

Gheerkin De Hondt: A Portrait

[Egidius Kwartet](#)

Compact Disc

Etcetera

May 09, 2006

<http://www.borders.com/online/store/TitleDetail?sku=8711011011702>

Graceful polyphony from an overlooked Dutch master

March 29, 2009

"Gheerkin De Hondt: A Portrait" is a remarkable recording of graceful polyphony from a lesser-known composer of the mid-Renaissance. Gheerkin belonged to a generation of Franco-Flemish composers highlighted by figures such as Gombert, Willaert, and Clemens non Papa. Gheerkin worked extensively throughout the Netherlands in the second quarter of the 16th century (the excellent liner notes discuss his career in detail).

Gheerkin has escaped mention in most textbooks that cover Renaissance music, probably due to his relatively conservative composition approach. His use of techniques such as pervasive imitation and canon, and his tendency to compose in fluid, graceful harmonies place his music in a tradition with earlier composers such as Ockeghem and Josquin, and not at the forefront of any new movement that might earn him stronger historic recognition.

The program includes four Mass movements (Missa Ceciliam), four Motets, and eight chansons, a repertoire that demonstrates Gheerkin's versatility. The works exhibit the flowing, imitative vocal lines, sweet harmonies, and serene quality characteristic of mid-Renaissance polyphony.

The Egidius Kwartet convey Gheerkin's works through a fine performance that compares favorably with the recordings of the Hilliard Ensemble. The Dutch quartet is accompanied by soprano Maria Luz Alvarez, six additional singers for the Mass movements, a six-piece period horn section and even a lute on one track.

"Gheerkin De Hondt: A Portrait" is highly recommended for lovers of Renaissance polyphony who are eager to venture beyond better-known composers.

The Rise of the North Italian Violin Concerto, Vol. 3: The Golden Age

Various Artists

Compact Disc

Avie

July 29, 2008

<http://www.borders.com/online/store/TitleDetail?sku=822252215427>

Vivid performances of Italian orchestral works

August 5, 2009

"The Rise of the Italian Violin Concerto Vol. 3: The Golden Age" captures the art of Italian orchestral composition during the transition from the Baroque era to the Classic period. The disc features works by late Baroque master Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741) and composers he influenced: Pietro Locatelli (1695 – 1764), Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1700 – 1775) and Giuseppe Tartini (1692 – 1770). First-rate ensemble La Serenissima, under the direction of lead violinist Adrian Chandler, delivers vivid and inspired performances using a variety of authentic and reproduction period instruments.

The disc begins and ends with two concertos by Vivaldi, with the Allegro that begins "Concerto in F major" providing a rousing introduction to the program. Locatelli is also represented by two concertos: "Concerto da chiesa in c minor" is dark and moody, even in its faster movements; "Concerto in F major" is livelier and features more prominent solo violin passages. Sammartini's two-movement concerto in Eb major, with its homophonic themes and treble-dominated melodies, points decisively towards the Classical period, though the use of continuo provides a Baroque underpinning and establishes consistency with the other works on the disc. Tartini's 4-movement concerto in Bb major reflects the composer's own stature as a virtuoso violinist, and features prominent solo cadenzas and greater reliance on the violin to state thematic material.

While scholars can use "The Rise of the Italian Violin Concerto" as a guide to compositions by Italian masters of the late Baroque and early classical era, the accessibility of these works and the excellence of these performances will hopefully attract wider audiences for this recording.