Fasch, Haydn, Kohaut, Hagen - Lute Concertos (1998)

Fasch, Concerto en re mineur *01. 1. Allegro moderato 02. 2. Andante 03. 3. Un poco allegro*
Haydn, Cassation en ut majeur *04. 1. Presto 05. 2. Minuetto, Trio 06. 3. Adagio 07. 4. Finale, Presto*
Kohaut, Concerto en fa majeur
08. 1. Allegro 09. 2. Adagio 10. 3. Tempo di minuetto
Hagen, Concerto en la majeur
11. 1. Allegro moderato 12. 2. Largo 13. 3. Allegro
Hopkinson Smith(lute baroque 13 choeurs) Chiara Banchini(violin I) David Plantier(violin II) Roel Dieltiens(alto) David Courvoisier(violincello piccolo)

I've been blinded by greatness: the andante of J.F. Fasch's guitar concerto. This is simply one of the most beautfiul pieces of music I've heard in a long time. Fasch (1688-1758) was a contemporary of J.S. Bach and Telemann but also displays signs of the forthcoming classical style. The interplay of the instruments is fascinating and the texture of sound created by this group is so warm and enveloping that I've found myself listening to it over and over again. Chiara Banchini is quite possibly my favorite baroque violinist, and Hopkinson Smith (frequently heard on Jordi Savall's recordings) displays excellent technique and feeling as a soloist. Some day I hope to pay closer attention to the rest of this disc, but I'm still captivated by track 2. (Be warned: the Haydn work included is an anonymous arrangement of his string quartet Op. 1 No. 6).

Hopkinson Smith plays a thirteen-course lute on this CD, not a guitar. I stand by my earlier comments, though, that this is a wonderful recording. The strings are rich with detail and sweetness, and the compositions are varied and interesting. I have since heard another recording of the Fasch concerto by the (often wonderful) Musica Antiqua Koln, who perform with larger numbers and at a much faster pace. This smaller group (two violins, viola, violoncello piccolo) brings a gentleness and delicacy to the music that Goebel's group cannot match. An excellent choice for lovers of classical music and/or lute music. --- Jonathan J. Casey,

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