



This is the fourth and final volume of a series devoted to Froberger's complete Suites, nearly

50 in total over eight CDs recorded over six years. They include the contents of the two autograph manuscripts dedicated to Froberger's patron, Emperor Ferdinand III, and those ascribed to the composer in other manuscripts (some famous and others less so). A few, finally, are attributed to the composer on various grounds. To judge by those included in this volume (including the one with which Gilbert Rowland rounds off the series, in whose opening I detect faint echoes of Byrd), these attributions are plausible at the very least and worth hearing in any case. Froberger is often referred to as a link between Frescobaldi's Italy and Bach, but it's perhaps in the Suites most of all that this historical perspective takes on palpable, audible form (the conclusion of the Gigue of the D minor Suite, FbWV639, being a case in point).

Rowland opts for continuity across the series, recording with the same harpsichord (a modern copy of a 1750 instrument) in the same venue and with the same engineer. In common with the previous volumes, Rowland begins the latest instalment with a Suite whose opening Allemande bears a programmatic or descriptive title; this one is the lament commemorating his being attacked and robbed while on his travels. One is thereby reminded of Froberger's endearing (and decidedly contemporary) willingness to let his biography intrude into his music. It's a thoughtful opening gambit on Rowland's part but even without it, Froberger extracts such variety from these dance forms that one can listen to each CD at one sitting without the ear being jaded in the slightest.

An entire, complex and sympathetic personality is on show, whose assimilation of different musical influences is constantly evident. Rowland is a fluent guide, discreet though not entirely self-effacing (I lost myself down a rabbit hole observing the desynchronisation of hands; the harpsichordist's bread-and-butter, perhaps, but in Rowland's hands a pleasure to listen to) and above all, as befits this music, elegant. (The meaning of Froberger's performance instruction, 'discretion', is not entirely clear but one feels that Rowland approaches its spirit.) Add to this a precise and atmospheric sound recording and you have a serious statement about a composer who deserves even wider recognition. After such a monument one really wishes for

a postscript from Rowland, including some of the famous stand-alone character pieces (such as the laments on the death of Ferdinand III or the lutenist Blancrocher) that have been recorded before but on which Rowland's insights would be welcome indeed. **Fabrice Fitch**

Garūta · Māgi

'Baltic Tides'

Garūta Études for the Sostenuto Pedal. Legenda. Meditation. Four Preludes **Māgi** The Ancient Kannel. Junipers of Kassari. Ten Piano Pieces - Nos 1-4 & 6-8. Three Sea Tableaux

Eva Maria Doroszkowska *pf*

First Hand (FHR177 • 71)



This is a beautifully conceived and executed album, combining deeply

felt, meticulously crafted and in some cases previously unrecorded music by the leading women of 20th-century Latvian and Estonian music, respectively Lūcija Garūta (1902-77) and Ester Māgi (1922-2021).

The two are not interspersed, but presented in that order. Garūta is building quite a presence on disc, to which pianist Eva Maria Doroszkowska's contribution here is significant. She opens with the first-ever recording of the composer's *Legenda*, a rhapsodic, lyrical work lined with that soulful melancholy which is so distinctively tinted when born of a Latvian musical mind. Each of the composer's four *Études for the Sostenuto Pedal* does something different but it's notable how No 2, 'Fairytale', starts out with sprinkled lightness before gaining potent weight; it is delectably paced by Doroszkowska. There is a similar majesty and solemnity to *Meditation*, which was later transcribed for organ. Scriabin lurks behind Garūta's Four Preludes. No 2 is a highly affecting piece; when Nos 3 and 4 were choreographed, the composer titled them 'Sorrowful Longing' and 'Turbulent Longing'. Enough said.

Māgi's music combines polyphony, impressionism and the raw material of Estonia's runic singing tradition (similar to Finland's). She was perhaps the more naturally pianistic composer of the two; there is more continuity and momentum here than in Garūta's piano works (which achieve something subtly different) and the certain feeling of a pianism filtered through late Brahms. *Three Sea Tableaux* is the album's standout multi-movement work, containing snapshots of the Baltic's infinite variety whose descriptive qualities are hypnotically evocative (the album cover

speaks volumes). They were written in Laulasmaa, the woody peninsula that now houses the Arvo Pärt Centre, in whose concert hall this album was recorded.

There is an obsessive, minimalist tendency to Māgi's *Junipers of Kassari*, a pianistic portrait of the island off Estonia's west coast. We hear seven of the composer's 10 Piano Pieces, all first recordings – taut, attractive miniatures in which No 3, 'Trouble Song', seems to adumbrate the mystic spiritualism that would take root in later Estonian music. Doroszkowska ends with *The Ancient Kannel*, a tribute to folklorist Herbert Tampere in which the pianist's hands plunge us into the shamanistic world of Estonian folklore, where expressive elements mingle with thematic chants picked out in octaves. In summary, this is vital for our understanding of 20th-century Baltic music and just the sort of album I long for musicians to make. **Andrew Mellor**

Mozart

Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darin, K620b.

Adagio in C, K356. Fantasias - in F minor, K594; in F minor, K608. Fugues - in C, K394; in C minor, K426/546; in G minor, K401. Zwei kleine Fugen (Versetten), K154a. Eine kleine Gigue, K574. Londoner Skizzenbuch, K Anh109b - excs. Suite in C, K399 - Overture. Eine Walze in einer kleinen Orgel in F, K616

David Goode *org*

Signum (SIGCD899 •• • 74)

Played on the Metzler organ of Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge



'It is a kind of composition which I detest', wrote Mozart of the F minor

Fantasia for mechanical clock, K594. 'If it were for a large instrument and the work would sound like an organ piece, then I might get some fun out of it. But, as it is, the works consist solely of little pipes, which sound too high-pitched and too childish for my taste.'

Yet the piece he eventually produced, the F minor Fantasia, K594, is nothing short of a miniature masterpiece in the churning harmonies of its framing *Adagio* and the frothing counterpoint of its central *Allegro*. It was followed by further works for the same clockwork organ: another F minor Fantasia (K608), which David Goode acknowledges as Mozart's greatest organ work, and the magical F major *Andante* (K616), which breathes the rarefied air of *The Magic Flute* and could be the product of no one other than Mozart.