

Juan DE NAVAS (1647 - 1719): Secular and sacred songs

[I] "Alado cisne de nieve - Art Songs"

Música Ficta

rec: Jan 7 - 13, 2016,

Chiquiza (Boyacá, Colombia), Iglesia doctrinera de San Isidro Labrador

Et'cetera - KTC 1609 (© 2018) (60'33")

Liner-notes: E/F; lyrics - translations: E

Cover & track-list

anon: Amable (after André Campra, 1660-1744); Pierre BUCQUET (c1680-c1745): 2e Suite [3]; Antonio MARTÍN Y COLL (?-after 1733): La chacona (after Jean-Baptiste Lully, 1632-1687) [2]; Juan DE NAVAS: Alado cisne de nieve, tono divino; Apolo y Dafne, zarzuela (Con que esa es tu pena - Ay, zagales - Quién ha de temer un ciego; Oh feliz yo, y desdichada - Adiós, selvas); Ay, Amor, tono divino al Santísimo Sacramento); Destinos vencen finezas, comedia (La rosa que reyna); Flores, a escuchar los dos ruiseñores, tono divino al Santísimo Sacramento; Venir el amor al mundo, zarzuela (En este arpón tirano); Gaspar SANZ (1640-1710): Pasacalles por la E [1]; Pavanas por la D [1]

Jairo Serrano, tenor; Carlos Serrano, recorder; Julián Navarro, guitar, jarana

with: Andrés Silva, tenor; Leonardo Cabo, recorder; Johanna Calderón, viola da gamba; Regina Albanez, Sebastián Vega, theorbo

[II] "Aves, flores y estrellas - Tonos y arias"

Música Ficta

rec: Jan 7 - 13, 2016,

Chiquiza (Boyacá, Colombia), Iglesia doctrinera de San Isidro Labrador

Lindoro - NL-3037 (© 2017) (57'36")

Liner-notes: E/S; lyrics - translations: E

Cover & track-list

anon: Amable (after André Campra, 1660-1744); Babau; Juan DE NAVAS: Apolo y Dafne, zarzuela (Y pues que por todas sendas - Llega pues, a mis brazos; No es nada lo que piden); Aves, flores y estrellas, tonada; Ay divino amor, solo al Santísimo Sacramento; Destinos vencen finezas, comedia (Dónde he de ir; Amor, ¿dónde estás?); Duelos de ingenio y fortuna, zarzuela (Rústicos ciudadanos de las ondas); Sosiega, sosiega, tono humano; Y advierta quien oye, tono humano; Gaspar SANZ (1640-1710): Fuga por primer tono al ayre español [1]; Pasacalles por la E [1]; Claudio VOYENNE (c1680-1745): Six suites de simphonies pour deux musettes ou vielles, c1736-42 (gravement; courante; 1er & 2e musette; gayement)

Jairo Serrano, tenor; Carlos Serrano, recorder; Julián Navarro, guitar, jarana

with: Andrés Silva, tenor; Leonardo Cabo, recorder; Johanna Calderón, viola da gamba; Regina Albanez, theorbo, guitar; Sebastián Vega, theorbo

Sources: [1] Gaspar Sanz, Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra española y método de sus primeros rudimentos hasta tañerla con destreza, 1674; [2] Antonio Martín y Coll, Flores de música, 1709; [3] Pierre Bucquet, Pièces à deux flûtes traversières sans basse, 1734

Music of the Spanish renaissance, with names as Morales, Guerrero and Victoria, is pretty well known. In comparison, the music of the 17th and 18th centuries has fared less well. Only a few composers from that period ring a bell with music lovers, even in Spain itself. On a positive note, in recent years several performers and ensembles have made efforts to bring the music from the baroque period to our attention through concerts and recordings. One of the genres which enjoys an increasing interest is that of the solo songs, known as tonos, which can be either sacred (tonos divinos) or secular (tonos humanos). The discs under review here focus on one composer of such pieces, Juan de Navas.

The genre of the tono came into existence in the 17th century. Most songs comprise a number of stanzas (coplas) and a refrain (estribillo). They were written to be sung in the homes of wealthy citizens and the palaces of the aristocracy, or were part of pieces for the theatre, either plays with music or comedies and zarzuelas. Among the authors of texts for tonos as well as zarzuelas were Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca.

Juan Hidalgo was one of the main composers of tonos. He was in the service of the court as a harpist. Juan Navas was his pupil, and when Hidalgo died in 1685 his position was given to Navas; he held this post until his death. He wrote a number of theatrical works; at least thirteen are known, but most are lost or have been preserved incomplete. Fragments of the latter have come down to us in the form of tonos, tonadas and arias.

