Ulrich Pförtsch

Intermezzo

Paul Peuerl | Johann Pachelbel | Claude Debussy | Missimiliano Neri | Samuel Scheidt | Johann Sebastian Bach | Eberhard Kraus | Friedemann Winklhofer | Dietrich Buxtehude | Robert Schumann | Franz Schubert | Giuseppe Verdi | Julius Fucik | Bernhard Etzel | Carl Maria von Weber

CD aud 97.469

Musikmarkt 6. November 2000 (- 2000.11.06)

Für seine klingende Visitenkarte wählte das Ensemble Kompositionen von Paul...

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Crescendo Sommer 2001 (EW - 2001.07.01)

Wozu vier Posaunen in der Lage sind, zeigt das münchner posaunen 4uartett auf...

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Klassik heute 04/2001 (Gerhard Pätzig - 2001.04.01)

So ganz korrekt ist es nicht, sich auf die "seit etwa sechs Jahrhunderten nahezu...

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Das Orchester 5/2001 (Heinz Fadle - 2001.05.01)

Die vorhandene Literatur für ein Ensemble von vier Posaunen ist auch heute noch...

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Musik zum Lesen 07-08/2002 (- 2002.07.01)

"Intermezzo" hält neue Impressionen eines Instruments bereit, das seit etwa sechs Jahrhunderten nahezu unverändert gebaut wird. Der Choral als Gattung, der schon immer das Aufgabenfeld dieses Instruments durchzogen hat, wird auch hier immer wieder spürbar. Das Quartett besteht aus Thomas Horch, Dany Bonvin, Ulrich Pförtsch und Volker Hensiek, allesamt im "Hauptberuf" bei führenden Orchestern beschäftigt.

American Record Guide 4/2001 (Barry Kilpatrick - 2001.07.01)

This all-star German group includes Thomas Horch, who has made two solo recordings (Nov/Dec 2000: 281; Mar/Apr 2001: 213) and is principal trombonist of the Bavarian Radio Symphony. The other ensemble members are Dany Bonvin, principal of the Munich Philharmonic; Uli Pfortsch, principal of the Bavarian Opera Orchestra; and Volker Hensiek, bass trombonist of the Bamberg Symphony.

Most of these works were arranged by Horch. Deftly executed ornaments enliven a set of sprightly dances by Paul Peuerl (c 1570-c 1625), and a Fantasia and Fugue by Pachelbel is very somber. A sonata by Massimiliano Neri (c 1600-66) is fascinating and multifaceted, and a set of Schumann miniatures ends with the delightful \'Knecht Ruprecht\'. The chorale Nun komm der Heiden Heiland\' is the basis for works by Scheidt and Bach, a very dissonant chorale prelude by Eberhard Kraus (b 1931) that includes extensive mute work, and an introspective Introduction and Chorale by Friedemann Winkelhofer (b 1951).

Munich sounds much like the Triton and Vienna trombone quartets--vibrant, beautifully blended, and intensely concentrated. Unlike most quartets, though, it often varies its instrumentation to obtain timbral variety. Horch plays alto trombone on about half of the selections. Truly unusual is bass trombonist Hensiek\'s use of the rarely heard contrabass trombone, an instrument that operates in tuba register with trombone tone. With it Hensiek produces the most remarkable very-low-register trombone sound I have heard--from huge fortissimos to easy, gentle pianissimos. The instrument is prominent in Julius Fucik\'s \'Entry of the Gladiators\' and in a set of Debussy arrangements, especially \'General Lavine\' and \'Jimbo\'s Lullaby\' (the suite also includes \'Canopes\' and the whimsical \'Hommage a S Pickwick, Esq PPMPC\', based on \'God Save the Queen\'). Plenty of contrabass trombone is heard in Hensiek\'s setting of Weber\'s Freischutz Overture. This exciting reading almost--not quite--overcomes my dislike of orchestral work s arranged for chamber ensembles.

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Der neue Merker 01/2008 (Dorothea Zweipfennig - 2008.01.01)

Bläser-Musik nicht nur zu Weihnachten mit dem Münchner Posaunen Quartett, das...

