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Patriquin: *Hangman's Reel—Ballet (With Music for Fiddle and Piano)*. Jean Carignan, fiddle; Gilles Losier, piano; Orchestra of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens conducted by Vladimir Jelinek. McGill University Records 80010), produced by Donald Steven

John Ditsky

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BACH: *Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord, BWV 1027-9.* Mary Cyr, gamba; John Grew, harpsichord. MCGILL UNIVERSITY RECORDS, 78007, produced by Donald Steven.

The only thing I *don't* like about this release is the paper inner sleeve. After an untillating experience with the last "academic" performance of these works sent me for review, I lowered the stylus to this Canadian vinyl with no great haste, and so I was really pleased to find myself quickly enveloped by the great warmth of these sensitive interpretations. The artists are both professors at McGill University in Montreal, which seems to have acquired fine recording facilities for its Pollack Concert Hall. This is pellucid and poised Bach playing by two extremely well-matched interpreters and instruments. The lower register of the harpsichord blends exceptionally well with the gamba.

The warmth (to repeat the noun) of this disc derives from an abiding sense of a surrender to the scores facilitated rather than impeded by thorough scholarship. Though I'll look to Rose/Gould or Cervera/Puyana for these works in my more manic moods, this is the version to which I'll return, often I'm sure, for a glimpse of the simultaneously transcendental and thoroughly human serenity of Bach.

Edward Strickland
[FANFARE, V/4 (1982), 86]

HAMBRAEUS: *Intrada: "Calls." Tornado. Tides.* MCGILL UNIVERSITY RECORDS 76001.

Though the vogue for this sort of thing may well have passed, these three "concrète and synthesizer" pieces by a Swedish composer now resident in Canada are particularly effective, thanks partially to what might be termed their programmatic coherence. Echoes of Swedish pasture cow-calls, of winds, and of waves are obvious enough in Hambræus's re-workings, but are nonetheless enjoyable in spite of their patent verisimilitude. One can only hurriedly note that anyone interested in this sort of music should own these examples. The recording is fine, the pressing adequate, but the junky inner sleeve can have its way with your disc before you even spring it from its plastic cell.

John Ditsky
[FANFARE, V/4 (1982), 158]

PATRIQUIN: *Hangman's Reel—Ballet (With Music for Fiddle and Piano).* Jean Carignan, fiddle; Gilles Losier, piano; Orchestra of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens conducted by Vladimir Jelinek. MCGILL UNIVERSITY RECORDS 80010, produced by Donald Steven.

This attractive disc marks my personal introduction to McGill University Records, a Montreal firm apparently committed to augmenting—or exceeding—the contribution made by CBC Records, which has largely moved away from recording Canadian music recently. Donald Patriquin's *Hangman's Reel* is a loosely plotted ballet based on an orchestration of typically Eastern Canadian music—largely airs and dances reflective of Quebec and Maritime-Provinces cultural blendings. The plot itself—which need not concern us here—comes from Quebec folklore, and has been imposed upon an earlier version of these materials in the form of a suite written for the soloist, a folk fiddler of considerable power and virtuosity. About half of Side 2 of this disc, moreover, is given over to fiddle-piano performances of more traditional material—reels, strathspeys, the air “Will Ye No Come Back Again,” and the sweet “Un Canadien errant.” However light, this is infectious stuff, and can be readily recommended both to balletomanes and to fans of Canadian music, “serious” or traditional. The performances are very fine, and the recording ambience warm and nicely balanced. The thin pressing is, but for a trace of warp and a bit of surface static, better than I might have expected.

John Ditsky
[FANFARE, V/4 (1982), 215]

SCHUBERT: *Variations on “Trockene Blumen,”* D. 802. FRANCK: *Sonata for Flute and Piano.* Jeanne Baxtresser, flute; Paul Helmer, piano. MCGILL UNIVERSITY RECORDS 77005.

Eureka! A university production that offers excellently competitive music-making just like any regular record company, merely pointing out that both the fine artists are on its faculty and letting the listener draw his or her own conclusions therefrom. Baxtresser is the solo flutist with the Montreal Symphony. She is a superb musician, playing with no signs of preciousness, and phrasing with exquisite care. Helmer has concertized in Canada, and is obviously an excellent pianist. The two, furthermore, work very smoothly together. Schubert's piece receives about as fine a performance as is currently available, but the piece itself is overlong and unconvincing. The Franck is his famous Violin Sonata transcribed for flute. Here, the competition is overwhelming: Galway and Argerich give one of the finest performances ever recorded (of anything) on RCA. The piece works for flute, but requires less heroic pianism (except when Galway is the soloist) than the part calls for when violin is used, since the piano will otherwise cover the flute. Helmer adjusts perfectly, but the work loses in scope. The recording, packaging, and Helmer's excellent liner notes are thoroughly professional.

Paul Turok
[FANFARE, V/4 (1982), 249]