

Review

Quartet's program made for the recorder

By Tom Strini of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Mar. 14, 2009

Early Music Now brought back an old favorite, the Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet, Saturday afternoon. Recorder players Daniël Brügger, Bertho Driever, Paul Leenhouts and Karel van Steenhoven played a nice helping of Vivaldi, Palestrina, Tarquinio Merula, Bach, Sweelinck, Tallis and Purcell.

Only Purcell's "Chacony" is specific to recorders. Actually, very little music was written for a recorder quartet, which in a way has been a blessing for Loeki Stardust. They don't have to worry so much about authenticity issues. They transcribe what they like and play it, and they have gone out of their way to get modern composers to write for their old-fashioned wind instruments.

Leenhouts peppered his arrangement of Stevie Wonder's "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" with all sorts of vocal and lip noises they never heard in the Renaissance. The bodies of their recorders amplified these sounds enough to give the jazzy, pitch-bending setting something of a rhythm section.

The suggestion of percussion remained very light, however. Recorders have their limits. That's why Leenhouts' takes on two Astor Piazzolla tangos didn't work so well. This music calls for passion and violence beyond the range of recorders, even those wielded by four extraordinary players. "La Muerte del Angel" and "Otono Porteno" sounded dainty, which is all wrong.

Van Steenhoven and Matthias Maute wrote expressly for Loeki Stardust. Both composers gave the quartet music that expands the instruments' range but sounds entirely at home on them.

Van Steenhoven's "La Chanteuse et le Bois Sauvage" begins as a mysterious forest of whirrings, chirps, flutterings and mutterings. Gradually, more sustained tones congeal into a long, dreamy melody. The chanteuse has sung her song and quieted the beasts around her.

In Maute's spanking-new "Rush," the quartet somehow makes recorders sound like rain plinking on a tin roof. In peeps and tinks and clunks, the music rises from isolated drops to a full-blown storm. Surprisingly, delightfully, the random pelting falls into metric patterns and - presto! - a rain dance! Cool.

This program took place at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Zelazo Center.

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Keeping Things Loeki

Classical Preview

By John Jahn



The recorder has wide-ranging and unique qualities, given its pure tone. An instrument of pastorals and love scenes, enormously popular during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, it was gradually supplanted by the flute. Though it no longer has a regular seat at the orchestral table, the recorder has many devotees, finding a decent home in many a chamber ensemble.

In its next concert ("Across Borders, Across Time"), **Early Music Now** hosts the **Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet**, recorder players in the midst of their 30th anniversary season. Works on the Loeki Quartet's program go back some 450 years, including those composed for the recorder and transcribed for it. The concert includes Tallis' *In Nomine*; Palestrina's *Lamentationes*; Sweelinck's *Variations on Mein junges Leben hat ein End*; Merula's *Canzon la*

Lusignuola; Purcell's *Chacony*; Vivaldi's Concerto in D Minor; excerpts from J.S. Bach's *The Art of Fugue*; Piazzolla's *La Muerte del Ángel* and *Otoño Porteño*; Steenhoven's *La Chanteuse et le Bois Sauvage*; and Matthias Maute's *Rush* (the latter being the winning composition of 2008's American Recorder Society Competition). The event takes place March 14 in UW-Milwaukee's Helene Zelazo Center (silent auction and chocolate reception included).

(Shepherd Express review below – final paragraph of a review focusing on MSO Carmina Burana)

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Choral Classic

By Rick Walters

Early Music Now (EMN) presented the Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet on Saturday evening at the Zelazo Center at UW-Milwaukee. By changing instruments on each number and mixing up repertory this unusual group makes recorder playing relevant and interesting to modern audiences. Anyone who appreciates expert musicianship and cultivated ensemble playing would have found much to admire in the performance. Continuing to use the pre-dinner 5 p.m. concert time, EMN drew what appeared to be a record crowd.