

ALL'ITALIANA

« I suppose one should refrain from a review if all that can be said is uniformly negative or positive – in this case, I shall let my enthusiasm go unfettered. Karl Wilhelm built for Église Madonna della Difesa, in Montreal PQ Canada, a magnificent organ of 15 stops in the Italian style. While not an exact copy, the sonorities of the Italian instruments inspired this organ through and through. It is delicate and assertive at the same time. This organ balances charm and energy in such a way that a player such as Catherine Todorovski can work small miracles with the music of 16th, 17th, and 18th century Italian composers.

Todorovski's approach to this organ music is obviously through the eyes and ears of a harpsichordist. She was born in Toulouse, France and studied harpsichord with Kenneth Gilbert in France and the late Scott Ross and Rejean Poirier in Québec. She was an organ student of Antoine Bouchard. Her playing was influenced by Gustav Leonhardt and Luigi Tagliavini, and she received awards in playing from conservatories in Toulouse and Paris. She was a graduate student at Laval University in Québec City and received a Doctorate in Harpsichord Performance from the University of Montréal in 1992.

The musical energy of her performance keeps the listener's attention throughout the broad scope of the German and Italian music on this CD. There is the well-known music of Frescobaldi, Froberger, Walther, Krebs, and the Bach family but the joy of the album comes with the music of little known Italian composers: Baldassare Galuppi, Giuseppe Gherardeschi, Giovanni Ferrini and Giuseppe Paganelli. The unknowns are just as fresh as the essential stock-in-trade stable of composers that every organist knows and expects to hear.

This is a marriage of organ, acoustic, and performer that may only be possible in a few of the richly ornate and acoustically "perfect" churches in a city like Montréal. The delicacy of the organ is offset by a rich reverberation that assures the ambiance the listener would expect for the Italian literature. Combined with Todorovski's intuitively musical playing, the listener's attention never flags. That is high achievement for many an organ recording! Highly recommended. »

Herbert L. Huestis, PhD

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