

But Visse has recognized the extension of the idea of “street cries” to the wider scope of “the cry”, expressing more impassioned sentiments. An early example of this expansion was a patriotic *cantate melologue* or partsong-with-recitation, *Le Cri du Bagnerais*, by Alfred Roland (1797-1874), sung, as intended, as a nostalgic gesture by Bonepartist veterans in a reunion on the Waterloo battlefield in 1840. A far more “realistic” military picture is ventured by Vincent Scotto (1874-1952) in his comic evocation of sex-starved soldiers at the front in *Le Cri du Poilu* (perhaps translatable as “The Cry of GI-Joe”). But Claude Ledoux (b.1960) has drawn on dimensions of modern life in his *Cri de Blog*, a deliberately chaotic collage pitting the biographical confession (in verse!) of an HIV-infected prostitute against the vacuous words and technological sounds around us. And ideological activism is behind *Le Cri* of Bruno Ducol (b.1949), a torrent of protests against tyranny that is hardly music at all.

It takes quite a bit of tolerance to enjoy everything in this program. But the virtuosity of the group’s six singers is incontestable, and they are often put to huge strains and challenges. (They are joined intermittently by players on lute, piano, organ, and double bass.) Not simply entertainment here, but quite varied food for thought.

Since verbal expression is so important in this material, it is a great pity that Harmonia Mundi gives us only the French texts, without translations. *Bonne chance!*

BARKER

### Hohes Lied

**DANIEL-LESUR:** *Dialogue; La Voix du Bien-Aime; Le Songe; Le Roi Salomon; Le Jardin Clos; La Sulamite; Epithalame*; **FASCH:** *Mass*; **RAVEL:** *Soupir*; **DEBUSSY:** *Des Pas sur la Neige; Les Angelus*; **SCHUMANN:** *Fruhlingfahrt; Wehmut; Waldesgesprach; Mondnacht*

Stuttgart Chamber Choir/ Frieder Bernius  
Carus 83222—66 minutes

Excellent singers, a world-class choral conductor, terrific sound, and a booklet with full notes and translations, and still I’m ambivalent about this release. What I like is Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur’s set of seven settings from *Le Cantique des Cantiques*, the biblical *Song of Songs*. Be assured that Daniel-Lesur (1908-2002) has more to recommend him than the oddity of hyphenated first and last names. An assistant of the great Tournemire at St Clotilde, he was a contemporary of Messiaen and Jolivet. After the Second World War he was appointed Director of the Schola Cantorum in Paris and wound up heading the Music Department of France’s Ministry of Culture. His settings of the *Song of Songs* sound

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staunchly religious and not very erotic. The music will suggest Messiaen, but you’ll hear some *Daphnis*-like rhythms when the Shulamite dances and some jazzy harmonies in ‘La Voix’ as the voice of the beloved travels over hill and dale. All in all, it’s pretty handsome stuff, especially when brought off sensitively by these artists. If a 20-minute set of unfamiliar but worthy French fare sounds enticing, by all means go for it.

What doesn’t thrill me is this “world premiere recording” of Carl Friederich Christian Fasch’s Mass for 16 voices, a glorious Mass that deserves better than it gets here. Bernius *et al* seem intent on turning it into a secular *concerto grosso*, with cool, straight voices crescendoing and decrescendoing their way through the syllables, words, phrases, and cadences of the liturgy. A spiritually aware performance of this would be something to treasure. This time around, though, you hear the notes but are left wondering what they would sound like sung by performers who cared about what they were singing.

Back on the plus side, the transcriptions of Clytus Gottwald are fascinating—especially the three excerpts from Schumann’s Opus 39 *Liederkreis*, which are a little busy but quite beautiful in their way. If the Fasch has you feeling leery, remember that Marcus Creed and the SW German Radio Vocal Ensemble have recorded a stunning program of Gottwald arrangements of Ravel, Caplet, Messiaen, Debussy, Berg, Wagner, and Mahler on Carus 83181. Unlike this program, that one gets an unreserved thumbs-up.

GREENFIELD

### Les Chantres Musiciens

**DUBOIS:** *Mass*; **SCHMITT:** *Psalm 112; Cantique de Simeon*; **LANGLAIS:** *Corpus Christi*; **DURUFLE:** *Cum Jubilo Mass*; **FRANCK:** *Psalm 150*

Antonio Figueroa, t; Marc Boucher, bar; Regis Rousseau, org; Les Chantres Musiciens,  
Les Voix Elles/ Gilbert Patenaude  
XXI 1582—60 minutes

Most of this music emanates from the quiet spaces, and the 20 young male voices of Montreal’s Chantres Musiciens croon it elegantly and with commendable attention to spiritual detail. The warm, serene harmonies of the Mass for Tenor Solo, Men’s Choir and Organ by Theodore DuBois (1837-1924) made me wish I were singing the work instead of writing about it. The plainsong that animates the six songs of Jean Langlais’s *Corpus Christi* and Duruflé’s flowing *Cum Jubilo* Mass oozes prayerful intensity; and if you’ve not experienced the heady chromaticism given voice by Florent Schmitt (1870-1958), here’s your

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chance. The men are joined by 12 female voices for a lovely, rather chaste performance of Franck's *Psalm 150*. (It could be juicier, I suppose, but why break the mood?)

