

## CD REVIEWS

edited by John Reeve

*Reviews are printed in roughly historical order of repertoire. The views expressed here do not represent any 'official' view of the Lute Society but those of the individual reviewers. Any comments and queries should be sent to the CD reviews editor at [john@jreeve.co.uk](mailto:john@jreeve.co.uk), not to reviewers directly.*

*Tastar de Corde*, Tony Scheuregger, lute, Hexachordia



As well as writing reviews for *Lute News*, Tony Scheuregger is a practising musician and composer for TV, radio and video. He has his own ensemble, Hexachordia, which has recorded several CDs of mediaeval and renaissance music, and now he has recorded a CD of solo lute music from the first half of the 16th century from Italy, France and Germany. There are 30 pieces, most of which, as the CD's title suggests, are abstract: fantasias, ricercars, preludes and two *Tastars de Corde* of Dalza's five. Just four tracks are dance movements, 'La Traditora' by Marco dall'Aquila, 'Ein Guter Venetian Tanz' by Hans Neusidler, a Saltarello from the Castelfionio lute book and a 'Calata ala Spagnola' by Dalza. Other composers represented are Capirola, Bossinensis, Francesco da Milano, Giovanni Maria da Crema, Spinacino and Stephan Craus and there are anonymous selections from the publications of Pierre Phalèse and Pierre Attaingnant and the Thibault manuscript as well as three other 'anons'. One of these, track 17, is from the Bonifacius Amerbach manuscript but I haven't tracked down the other two yet.

Scheuregger plays neatly with a clean, bright tone in a clear acoustic with just enough resonance to enhance the sound. Indeed, this clarity is a key feature of the performance, making every note clearly audible regardless of tempo. The only sonic drawback is a faint right-hand 'chuffing' in the faster pieces, but you might not notice. Squeaks and buzzes are almost completely absent. Tempos are generally well judged. The preludes and ricercars tend to be on the measured, contemplative side, but the dances are appropriately faster, providing some welcome variety. This is a recital of mostly short pieces: only five are over two minutes. Some of the pieces are very familiar, such as Francesco da Milano's Fantasia 40, played very well and at the right tempo, but others are rather less so, like the Phalèse Fantasia.

The CD notes are aimed at an audience which is unfamiliar with the music, and they provide a high-level introduction to the lute but only sketchy details of the sources. It would help to give more information for those who might be moved to try the pieces themselves (and for reviewers!). It would also be interesting to know which of the four fine lutes was used for each track and why. They are a 6-course by Andy Rutherford, two 7-courses in G, by Paul Thomson and Barber & Harris, and a 7-course in F by James Stallibrass, which does have a deeper, darker sound, if I am right about where it is used.

This is a pleasant CD to listen to for quiet relaxation and is available from [www.hexachordia.com](http://www.hexachordia.com) as well as some streaming platforms.

John Reeve

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0IwGL9Jlso>