

an attractively delicate touch on these harpsichords. He emphasizes a simpler and more lyrical side of this music than the conventional brilliance that the younger generations learned from Gustav Leonhardt. He isn't cultivating charm, but he is playing famously excellent period instruments carefully and letting the compositions speak for themselves.

His ornaments are not automated twitches of his fingers, but he takes the time to make them better than that. They are languid vocal shapes—like savoring the syllables of spoken poetry. They are sometimes slightly clumsy. It seems more human that way, not prefabricated.

Aficionados will already have other favorite recordings of Rameau's music. The readings of those pieces here are ordinary. Immerseel is better at the next generation's pieces on Disc 3.

The tuning is good except where some of the meantone fifths have drifted to be irregularly too narrow. This is most apparent in a few Couperin pieces on the Hemsch harpsichord, Disc 1. Immerseel tunes the other harpsichords differently and appropriately.

At the end of the program, Armand-Louis Couperin's *Affligée* is a wistful downer, the end of that world of extravagance. The performance takes us through this depiction of illness with stoicism, nobly holding the head up to get through some unspecified grief. As with the pieces on the other discs, Immerseel plays plainly (without overt characterization). There was a more intense *Affligée* from Benjamin Alard recently (July/Aug 2023). The piece is fabulous when played either way.

The booklet is about the instruments, not the music. It has the same typeface-changing problem as in Rachel Podger's recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations (this issue). The same label published both albums.

LEHMAN

Duo in Vento

BACH: *Sonata in B minor, S 1030; Organ Sonata 5 in F*; **MARAIS:** *Viol Pieces*; **SOLER:** *Fandango*; **VIVALDI:** *Flute Concerto in C, R 443*

Marion Ferme, recorders; Ambre Vuillermoz, accordion—Paraty 8231139—64 minutes

In the last issue, I confessed to enjoying the

sound of the accordion, so I kind of set myself up to get this disc to review. The recorder is a staple of Baroque music, but the good news is that the accordion sounds at home in 18th Century music. Of course, transcription for the instruments at hand is a hallmark of Baroque music, so if Bach or Vivaldi had an accordion player as accomplished as Ms Vuillermoz at hand, there's no reason to believe they wouldn't have made transcriptions for her instrument. However....

The reediness of the accordion doesn't always supply the best contrast to the pert purity of the recorder in slow movements. On balance, this is a charming program performed with verve and wit. It's not surprising that the Bach flute sonata comes off well in this treatment. It may be a little surprising that the Soler Fandango and the Vivaldi flute concerto also seem such a natural choice for this combination. I'm not missing the orchestra in the latter.

The recording is very closely miked, so there's not much room ambiance around the instruments. That makes the recorder a little piercing and the accordion rather dry sometimes. The good news is that we don't miss out on any of the nuances from either performer. There are a few bits in the Soler where the accordion makes some pretty unique sounds.

There's no way around it: this is really a niche item. If you like to hear familiar music in rather unusual arrangements, and you give it a try, chances are good you'll have a good time. Booklet in French only.

HANSEN

Markus Leoson, marimba

Piazzolla, Satie, others

DB 208—51:17

These are mostly piano pieces played on the marimba, though there are 3 movements from a Bach cello suite (yes!). If you like the sound of the instrument, you will probably like this. I might add that I suspect this instrument is best in small doses, so the total time does not seem inadequate.

VROON

Word Police: normalcy

The correct word is "normality". "Normalcy" is a "needless variant", not supported by language experts.