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Ouverture - Works for Trombone Quartet

Michael Praetorius | Johann Sebastian Bach | Joseph Bodin de Boismortier | Gioacchino Rossini | Samuel Barber | Claude Debussy | Johannes Brahms | Gaetano Donizetti

CD aud 97.533

www.musicweb-international.com February 2008 (Dan Morgan - 2008.02.01)

Brass quartets can be most rewarding, as I discovered with the recent Tetraphonics disc of 20th-century music for four saxophones. Far from being an assault on the ears it turned out to be chockful of challenging music very well played [review]. But at least there is some original music for sax quartet, which is not the case with trombones. Hence the Munich quartet's Thomas Horch decided to make his own arrangements of pieces written for other instruments and ensembles.

An arranger and academic Horch is no mean player either, having been principal trombonist with the Berlin Philharmonic from 1987 to 1989. At the time this recording was made – in 1996 – Dany Bonvin and Uli Pförtsch were principals with the Munich Philharmonic and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra respectively, while Volker Hensiek played bass trombone in the Bamberg Symphony.

As much as I wanted to enjoy the earlier items I found there simply wasn't enough variety of timbre and dynamic to hold my attention for long. The Praetorius dances – two ballets, a galliard and a courant – are all despatched in ringing style but there is an relentless quality to the music-making that may deter all but the most dedicated brass fans. Yes, the Bach Prelude and Fugue is neatly done, the opening of the prelude especially sonorous, but there is little character here. The fugue fares rather better, with some deft articulation, but ultimately it all seems a little bloodless.

The Boismortier – originally scored for three flutes and continuo – is cast in the form Adagio-Allegro-Largo-Allegro, the faster movements full of brio and bite, the Largo characterised by a pleasing instrumental blend and real gravitas. Perhaps a warmer, more expansive acoustic might have helped to tame the trombones' natural edge, especially in the more exposed upper registers.

Some extra 'air' would certainly been welcome in the 'horn call' at 4:06 in the Rossini but that said the players achieve some wonderful, rich sonorities in the run-up to the famous gallop. The latter is dashed off in great style; surely one of the more invigorating and infectious arrangements on this disc.

Curiously Barber's Adagio, derived from the second movement of his String Quartet No. 1, Op. 11, has become synonymous with sadness and tragedy. Indeed, listeners of BBC Radio 4's Today programme voted it the 'saddest' piece of classical music ever written. The natural timbre of the trombone – especially

in the lower registers – may lend itself to mourning but to their credit the Munich quartet invest the long, flowing melodies with a genuine sense of nobility. The climax is splendid but it's the gentle ending that is most moving. This really is exceptional playing, sensitively done.

The Petite Suite is not the work Debussy wrote for four hands in 1869 but a suite of the arranger's own choosing. First up is the delightful Minstrels from Book I of the Préludes. Delectably sprung, the piece has all the harmonic colouring of the piano original plus a real sense of fun. Taken from the same book The Girl with the Flaxen Hair is rather more serene – after all it is marked Très calme et doucement espressif – eliciting some secure and surprisingly tender playing. There's nothing restrained about the jazz-inflected rhythms of Golliwog's Cakewalk, from Children's Corner (1908). Again the quartet bring a welcome degree of spontaneity to the music, especially in the staccato chords that pepper the piece.

They also rise to the rather different rhythmic challenges of Brahms's 3rd and 4th Hungarian Dances, which come across with plenty of vigour. As a foil to this Magyar moodiness comes the Italianate warmth of the overture to Donizetti's comic masterpiece Don Pasquale. Full of wit and point this is a real test of the trombonists' expressive skills. Needless to say they are more than equal to the task.

This disc gets better with repeated listening, but I still feel the early pieces are the least successful. From the Barber onwards matters improve, though; it's impossible not to smile at the humour of the Cakewalk or bask in the genial warmth of Pasquale. The liner-notes – in English and German – are surprisingly informal, which gives you a pretty good idea of the players' approach to the music. Well worth a spin, even if this isn't your usual fare.

Der neue Merker 01/2008 (Dorothea Zweipfennig - 2008.01.01)

Bläser-Musik nicht nur zu Weihnachten mit dem Münchner Posaunen Quartett, das...

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www.critic-service.de Dezember 2009 (Christian Ekowski - 2009.12.01)

Trompeten-Ensembles hört man oft, weil sie zumeist brillant schmettern und den...

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