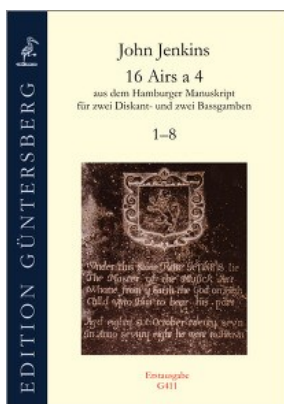


Music reviews

John Jenkins: 16 Airs à 4 Edition Güntersberg G411 and G412



Jenkins looms so large in the world of viol music and so much of his huge output is readily available that it's hard to believe that there could be any more for us to get to know.

However, the wheels of scholarly research never rest, and as we've seen several times recently (the Maltzan Collection, or Telemann Fantasias,

for example) the opening-up of libraries previously unavailable to examination continues to surprise.

These splendid Airs have languished in an incomplete set of part books in Hamburg (and indeed for some years in St Petersburg/Leningrad) waiting patiently for the attentions of a specialist to identify this unique source and make good the missing part. For this edition, all is in the safest possible hands – reconstruction and editing in the care of Andrew Ashbee – than whom no-one knows more about Jenkins!

Scored for two trebles, two basses and continuo (the basses doing alternate duty as bass line or tenor part), the pieces are grouped in twos and threes by key. Here you will find (two-strain) Pavans, some Corants and a diverse range of Airs, a number ending in tripla sections. Interesting too are several annotations suggesting tempo or dynamic changes as well as places where literal repeats invite echo effects, all of which might well prompt us to re-evaluate how we handle these elements in our playing of other works by Jenkins and his peers.

The music represents Jenkins at his most tuneful and outgoing. There is much bustle and lively exchange between the trebles and an altogether leisurely and congenial atmosphere prevails. Overall the style and mood is not unlike the Simpson airs for the same ensemble so elegantly printed by VdGS Editions and so persuasively recorded by Chelys Consort.

Edition Güntersberg can always be relied on for music that is well-presented and well-researched, and this edition is no exception

Altogether, this is an excellent and, to completists and Jenkins lovers, essential addition to the repertoire and well worth exploring – especially if a continuo player is on hand.

Philip Redfern