



DDA 25205 – Invocazione Brillante

The lockdown could have stopped one-man organ machine Carson Cooman from composing, but it's unlikely. He's prolific and never stops. Normally we expect Erik Simmons to be playing Cooman's work but for this it's German organist Philip Hartmann, and he does a fine job.

We used to find organ music hard going but repeated forced exposure to Cooman has given us appreciation, admittedly not always shared by members of the Review Corner household. This is a nice collection of music and, even setting aside our recent appreciation of the organ, we think it's an album that people who may not always listen to organ music might like. It's not an album with any great pieces on, which means anything too organ-ish (organic?) is largely absent. We wouldn't be so rash as to call it ambient but it's tranquil and creates an ambience.

Musica Da Processione opens proceedings and its origins as wedding music are obvious from the opening notes, a preamble as the bride walks to the door, swelling fanfare as she pauses dramatically and more melodic music as she walks down the aisle. There's a definite feel of a melody from a pop tune buried in there somewhere. Arioso is next, dedicated to Scottish organist Geoffrey Atkinson; it's simple and pleasant, the kind of music you'd want to hear if you stumbled upon a country church and caught the organist having a quiet noodle.

Cortège, Intermezzo, and Litany on the Joseph-Hymnus follows, a much grander piece; cortège is a ceremonial procession, and the sleeve notes report the theme is found primarily in the bass; after a grand ending to the first movement, the Intermezzo is slower before the Litany perks up again. A run of meditative tracks follows before the livelier Suite In F, dedicated to Hartmann. Again, there's the feel of this being a pop tune, maybe a synth-based club classic. The sleeve notes explain the music in detail ("a fanfarelike march figure and a pattern of quickly alternating 3rd") but if someone played this on synth and added a beat, it would be a banger.

Damn it, Cooman, you've made us fans of organ music. Cooman is organist and composer in residence at the Memorial Church, Harvard University. Hartmann has been organist at Ulm Cathedral, Germany since 1999 and in 2005 was appointed as district Cantor for Ulm deanery.

—Jeremy Condliffe (The Chronicle Review Corner)