

PLAYS ON ALL CD- AND SACD- PLAYER



Press Info:

**Giovanni Gabrieli
Heinrich Schütz**

Polychoral Splendour
from the four galleries of the
Abbey Church of Muri

**CAPPELLA MURENSIS
LES CORNETS NOIRS**
Johannes Strobl, musical director



The young Heinrich Schütz's four-year sojourn with Giovanni Gabrieli proved to be one of the most fruitful educational journeys to Italy undertaken by German musicians, artists and writers. Following his return, Schütz presented his *Psalms of David* in 1619: an impressive result of his encounter with the Italian musical style. These *Teutsche Psalmen auf Italienische Manier* ("German Psalms in the Italian Manner") are consistently based on the polychoral style with which Schütz had become acquainted in the Venetian tradition of *cori spezzati*. As first organist of St Mark's, Venice, Gabrieli included in his compositions the architecture of this ecclesiastical building in a unique way, placing the singers and instrumentalists, who were divided into as many as four choirs, in facing galleries, thus achieving remarkable sonic and spatial effects.

On this recording the *Cappella Murensis* and the ensemble *Les Cornets Noirs* make use of the four galleries in the Abbey Church at Muri, following the historic model: in the works for two, three and four choirs, voices and instruments blend with a total of four continuo organs, producing a unique sound. The inclusion of the two large historic Bossart organs ("Epistle" and "Gospel Organ") as continuo instruments creates an additional dynamic palette. Rather than being constantly present as soloists, the vocal parts are often integrated, as instruments, into the overall sound, thus appearing all the more prominent in solo passages. This supports the compelling contrast between expansive *tutti* and *concertante* sections characteristic of this music.

With magnificent Sonatas and Canzonas by Giovanni Gabrieli, *Les Cornets Noirs*, led by the cornettists Gebhard David and Bork-Frithjof Smith, once more showcase themselves as one of the leading European ensembles in the field of early baroque music.

With Italy in mind, the abbots and master builders designed the octagonal nave of the Abbey Church at Muri with its four galleries especially for polychoral music-making. The *Cappella Murensis* under its founder Johannes Strobl and *Les Cornets Noirs* regularly perform here using several choirs spaced widely apart.

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