

CRITIQUES DE DISQUES

LAS CIUDADES DE ORO
GAGNANT JUNO 2016



American Record Guide
June 29, 2016

From the bounty of music preserved in the archives of Puebla, Antigua, Bogota, Lima, and the like, Corriveau and Milnes have culled a wonderful program of vocal and instrumental music by Spanish and indigenous South American composers active in the 16th and 17th centuries.

'Fuera, Fuera, Haganles Lugar', by Roque Jacinto de Chavarria (1688–1719), about Indians on the way to Bethlehem, sets the tone for the recording with its dance-like rhythms and jubilant nonsense refrains "Ha ha ha hay", and "Achalay, achalay". 'Ay Andar, Andar a Tocar, a Cantar, a Baylar' also strikes a joyful tone, as the title itself suggests, 'Go Now! Play, Sing, and Dance' to celebrate the resurrection. With its references to Spain and Portugal, and an accompaniment that includes castanets and guitar, the villancico evokes the colors of Juan de Araujo's (1646–1712) Iberian homeland. Araujo came to Lima at a young age and ended up composing polyphonic music for the cathedral in La Plata (Sucre). 'Convidando Esta la Noche', by the Mexican composer Juan Garcia de Zepedes (1619–78), is also a villancico; but, according to Daniel Zuluaga, its integration of the Afro-Cuban dance rhythm known as a guajira evokes music of the New World.

Perhaps the most famous piece on the program is 'Hanacpachap Cussicuinin' (1631), because it is considered to be the earliest known polyphonic work composed in the New World. It appears at the end of the Ritual, Formulario e Institucion de Curas by the Franciscan friar Juan Perez Bocanegra, but it is uncertain whether he actually composed the piece. Bocanegra was a linguist, and so having composed the Marian lyric in Quechua should be considered a special achievement.

Works like 'A del Dia, a de la Fiesta', by the Peruvian composer José de Orejon y Aparicio (1705–65), fit more in the tradition of the Baroque cantata, as do 'Ventezillo Traviesso', by Manuel Blasco (1628–96), chapel master at the cathedral in Bogota, and 'Jesus, Jesus, y lo que Subes', by Manuel José de Quiros, chapel master at cathedral in Antigua, Guatemala, with their emphasis on solo voice with continuo.

This must be one of the best recordings I have reviewed in recent months. The performances are so energetic and virtuosic that it will take your breath away. Texts and notes are in English.

Peter Loewen - **American Record Guide**

The WholeNote

January 27, 2016

The importance of Spanish music of the 17th and 18th century has long been recognized, but it is only in recent years that we have been introduced to the riches that have been preserved in Latin American archives, in Colombia and Peru, in Chile and Guatemala, in Bolivia and Mexico. It is clear from the music on this recording that there were rich polyphonic traditions in Peru (in the San Antonio Abad Seminary in Cuzco, at the shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Candelaria in Copacabana and in the Cathedral at Lima) and in Bolivia (in the Cathedral of La Plata, now Sucre). Some of the composers featured were Spaniards whose careers developed in the New World, others were born in Latin America and one (Alonzo Torices) never left Spain, although some of his works have been preserved in the Guatemala City Cathedral archives. Most of the texted works on this recording are in Spanish but one is in Latin and one in Quechua, the official language of the Inca Empire. The recording is carefully planned: the musical language shows a great deal of variety and the documentation is excellent. The rhythms are incisive and the standards of playing and singing are high. I particularly enjoyed the two duets sung by the sopranos Hélène Brunet and Elaine Lachica.

Hans de Groot - **The WholeNote**

Le Bel Âge

1^{er} mars, 2016

Lorsque les conquérants espagnols découvrirent l'Amérique du Sud, la rumeur se répandit à Madrid que les rues des villes incas étaient recouvertes d'or. Les souverains d'Espagne ordonnèrent alors le pillage systématique des ressources de ce continent, quitte à en assassiner les autochtones. Les religieux qui accompagnaient les conquistadores achevèrent le génocide culturel. Signature plus positive: les cantiques, dont plusieurs, sublimes, se sont rendus jusqu'à nous. Une douzaine sont réunis sur l'album *Las Ciudades de oro* (Les Cités en or) du groupe musical L'Harmonie des saisons. Composés aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, ces chants intègrent les rythmes sud-américains de l'époque et sont chantés en espagnol ou en quechua, la langue de l'empire inca. Cette musique enjouée et festive, interprétée ici par des musiciens de haut niveau, faisait l'orgueil des bâtisseurs de cathédrales d'Amérique du Sud. Clavecin, flûtes à bec, guitares et instruments de percussions célèbrent la gloire du nouveau dieu chrétien importé d'Europe. Cet album est une joie pour les oreilles et pour le cœur. La traduction française des paroles est incluse dans le livret. *Las Ciudades de oro*, sur ATMA Classique.

Paul Toutant - **Le Bel Âge**

PARDESSUS DE VIOLE

Mélisande Corriveau | PARDESSUS DE VIOLE
Eric Milnes | HARPSICHORD
2016 JUNO AWARD winners



Gramophone
June 21, 2016

A pardessus recital is a rarity, indeed! Fine treble viol plays are reasonably thick on the ground these days but are heard mainly in 17th-century consort music and earlier ensemble music.

