

**The Consort
Volume 56**

**American Baroque plays Telemann
Dorian
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These are excellent performances of familiar works from Telemann's *Tafelmusik* and *Essercizzi musici* collections: trios for flute, oboe and bass from both collections; the oboe sonata in Bb major from the *Essercizzi* and the flute sonata in B minor from *Tafelmusik*; the G minor trio for oboe, violin and bass from *Essercizzi*, and the G major quartet for flute, oboe, violin and bass from *Tafelmusik*.

All the performances on this disk display fine musicianship and the highest level of technical command. Gonzalo X. Ruiz (oboe) adds some tasteful ornamentation to his solo sonata and his technical control in the second movement is impressive, but I find his account a little understated overall, compared with say Paul Goodwin at his best (Harmonia Mundi 907152). Stephen Schultz is perhaps a little over spacious in his reading of the flute sonata from *Tafelmusik*. In particular, the opening bass line of the first movement needs to be felt as a series of harmonic shapes rather than an expressive melody line.

The two wind players strike sparks off each other in much of the trio sonata, and the notoriously difficult E major movement from the *Tafelmusik* trio is played with impeccable intonation and great sensitivity. In the trio for oboe and violin the expressive capabilities of both instruments are well matched, with violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock encouraging Ruiz to more expansive levels of expression. The continuo team of Joanna Blendulf (cello) and Katherine Shao (harpsichord) do not always think as one, with an occasional snatched chord from Shao, but at their best they are highly expressive.

The most exciting performance on this disc is the final work, the G major *Tafelmusik* quartet, the only offering in which the whole ensemble appears together. This is a thrilling performance in which the various players appear to exult in their virtuosity, but without any sacrifice of musicality to mere display.

J. Gerald McDonald