William Byrd - Complete Consort Music (2011)

1. Fantasia a3 (III) 1:05 2. Browning a5 (The leaves be green) 4:39 3. Te lucis a4 2:22 4. In nomine a5 (III) 2:32 5. Christe redemptor omnium a4 3:17 6. In nomine a5 (IV) 2:44 7. Fantasia a4 (III) 2:10 8. Sermone Blando a3 2:03 9. Fantasia a5 ('Two parts in one in the 4th above') 6:05 10. Fantasia a6 (I) (A song of two basses) 3:40 11. Fantasia a3 (I) 1:48 12. Christe qui Lux es a4 (I) 2:52 13. In nomine a5 (II) ('on the sharp') 2:33 14. Christe qui Lux es a4 (II) 2:44 15. In nomine a4 (II) 2:36 16. Fantasia a6 (II) 5:09 17. Miserere a4 1:34 18. Fantasia a4 (I) 2:23 19. Christe qui Lux es a4 (III) 1:08 20. In nomine a5 (V) 2:52 21. In nomine a4 (I) 2:27 22. Pavan and Galliard a6 3:59 23. Fantasia a6 (III) ('to the vyolls') 4:18 24. Pavan and Galliard a5 3:57 25. Sermone Blando a 4 (II) 2:16 26. Fantasia a3 (II) 1:39 27. Prelude and Goodnight Ground a5 5:40 Phantasm (Ensemble) includes: Emilia Benjamin, Wendy Gillespie, Laurence Dreyfus Markku Luolajan-Mikkola, Jonathan Manson, Mikko Perkola

This new recording is the only complete collection of William Byrd's consort music and includes new hymn settings that are premiere recordings. William Byrd, who studied under Thomas Tallis, was the most celebrated Elizabethan composer of Renaissance consort music, English song, masses, Latin motets and keyboard works. Byrd's viol music is polyphonic and full of melancholy. The performances bring out the rich, overlapping textures of the compositions creating a mesmerising sound. William Byrd Complete Consort Music is Phantasm's second album with Linn; the first, John Ward: Consort music for five and six viols , was a Finalist in the 2010 Gramophone Awards. Inspired by the great twentieth-century string quartets, Phantasm enjoys taking risks in its search for renditions that renew the expressive traditions of early music. Critics have called Phantasm's performances and recordings 'intoxicating', 'revelatory', 'electrifying', 'interpretations pervaded by a truly burning spirit'. Phantasm's recordings have won two Gramophone Awards, in addition to numerous other international nominations and citations, and are recognised as the most exciting viol consort active on the world scene today. Director Laurence Dreyfuss, who is also an esteemed musicologist, has made the study of 16th and 17th century instrumental music his life's work. He brings this vast knowledge and immense passion into Phantasm and its recordings. Phantasm has been made Ensemble in Residence at Magdalen College, Oxford, which will enable them to present exciting series of concerts, both in

the UK and internationally, in the coming months. ---amazon.com

William Byrd's music for viol consort, relatively early in the history of the genre and lacking the chromatic strokes of that by Dowland, has received less attention than his choral masterworks that seem to embody the religious divisions of 17th century England. In fact it seems to resemble his choral music in its overall mood, which is sober, a bit inward, and intellectually rigorous. Even in dances rooted in popular origins Byrd subjects his themes to little contrapuntal complications. Musicologist Lawrence Dreyfus, leader of the multinational viol consort group Phantasm, suggests a detailed chronology for Byrd's consort music in his booklet notes but then ignores it in favor of a program mixed up by type. In short, Byrd wrote pieces based on sacred vocal models, some rather severe dance pieces, variation sets, and, later in life, some fantasias independent of vocal models. This recording has the restrained, slightly tortured quality that seems to slay British audiences every time and leave others wondering what the fuss is about, but there's no denying it's a more-than-competent complete survey of Byrd's consort music, brought in at just one second less than a CD's usual 80-minute limit, and that it has quite a deep, meditative quality if heard in the right frame of mind. The Super Audio sound from Germany's Linn label may be the main attraction; each viol seems to purr and to die away in a rainbow of colors. ---James Manheim, Rovi

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