



Handel – Il Pastor Fido HWV 8a  
 Lucy Crowe, La Nuova Musica/David  
 Bates (conductor)  
 Harmonia Mundi HMU 907585.86  
 144:00”

*Il pastor fido* is the opera Handel wrote for London after the tremendous success of *Rinaldo*, but its Arcadian theme of shepherds undergoing the trials of love makes it a more intimate and less ambitious piece. It is perhaps this pastoral aspect that David Bates and his forces have in mind for this recording, seeking beauty and clarity of tone rather than a sense of a fully-fledged operatic drama per se.

Anna Dennis as Mirtillo has a beautifully rounded, sensuous quality to her voice, to which she adds a sense of yearning when appropriate. Lucy Crowe’s full tone matches this as Mirtillo’s beloved, Amarilli. Madeleine Shaw as Dorinda is also driven to distraction by the claims of love and interprets her aria *Se m’ami, oh caro* vividly as the musical expression of a sigh. Although there is occasional unevenness in the other parts, the spacious and resonant acoustic of London’s Temple Church provides a theatricality and depth to the recording that is alluring. All Handelians will want this recording as Nicholas McGegan’s earlier recording of this opera was of the 1734 revival, which contains a fair amount of different music. His is arguably a more dramatic reading, but Bates’s interpretation is marked by captivating sensitivity and spontaneity without being rushed or mannered.

Curtis Rogers

A New Venetian Coronation 1595  
 Music by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrielli  
 and others

Gabrielli Consort and Players  
 Paul McCreesh  
[www.wingedlionrecords.com/](http://www.wingedlionrecords.com/)

McCreesh’s re-recording of the Gabrielli Consort and Players first CD (*A Venetian Coronation 1595*) builds on the successes of the original. The recording might best be described as an attempt, both on a scholarly and a musical level, sonically to recreate the mass of the Doge’s coronation in 1595. As such the re-recording needs no justification as it is the product of thirty years more research and development towards understanding and performing this music. This new recording makes more of ambient sounds. These bring attention to the acoustic functionality of the instruments for example the rasping sound of the newly added shawms cut through the ambient sounds of bells and fireworks in the opening procession. This articulates a very modern conception of musical experience; one that includes the ambient noise and each instrument’s or voice’s relationship with the acoustic. Particularly powerful tracks are the single voice chants and the trumpet fanfares.

Listeners should buy this CD for the same reasons they bought the first recording; it is an effective and ambitious recreation only now a more refined and immersive experience.

Harry Buckoke