

Kapsberger's *Libro IV. Kapsberger*, the piece to which the composer gave his own name, is a rhythmically angular dance based on six statements of a ground bass saturated with hemiola. Miracle's tambourine plays a mischievous role, sometimes corroborating the notated barlines and sometimes the audible hemiola. I was reminded of a French *Courante* that ran away from home to live on the streets of Naples. *Corrente VII* is a smoothly-flowing composition of modest proportions, but it contains a distinctive descending chromatic motive that strangely echoes a cadential cliché in Dixieland jazz. *Colascione* is a widely recorded work that evokes the character of the instrument it is named after. Harmonizing its melodic material in fifths and octaves, in apparent portrayal of a contemporary folk practice, it evokes the "power chords" of rock guitarists in the 1960s. The presence of an actual *colascione* in the texture makes the folk flavor more real, and the presence of this piece on the record reminds us of the overlap between the worlds of popular and art music, an overlap fluently navigated by the guitar and its cousins.

The lutenist Piccinini claimed to have invented the archlute and objected strenuously to the practice of calling it a *liuto attiorbato*. He is represented here by three theorbo pieces of his own: an extended *Toccata cromatica*, followed by *Partite sopra l'aria francese detta l'alemanna* and *Corrente VI sopra l'alemanna*. The first is a dreamlike prelude paired with a brief fugue; the second two are based on the French tune *Une jeune fillette*.

*Alfabeto falso* is a highly successful re-imagining of Baroque guitar performance, informed—but not limited—by solid historical scholarship. It might not appeal to purists, but open-minded listeners will find it compelling and fresh.

—ELLWOOD COLAHAN

## CD Review:

*François Campion: Music for Baroque Guitar*. Hofstötter, Bernhard.  
Brilliant Classics 95275, 2017. 1 CD.



### *Campion as Seldom Heard*

Bernhard Hofstötter's CD, *François Campion: Music for Baroque Guitar* joins a select company of recordings devoted to Campion's music performed on the Baroque guitar. This is not the 16th-century English lutenist Thomas Campion, by the way, but rather the late 17th- and early 18th-century guitarist, theorist, and theorist sometimes viewed as the heir apparent to Robert de Visée. The previous recordings of the five-course Baroque guitar concentrating on Campion's music are Michel Amoric's *Nouvelles découvertes sur la*

*guitare* (Arion ARN 38750, 1984) and Eric Bellocq's *François Campion: a Portrait* (Frame 244, 2003).

Campion's *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guitare* [sic] of 1705 was the last major French publication for the five-course Baroque instrument. In it he explores dance forms in loosely structured suites corresponding to different *scordatura* tunings as well as standard tuning. Hofstötter's recording focuses on Campion's own personal copy of his collection, into which the composer continued to copy numerous new compositions throughout his life. His nephew presented the volume to the royal library on the composer's death in 1747, and it now resides in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. It is the pieces Campion added later that form the focus of this recording.

Hofstötter's approach is characterized by relative stylistic purity and fidelity to Campion's text. There is nothing experimental here, but his excellent command of the instrument and the style brings the pieces to life, while still evoking the "otherness" of a long-vanished musical culture. He deploys ornamentation liberally, with an ease and grace that embellish the written notes without obscuring them. He uses *inégaes* generously and with sophistication: His rhythms are neither dotted nor triplet, just ... unequal. He plays often with a more pronounced rubato than one is accustomed to hear in Baroque music, but why not? Music as darkly emotive as this would seem to call for all the tools at the player's command.

Next to the styles heard on the two recordings mentioned earlier, Hofstötter's playing is more sustained and legato. Unlike Amoric, he mixes *punteado* and *rasgueado* textures more fluidly. He also solves the tuning challenges of the instrument, with its double courses tuned in unisons and octaves, more successfully. Amoric's texture is sometimes more transparent with regard to voice-leading, however. Hofstötter's recording almost suffers from excessive resonance, with an especially full, dark timbre, which sometimes sacrifices clarity. Bellocq's recording is also sustained and legato, but a little less resonant than Hofstötter's. Bellocq plays with a more percussive attack and uses a more aggressive rhythmic approach; his instrument emphasizes the treble side more, all of which might be appropriate for this repertoire. However I found myself convinced by the rich, smooth, and dark sound world created by Hofstötter. He himself, in the notes to the recording, gives much of the credit to his instrument, a restored Baroque guitar dating back to around 1640, even older than the music he is playing.

The added pieces in the Campion copy of *Nouvelles découvertes* tend to be more abstract, and are in many cases significantly more extended and developed than the pieces printed in the book. The longest is a *Passacaille*, which

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runs for almost ten minutes. This piece is a good example of how the composer continued to rework his pieces even after he had copied them into the book: He scratched out some passages and added new ones, letting them spill onto other pages of the book wherever there was room, and then renumbered the variations to change the order in which they would be played.