First-class organ playing is a must in the French choral idiom, and the keyboard artistry on display here is formidable indeed. English notes are supplied; but for the texts, it's Latin and French only.

GREENFIELD

### Song of the Stars: Catalan Choral

**GRANADOS:** *Cant de les Estrelles; Escena Religiosa; Romanza; Salve Regina*; **CASALS:** *Rosarium Beate Virginis Mariae; Recordare, Virgo Mater; Nigra Sum*; **MORERA:** *El Rossinyol; Ave Maria*; **BLANCAFORT:** *Cant d'Amor*; **OLTRA:** *Preludio; Eco*

Mark Kruczek, org; Douglas Riva, p; Erica Kiesewetter, v; Voices of Ascension/  
Dennis Keene  
Naxos 570533—63 minutes

Enrique Granados (Enric in Catalan) gave the premiere of his piano suite, *Goyescas*, in Barcelona on 11 March 1911. Also introduced on that program was his 17-minute *Song of the Stars*, a poem composed by Heinrich Heine, translated into Catalan, and set for piano, organ, and choral voices by the composer. Things must have gone well, because the post-romantic sensibilities of the work scored big with both the critics and the public. Alas, Granados chose not to publish the *Cant de les Estrelles* and, owing to a Kafkaesque series of events recounted in the notes, it wasn't performed again until Maestro Keene and his Voices of Ascension got ahold of it for a pair of New York concerts recorded by Naxos in 2007. Of all the works here, it's the one that reaches beyond Catalunya, beyond Spain, beyond anyone's liturgy and heads—well, beyond. ("We want to visit new worlds! Break the enchantment of love! There's no escape from its bonds! Infinite space! Endlessly still!")

Granados begins with a five-minute piano solo redolent of the 19th Century romantics, then has the organ join the piano for the ascent to an otherworldly realm. The sopranos enter on an ethereal pianissimo ("O infinite vastness and stillness of space!"), having been set up exquisitely by the piano. The rest is dominated by the chorus, which intones the core of the poem with ever-increasing spiritual intensity. I confess that the inclusion of audience applause bothers me far less than usual because it is so moving to hear Granados's handiwork connect despite the 98-year gap between its first two performances.

He also gives us a *Salve Regina* that harkens back to the Renaissance, a lyrical *Roman-*

*za* for violin and piano, and a deeply-felt *Escena Religiosa* for those same instruments with a cameo performance by the organ. The instrumental works are played beautifully (especially the *Escena*, where violinist Erica Kiesewetter really digs in), and I will return to both. Naxos set the mikes pretty close to the fiddle in that second work, by the way, but the ear adjusts quickly. This is Granados as most of us have never heard him.

Pablo (Pau) Casals's 'Nigra sum' has become a staple of the repertoire for women's choir; and this cool, calm performance is pleasant, if a bit detached. You also should enjoy Casals's less familiar offerings, especially his ten brief and chaste evocations of the Rosary composed for the choir of the Monastery of Montserrat. There's also a striking 'Ave Maria' for women's voices by Enric Morera (1865-1942) and a pair of songs by Manuel Oltra (b 1922) that head straight for the soul of Spain, just like the poems of Federico Garcia Lorca that inspired them. We yell at Naxos when their notes and translations aren't satisfactory, so let's praise them here when they are.

GREENFIELD

### Love Duets

*Faust, Pearl Fishers, Carmen, Otello, Iris, Boheme, Turandot*

Rosanna Carteri, Giuseppe Di Stefano; RAI Turin/  
Arturo Basile; Milan Symphony/ Antonio Tonini  
Preiser 93454—79 minutes

A very well-filled disc. The duets portion is an all-too-brief 1957 EMI LP. Di Stefano is a bit over his head in the *Otello* (he was foolish enough to try the entire role once in San Diego opposite Tito Gobbi). But many tenors ill suited to the Moor do well with this lyrical duet. Some typical Di Stefano comments apply: he sings sometimes through the passagio with the voice sometimes spreading on top, but there is much amazingly gorgeous, heartfelt singing and a joy in performing. You should also get this for the lovely singing of Carteri. Her lyric soprano is also beautiful and heartfelt. (Record collectors best know her for one of the finest *Traviatas* with Valletti, Warren, and Montoux—available on Testament and Myto.) It can be pure unadulterated joy for a sometimes jaded reviewer to listen to two gifted singers. In the 1952 arias heard here, Carteri walks away with the honors. No vocal difficulties. Yes, the French arias and duets are sung in Italian and sound like Verdi and verismo. But with singing of such quality, who cares? Carteri's *Boheme* arias are the finest moments here. Her recording of the complete opera is

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