. Tiento^b. **Dalza** Calata ala spagnola^a. Calata ala spagnola ditto terzetti. Caldibi castigliano. Tostar de corde^b. **Gombert** Assiste parata (arr. Valderrábano). **Guerrero** Adios mi amor. Huyd, huyd, o çiegos amadores. Niño Dios d'amor herido. Si tus penas no pruebo. Todos aman. **Josquin Desprez** Mille regretz. **Morales** Et in Spiritum Sanctum (arr. Valderrábano). **Morlaye** Conte Clare. Gaillarde (Romanesca). **Mudarra** Romanesca: O Guardame las vacas. **Narváez** Mille regretz (La canción del Emperador)^a. **Valderrábano** Música para discantar sobre un punto. Sobre el tenor del conde claros. **Victoria** O Magnum Mysterium.

Delitiae Musicae (ªManuel Minguillón Nieto, ^bJesús Sánchez, vihuelas).

Brilliant Classics 94302 (budget price, 1 hour 3 minutes). *Website* www.brilliantclassics.com. *Producer/Engineer* Adrian Hunter. *Dates* August 5th-7th, 2010.

What could be lovelier than a vihuela? Why, two of them, of course! This small, vaguely guitar-shaped instrument held the position in sixteenth-century Spain that the lute occupied throughout the rest of Europe. Strung with six or seven courses and tuned like the Renaissance lute its sound is even gentler, with a subtle additional dryness and warmth of tone. Even more than the lute, the vihuela is an intimate instrument, best played in small surroundings in private or before a small audience. It is thus perfectly suited to disc.

Jesús Sánchez and Manuel Minguillón Nieto, who form Delitiae Musicae (not to be confused with the Italian vocal ensemble of the same name), have put together a very attractive collection of pieces for their first recording, with plenty of captivating melodies and much variety of styles and moods. Sánchez's concise but

informative notes provide a comprehensive description of the programme, explaining clearly, for those concerned to know, which pieces are original duets and which are arrangements (or intabulations) by the performers or even to some degree improvised – in each case in accordance with authentic Renaissance practices. Two pieces by the Frenchman Guillaume Morlaye, originally lute solos, are included in this essentially Spanish programme. These, a galliard based on the *Romanesca* tune and variations on another Spanish song, *Conde claros*, are played uniquely in the recital on Renaissance guitar and lute and are also examples of the Renaissance technique of improvising an additional part over an ostinato (or ground). There are also four dances by the Venetian Joan Ambrosio Dalza, which Delitiae Musicae plays unusually on vihuela to honour his probable Spanish origins, once again improvising an additional part over the original ostinato-based work. Several other pieces are reductions for two vihuelas of polyphonic vocal music by Spanish and Franco-Flemish composers active in Spain. Two of these, arrangements of Nicolas Gombert's *Assiste parata* and Cristóbal de Morales's *Et in Spiritum Sanctum*, are the only original mid-sixteenth-century vihuela duets in the recital, written around 1550 by Enríquez de Valderrábano. Delitiae Musicae has used these as models for its own successful arrangements of sacred *villancicos* and motets by Francisco Guerrero and Tomás Luis de Victoria.

All these works Delitiae Musicae plays with considerable élan, pointing up nicely the rhythms of the different dances and cleanly articulating the different voices in the polyphonic pieces. The players' full, rounded tone and measured style impart an attractive gravity especially to their sacred music arrangements. They also adopt excitingly fast tempos in some of the dances, where their nimbleness and the cleanness of their fingering are impressive.

Interspersed among the duets are six solos, allowing one to appreciate the individual qualities of each performer. Sánchez seems the more brilliant and vigorous of the two and his seven-course vihuela certainly has the brighter tone. Minguillón Nieto, playing a six-course vihuela, seems both moodier and marginally more precise, making him the natural choice to play Luis de Narváez's delicious variations on Josquin's melancholic *Mille regretz*.

The recording was made in a small Gloucestershire church whose mildly resonant, almost large salon-like acoustic is nicely suited to the duo's instruments. The sympathetic sound engineering places both instruments close enough to the listener for the performers' breathing and movements to be clearly heard, but not so as to saturate the sound stage.

A gem of a disc.

Christopher Price