

**Michael Praetorius. *Puer natus in Bethlehem***; Christmas settings for vocal and instrumental ensemble, Volume 5, five-part, ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow. G157, Edition Güntersberg, 2010. ISMN M-50174-157-1. Score and five parts, with texts, €21.50.

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For those groups looking for a selection of charming, approachable five-part pieces for the inevitable winter holiday performances, these volumes of Christmas settings are good resources. The contents are fine examples of typical Renaissance idioms and sounds—musically interesting and aurally pleasing when performed at suitably quick tempi.

The edition itself is well done. The parts are clear, large, and easy to read and include the convenience feature of cue notes of a preceding part. Middle parts are notated in treble octavo. The score also is nicely done, with a range notation for each part. Both the score and the parts have text underlay of first verses only, due to space limitations. These pieces are suitable

for voice, strings, and winds, or a combination thereof. I tried these out on a mixed group of viols, recorders, and guitar and all players found them pleasant and charming, and we plan to utilize these for our holiday programs. With the exception of a stray note or two, parts were within playable range for recorders.

The preface, in German with an English translation, includes performance suggestions, a brief biography of Praetorius, and a list of the editorial modernizations (clefs, bar lines, key signatures, meter changes, text and spelling).

This is a recent addition to a series of volumes of Christmas settings by Praetorius, the earlier volumes containing pieces for two, three, and four parts. Additional volumes for six, seven, and eight parts (in two choirs) have also been published or are in preparation. The original volumes from which these pieces are extracted contain pieces for up to sixteen parts. I have not seen any other volumes in this series, but I would consider purchasing them, based on the contents and quality of these two.

Vol. 5:

*Ecce dominus veniet; Ein Kindelein so löblich; Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ (1); Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ (2); Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ (3); Joseph lieber Joseph mein.*

Vol. 6:

*Hosianna dem Sohne David; Nun komm der Heiden Heiland; Puer natus in Bethlehem; Resonet in laudibus; Rorate coeli desuper; Uns ist geborn ein Kindelein; Vom Himmel hoch; Wie schön leuchtet; Deo dicamus gratias.*

Tracy Hoover, Wichita, KS