In Navas' oeuvre one can observe the stylistic evolution of secular music in Spain. Whereas sacred music in 17th-century Spain was still written in the *stile antico*, in secular music the influences of the Italian *stile nuovo* were embraced. The genre of the *tonos* attests to that, as the very concept of a song for solo voice and basso continuo obviously had its roots in the Italian monody. In Navas' zarzuelas and *tonos* modern fashions from Italy manifest themselves. Among them are a closer connection between text and music, including an interest in the *affetti* as expressed in the text, a more declamatory style, the application of chromaticism and the appearance of *recitadas*, not very different from the recitatives in Italian operas and cantatas. Moreover, several pieces include *obbligato* instrumental parts, another token of the evolution of the genre. The present discs include various specimens of the Italian style in Navas' oeuvre.

One example is the zarzuela *Apolo y Dafne*; these two discs offer various extracts from this work. One of these is *Y pues que por todas sendas*, followed by the *seguidillas* (verses) *Llega pues, a mis brazos*; it is a dialogue between Apollo and Amor, which shows a split between 'recitatives' and 'arias'. Notable is that this work is the result of a collaboration between Navas, who composed the second act, and Sebastian Durón, who wrote the first. *Es este arpón tirano* is another example of the application of the form of the recitative. This piece was part of the zarzuela *Venir el amor al mundo*, but appears separately in some sources. Chromaticism can be found, for instance, in *¿Dónde he de ir?*, a lamentation of the goddess Juno, and *La rosa que reyna*, the latter taken from the comedy *Destinos vencen finezas*.

Both discs also include some *todos divinos*. *Ay divino amor* and *Ay, Amor* are both *tonos* to the Holy Sacrament. It is notable that stylistically there is no fundamental difference between *tonos humanos* and *tonos divinos*. *Y advierta quien oye* is an interesting case: it is found in the archive of Bogotá Cathedral with two texts, one secular (performed here) and one sacred. Even the texts sometimes make one guess, whether the subject is secular or sacred. Some of these pieces include chromaticism and strong dissonances, such as *Flores, a escuchar los dos ruiseñores*.

As one can see in the track-lists, these two discs also include some instrumental music. One may be surprised to see names of French composers here. That can be explained by the historical developments in the early decades of the 18th century. French music was quite popular in Spain anyway, but its influence was furthered through the rise to power of Philip V - grandson of Louis XIV - and the House of Bourbon. It resulted in an influx of musicians from France and the printing of French music. The *2e Suite* by Pierre Bucquet - a little-known composer, who is not included in *New Grove* - is taken from a collection of pieces for two transverse flutes without basso continuo, printed in 1734 in Seville. An equally unknown quantity is Claudio Voyerne, who was associated with the Royal Guard of Philip V and was appointed as an oboist in the Royal Chapel in 1731. The four pieces played on the Lindoro disc are from a set of pieces for two musettes or vielles without basso continuo. These instruments were quite popular in France at the time, but the pieces are played here on the more 'conventional' recorders, which is a perfectly legitimate option. More evidence of French influence is the anonymous *Amable*, which is an arrangement by an unknown Spanish master of a piece from *Hésione, a tragédie lyrique* by André Campra. It is a bit odd that it is included on both discs, albeit played in different scorings: on the Lindoro disc is performed by voice flute and theorbo, on the Et'cetera disc by two theorbos.

These discs are interesting complements to discs with *tonos* from earlier stages in the history of this genre, for instance in the ongoing series of recordings devoted to the so-called *Guerra* manuscript (Naxos). They document the development of an important genre of secular and sacred music, which is not that well known, and also of the zarzuela, another genre, which is relatively underexposed in the discography. The performances are quite good. I like the relaxed manner of singing of Jairo Serrano, in some pieces joined by Andrés Silva. One could argue that the voices are a bit too similar; it is not easy to tell them apart. Both also have a slight tremolo in their voice, which is regrettable, but which one notices only through careful listening. That is something this music certainly deserves; it is a matter of good fortune that both booklets include the lyrics and English translations. The playing is excellent, not only in the instrumental items, but also the *obbligato* parts in the *tonos*.

It is quite odd that these two discs have been recorded at the same time in the same venue, but ended up at different labels. The music industry works in mysterious ways.

If you are interested in Spanish music from the baroque era, you should not miss these discs.

Johan van Veen (© 2018)

http://www.musica-dei-donum.org/cd_reviews/Etcetera_KTC1609_Lindoro_NL-3037.html