

super-sensitive ears and seek out every subtle harmonic and rhythmic felicity? The first movement takes time to recover from the lurch with which it is launched, and poise and focus are hardly terms that come to mind at the start of the finale. There is so little sense in such dogged, workaday playing of Schubert's need for a seamless *legato* and *cantabile*, for an awareness that he was, after all, the greatest of all songwriters. Matters hardly improve in a selection of three Impromptus: Kamiya's leaden way with the scintillating No 2 in E flat is notably regrettable. The F minor *Moment musical* is played first on a modern piano and then on a historic Mattheus Andreas Stein (1776-1842) instrument, a gesture of little more than passing interest. A tubby, bass-heavy sound and notes inhospitably nearly all in Japanese make this essentially a national rather than international product. **Bryce Morrison**

Sweelinck

'Keyboard Works, Vol 2'

Esce mars, Sw3 No 3. *Fantasia crommatica*. *Mein junges Leben hat ein Endt*. *Unter der Linden grüne*. *Pavana lachrimae*. *Pavana Philippi*. *Die flichtig Nimphae*. *Allemand (Gratie)*. *Toccata noni toni*, SwWV297. *Toccata, C2*. *Toccata primi toni, d2*, SwWV286. *Toccata a 3*, SwWV289. *Toccata secundi toni, g1*, SwWV292. *Von der Fortuna werd ich getrieben*, Sw3 No 2.

Robert Woolley *hpd/ving*

Chandos © CHAN0758 (64' • DDD)

A rich, rewarding brew of imaginative harpsichord music, expertly playing

What a fine composer Sweelinck was! This second volume of his complete keyboard works (by my reckoning there are enough for four) drives the point home by presenting several of his best compositions, including the imaginatively patterned variations on *Esce mars* and *Unter der Linden grüne*, the weighty and implacable *Fantasia crommatica* (how Bach would surely have admired this piece) and the hauntingly beautiful variations on *Mein junges Leben hat ein Endt*. Other works here include a take on Peter Philips's *Pavana dolorosa*, a lovingly plumped-up version of Dowland's *Lachrymae*, and a handful of improvisatory toccatas. Sweelinck brings together in his music many of the influences current in the first years of the 17th century – Italian flair, north European seriousness, English resonance and melodic grace – and makes of them a rich and rewarding brew, maintaining coherence by the force of his own good taste and sound compositional judgement.

Robert Woolley used just an organ in Vol 1 but here switches between two marvellous harpsichords – Malcolm Rose's currently much-in-demand copy of the Victoria and Albert Museum's 1579 Theewes claviorganum, and a deep and mellow copy by Derek Adlam of a 1611 Ruckers virginals. His playing, too, covers most bases. Without forcing the pace, he shows

brilliant fingerwork in *Esce mars* or a piece like the *Toccata C2*, and achieves clarity and composure in the more melodically driven works. The toccatas occupy a convincing middle ground between the improvisatory and the written-out in feel, and tempi are for the most part expertly judged (only *Mein junges Leben* seemed a bit slow to my ears). In other words, these are pleasingly natural performances. There is not much competition in the world of Sweelinck recordings, but this stands out as an excellent harpsichord release in its own right. **Lindsay Kemp**

Edin Karamazov

'The Lute is a Song'

Anonymous So Maki Se Rodila **Bach** Toccata and Fugue, BWV565 **Brouwer** Paisaje cubano con rumba **Domeniconi** Koyunbaba, Op 19 **Handel** Saul – O Lord, whose mercies^a **Purcell** Dido and Aeneas – When I am laid in earth^b **Sting** Alone with my thoughts this evening^c **Zamboni** Lute Sonatas, Op 1 – Sonata in C minor
Edin Karamazov *gtr/lte* with ^bRenée Fleming *sop*
^aAndreas Scholl *countertenor* ^cSting *sng*
L'Oiseau-Lyre © 478 1077DH (60' • DDD)

A collection of lute music that's as unusual and distinctive as its player



From the tongue-in-cheek self-styled "second most famous lutenist in the world" comes a release that's as unusual and distinctive as Edin

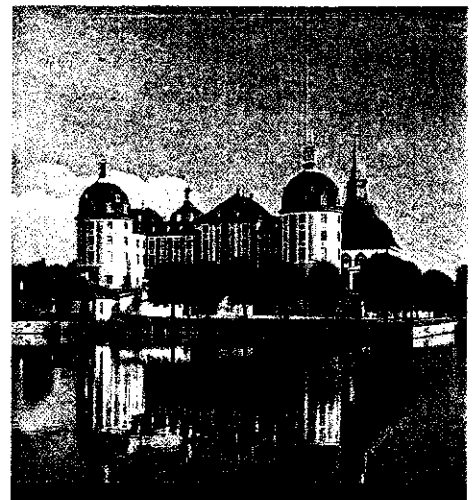
Karamazov's own playing.

What other lutenist would open his disc with Leo Brouwer's *Paisaje cubano con rumba*, originally for four guitars but here played on a single, multi-tracked electric guitar, and follow it by accompanying Sting on archlute as the latter sings his own "Alone with my thoughts this evening"?

Karamazov was always a great player – technically superb, musically imaginative and never afraid to take risks. But when he and Sting recorded an album of songs by English Renaissance master John Dowland (A/06), he found himself achieving almost superstar status overnight – no mean feat for a lutenist. Thus "The Lute is a Song" is in many ways designed to appeal to a broad, albeit relatively sophisticated, audience.

And appeal it should: after all, who can resist a fabulous, Eastern-sounding lute version of Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (certainly not all those Sky fans out there)? Or a lute version of Carlo Domeniconi's Turkish delight *Koyunbaba*, normally heard on classical guitar but here given a mind-bending reappraisal on a 14-course Baroque lute? Purists aren't forgotten either, a stylish account of Giovanni Zamboni's *Sonata* and a superb rendering of Handel's "Oh Lord, whose mercies numberless" from *Saul* with countertenor Andreas Scholl being among the choicest items in this vein.

And the most famous lutenist in the world? As Karamazov says to Sting in the latter's amusing booklet-note, "You are, my friend...but it has nothing to do with talent!" **William Yeoman**



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