Next to the *Passacaille*, the two longest pieces are the fugue on track 10, over six minutes long, and another on track 12, almost five minutes in length. In the first, Campion's writing goes up to the twelfth fret (marked "n" in the tablature, and the highest fret available on Hofstötter's instrument) as he takes his time exploring a greater variety of tonalities than was customary on the Baroque guitar. In the second, he notates a subject entry at the climax of the piece completely in natural harmonics—the first known notation of this technique.

A peculiarity of the Baroque guitar, in certain re-entrant tunings like the ones here, is the ability to use the fifth course for treble notes co-equally with the first and second. In track 9, *La somptueuse*, bars 6 and 7 of the B section present a melodic motive on the fifth course and immediately echo it at the same pitch on the first course. The two courses have different timbres, so the effect is one of an antiphonal dialogue, even though it is all taking place on one instrument. Here we see how truly idiomatic Baroque guitar music can often be when played on the instrument for which it was written, and why transcriptions for modern guitar must always be considered arrangements.

Track 11, *Les Ramages*, may be the moment when Hofstötter takes his greatest liberties with Campion's text. The piece is in two repeated sections, notated throughout in 12/8, but with the added instruction that it should be "arpeggiated continuously." Hofstötter plays the A section without alteration the first time, but begins arpeggiating on the repeat, and keeps it up until the end of the piece. His arpeggiation, however, changes the meter to 4/4 with steady 16th-note motion. What is more, he ends the B section partway through, repeats it, and then plays the last part as a coda. I note these modifications not as a criticism, but rather as an illustration of the artist's commitment to creating a musical statement he can fully stand behind. This kind of commitment flows through the entire recording, and makes for challenging yet satisfying listening.

Bernhard Hofstötter's *François Campion: Music for Baroque Guitar* is masterfully played and well-recorded. It offers a sound world and a repertoire we hear only too rarely. It is packaged in an attractive jewel case with a well-written and informative booklet. It is a welcome addition to the limited discography for this instrument and this composer.

—ELLWOOD COLAHAN

## CD Review:

*Ma Guitte je te chante: 16th Century Guitar Solos and Chansons*. Nelson, Jocelyn & Amy Bartram. Nelson 5637610050, 2010. 1 CD.



### *A Four-Course Bouquet of Renaissance Love Songs*

Jocelyn Nelson and Amy Bartram's *Ma Guitte je te chante: 16th Century Guitar Solos and Chansons* is a well-conceived and executed testament to the vitality of 16th-century repertoire for the four-course "Renaissance" guitar, both as a solo instrument and as an accompaniment to the voice. The four-course instrument was especially cultivated in France. The disc is attractively packaged in a gatefold-style case with an informative booklet of scholarly notes and song texts (so *that's* how you pronounce *bransle*); it focuses on pieces anthologized by two Parisian music publishers, Guillaume de Morlaye and Adrian Le Roy. It also includes one piece from a Lyonnaise source by Simon Gorlier, and another vocal arrangement by a non-Parisian publisher, to be discussed presently.

Nine of the tracks are vocal works arranged with guitar accompaniment, and the remainder are instrumental tracks. This is really a guitar CD with a generous sample of pieces for voice, or if one prefers, a jewel-like bouquet of vocal works—all on themes of romantic love—placed in a lush and varied setting of instrumental greenery.

The selection of repertoire is quite varied, including refined and sophisticated *chansons* (*Tant que vivray* and *J'ay le rebours*) next to simple, strophic songs with humorous or even nonsense texts (*Au jour au jour au jour* and *Margot labourez les vignes*). The instrumental pieces include dances like galliards and pavaues, along with more abstract forms like canons and fantasias. As for accompaniment practice, Nelson's notes concisely summarize the ambiguities confronting the modern performer who would take account of historical evidence, even to the point of footnotes for those who wish to explore the issue further. She and Bartram have carefully considered their options for each piece, and chosen an approach that seems contextually appropriate in each case.

Bartram's voice is well-suited to this material: light but strong, agile and clear. Her French is modified to encompass certain archaic pronunciations, such as *avoit* or *soit*, distancing the language of the songs just enough. Nelson's execution on the guitar is facile and articulate. She is equally comfortable supporting Bartram's voice or executing virtuosic passagework, as for example in the *fantasies* by Le Roy.

The vocal composer most represented is Jacques Arcadelt, a major Renaissance figure and something of a musical chameleon. Probably born in Flanders, Arcadelt