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The Cape Verde Singers
Sexy Sirens from the Islands
J.S. BACH: *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248
Bernhard Landauer, countertenor; Charles Daniels, tenor; Klaus Mertens, bass; Swiss Radio Chorus, I Barocchisti; Diego Fasolis, conductor
Arts Music 47744-8 (2 SACD/CDs)

**HANDEL: Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day, Organ Concerto 13, Coronation Anthem 1**
Julia Gooding, soprano; Jeremy Ovenden, tenor; Dulio Gaffetti, violin; Francesco Cera, organ; Swiss Radio Chorus, I Barocchisti; Diego Fasolis, conductor
Arts Music 47738-8 (SACD/CD)

A double whammy from I Barocchisti, conductor Diego Fasolis, and Arts Music! From the first sounds on this recording of Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio* I hear irresistible joy and zest. The work enjoys several lovely recordings on SACD, but after reacquainting myself with those by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Concentus Musicus Wien (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 88697112252), Jos van Veldhoven and the Netherlands Bach Society (Channel Classics CCS SA 20103), and Jan Willem de Vriend and Combattimento Consort on CD as Chandos CHAN 3147). Since then there have been a string of excellent performances, most in the traditional Mozart arrangement. Now Linn offers us a thoroughly marvelous multichannel set by the Dunedin Consort and Players of Handel’s original “Cannons” performing version of 1718. The use of one voice or instrument to a part sacrifices very little of the “orchestral” sound of the familiar Mozart version, but it does provide much more detail and clarity throughout. But fear not—this thoroughly virtuosic yet charming performance can stand with the classic Boulté. Moreover, it’s offered in Linn’s spacious, balanced sound.

**VIVALDI: Bellezza Crudel**
Cantatas and Concertos
Tone Wik, soprano; Alexandra Opsahl, recorder; Per Hannisdal, bassoon; Barokkanerne 2L 56SACD (SACD/CD)

What a delightful way to spend an hour! All of these four solo cantatas feature the meltingly lovely soprano of Tone Wik accompanied by a period ensemble, Barokkanerne, that does not wear its H.L.P. label on its sleeve. In fact, they produce warm, colorful sounds that are vividly conveyed in a wide, almost wraparound soundstage, as is typical of recordings made by Norwegian label 2L. Interspersed with the cantatas are one concerto each for bassoon and recorder. In these, the accompanying ensemble is consistent, while the solo instrument, like the soprano, is recorded front and center—we hear the wonderful richness and buzz of the bassoon and the cool, calming woodiness of the recorder, both with almost stunning clarity.

—Kalman Robinson