Pardessus players belong to a subset of viol players who specialise in 18th-century French chamber music, both pièces and sonatas composed specifically for the pardessus in les goûts réunis style and violin sonatas of the day. The original devotees of the six- and later five-string pardessus were most often aristocratic. Mélisande Corriveau belongs to a new generation of players bringing formidable performing skills and knowledge of period practices. A recorder player and Baroque cellist as well, Corriveau wrote her doctoral thesis on the pardessus and on this CD eloquently plays an instrument by Nicolas Bertrand (1710). Listeners will marvel at its silvery tone, thinner than that of a violin but still sparkling and warm.

The composers represented here were all either viol players, Hervelois in particular, or knowledgeable about the specific idiomatic qualities of the instrument. Barrière, the violist who travelled to Italy and returned a cellist, contributes perhaps the most blended and beautiful pardessus sonata (1739), though Boismortier's (1736) runs a close second. The music—a varied mixture of Italian sonata movements, French dances and character pieces—is engaging and divinely interpreted by Corriveau and sympathetically accompanied by Eric Milnes. Dollé's *La précieuse* is a vivid portrait, infused with discourse, wit and fine detail, and *Les regrets* is virtually a private conversation. This CD remarkably evokes a hitherto neglected musical milieu that will, one hopes, win many new followers.

Julie Anne Sadie - **Gramophone**

Le Parnasse musical

Avril 2016

L'instrument, mignon comme tout, est le petit de la viole de gambe. Sur d'anciennes toiles où il est représenté, il semble reposer comme un enfant sur les genoux des nobles dames. En France, elles adoptèrent le *pardessus*, non seulement pour la délicatesse du son, mais aussi pour la position avantageuse qu'il offrait à la décence aristocratique...

Au début 18e siècle, le violon italien s'installait de plus en plus en France. Mais pour la noblesse, il était encore considéré vulgaire et moins raffiné que la viole. Pourtant la musique italienne s'immisçait inévitablement dans les concerts, et l'on se mit à jouer du Corelli entre autres. Le *pardessus de viole* fut apprécié car l'on pouvait jouer ces pièces dans la même tessiture aiguë. Mais les goûts ont changés rapidement par la suite, et ce fragile instrument fut relégué aux oubliettes.

Mélisande Corriveau s'est investi à lui redonner une belle place dans nos salons. Les pièces proposées sont de caractère intimiste, italianisantes et mélodiques pour la plupart d'entre elles, représentant bien la nouvelle ère des goûts réunis. Bien sûr, le raffinement du baroque français est encore bien présent par la multitude d'ornements qui s'ajoute au délicieux mélange de saveurs.

L'artiste joue avec une infime délicatesse le *pardessus* comme s'il avait toujours fait partie de son univers. Délaissant momentanément la basse de viole et sa gravité, elle accueille la petite viole par de fines décorations lumineuses en son sein. Elle sait le faire fléchir à son gré par de tendres et affectueux discours. La virtuosité naturelle de son jeu est d'un contentement continu. Grâce à elle, ce petit instrument au charme discret a su gagner nos cœurs.

American Record Guide

August 16, 2016

The *pardessus de viole* is a *viola da gamba* that covers about the range of today's violin, though it is held between the legs somewhat like a cello, but without reaching the ground. It was considered a ladies instrument in its time—the 1700s. Don't look now, but this conforms to that tradition.

As far as I can determine, little of the music recorded here has appeared on records before. These are all fine French composers of the time of Bach and his boys, and they write with poetic personality and enjoyable verve. Corriveau and Milnes play sensitively and stylistically. The only minus aspect to my ears is that the otherwise well-balanced recording is a bit lacking in high frequencies when played at a normal setting. You can turn up the highs a bit and that problem may be solved. At any rate, this is a lovely collection of suites and sonatas played with sensitive phrasing and polished to a turn.

David W Moore - American Record Guide

The WholeNote

June 1, 2016

The elegant music featured on this recording was written for a now largely abandoned instrument – pardessus de viole. This smallest member of the viola da gamba family originated in France at the end of the 17th century and had a brief life span of just over 100 years. While pardessus de viole exemplified French aesthetics and their sophisticated musical tastes and values, it was forsaken with the arrival of the Revolution, which did not stand for the same ideals. Featured composers – Barrière, Caix D' Havelois, Boismortier and Dollé – are among many prominent French composers who wrote for this instrument at the height of its popularity. However the selection of pieces on this recording is mostly unpublished and carefully chosen from the microfilm collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

What grabbed me immediately was the sound of the “woman’s violin” (as it was nicknamed once upon a time) – pure, light yet robust at times, textured as a crossover between the flute and the violin. Mélisande Corriveau elicits an array of emotions out of her instrument. The virtuosic passages in Jean Barrière’s Sonata in G Major suit her very well but she is equally colourful in depicting the feelings of sorrow in Dollé’s Les Regrets. Eric Milnes is a resourceful and imaginative harpsichord player; together they offer a charming array of ornamentations, making this music a gesture of nobility from the past.

Ivana Popovic – **The WholeNote**