

anonymous Prelude on track 6 can be traced from “VdGS A-8875” in the booklet, via “05 ANON-TABLATURE-F” in the online *Index*, where sources are grouped in alphabetical order of viol tuning (in this case, fedfh), to page A-fedfh-8, where we find it comes from Goëss A, (p. 88). My only real gripe with this CD is its cover: I would have preferred to see a photo of The Little Consort or a painting of the Goëss family, rather than the ghostly, dark, uninviting picture they have.

The CD begins with Divisions in A minor on a Ground, by Dietrich Stöeffken. He was one of the most prominent viol players of the 17th century with an international reputation, and, according to Roger North, a good friend of John Jenkins. Stöeffken’s date of birth is unknown; he died c. 1673. (His name survives with various spellings. It usually appears as Dietrich Stefkens in the Goëss manuscripts, where much of the viol music is attributed to him. It is given as Steffkens in the VdGS *Thematic Index*.) The ground is well sustained on Richard Carter’s bass viol and Hermann Platzer’s theorbo, while Johanna Valencia plays Stöeffken’s virtuosic divisions, developing a variety of musical ideas: slow divisions with just a few high notes, then more movement with answering phrases, faster bursts developing a lively point, triplets, back to duple time with fast notes covering a wide range up and down the neck, arpeggios, a simpler melody with the theorbo more to the fore, a point involving repeated notes, very fast divisions interspersed with a dum diddy rhythm, rich chords, deep low notes – a wealth of material, of which, no doubt, Christopher Simpson, author of *The Division-Viol*, would have approved. The three musicians join together for two other sets of divisions, one of which, attributed to “Pater Switoni”, is thought to be by Christopher Simpson. All the other pieces on the CD are solos, either for the viol or the theorbo.

Hermann Platzer plays three suites for the theorbo, in A minor, G major, and G minor, all from the Goëss theorbo book. The A minor suite consists of a Prelude (43r) by Nicolas Hotman, where the whole of the first stave and a quarter is devoted to the chord of A minor. It is followed by a slow Allemande (42v) by Hotman, where Platzer adds a few extra ornaments to those notated in the manuscript. A Passegalle (40v-41r) by Jacques de Saint-Luc makes its slow way along with many ornaments and *séparé* chords, campanella effects, and out of nothing, a surprising k l on the third course (the highest sounding string). The suite perks up with a Gigue (43v-44r) by Hotman, where the upper voice has quite high notes, while the bass, very much lower, spends much of its time on the long diapasons, right down to the 14th course.

For many years, Johanna Valencia has been exploring music for the lute viol. In her ground-breaking recording “What if a Day” (ORF CD 3098), she presented a selection of music from Peter Leycester’s viol manuscript, using six different tunings. For the present CD she uses three: Viol or Lute way (ffeff) for track 1, High Harp way flat (fedfh) for three suites and two sets of divisions in D minor, and an unnamed tuning (fedef) for two suites in B flat major. The first Suite in D minor consists of an anonymous Prelude, a gentle Allemande by Stöeffken, a mournful anonymous Sarabande & Double, and a bustling Courante by Stöeffken. The music is tastefully interspersed here and there with double stops – just enough to clarify the harmony, without interfering with the flow of the melody. The second Suite – an Allemande, Courante and Sarabande by Stöeffken – a two- and three-part texture is created now by hopping from the bass to the treble and back (as with Thomas Mace’s viol piece on p. 251 of *Musick’s Monument*), and now with double-stopping. The fact that all voices cannot be sustained when bowed on a viol, as they can when plucked on a lute, is in some ways an advantage, because the texture is thin and light, with no unnecessary padding, and the tone is enhanced by the extra resonance from the various tunings. The third Suite in D minor consists of a superb Allemande ‘F.S.’, and Sarabande & Double. This is viol-playing at its best, where a single viol with a beautiful tone and well-shaped phrases captivates and draws the listener in. At the start of Goëss B is the proverb “Contentement passe richesse” (Happiness is worth more than riches), understandably chosen for the title of this excellent CD.

Stewart McCoy

Adoramus Te (Motets, songs and consort music) William Byrd & Peter Philips – The Rose Consort of Viols, Clare Wilkinson. Deux-Elles DXL 1155

The well-known Breughel painting ‘Hearing’ (1618) on the cover gives an unusually good hint of the music on this disk: a singer, six viols, in a variety of sizes including the large great bass, performing chamber music from the Lowlands written around the turn of the seventeenth century. (Pedants hoping also to hear parrots, a deer and a naked lutenist may, alas, feel unfulfilled.)

John Bryan’s magisterial programme notes draw many fascinating parallels between the apparently distinct lives of William Byrd and Peter Philips. The same blend of scholarship, line and detail is evident in the playing of the Rose Consort. These are sensitive and flawless performances, captured on the recording with great clarity and a little warmth. The counterpoint can be heard with ease, assisted by tempi which admittedly at times lean towards the slower side.

The carefully chosen programme exploits the variety of repertoire available to a single voice and viol consort, including consort songs, motets and other sacred pieces. The consort pieces are in three, five and six parts. Among the six-part pieces the selection makes the most of the different scoring possibilities available, from the doleful combination of voice, pairs of tenor and bass viols and great bass viol in Byrd’s ‘Domine