

ACRONYM to release its 10th CD on July 24

by Daniel Hathaway



The Baroque string band ACRONYM cleverly changes the meaning behind its abbreviated name for each of its recording projects. For their tenth and latest CD, due to be released on July 24, they've pegged themselves as "Archive Crawlers; Researchers Of Niche Yellowed Manuscripts."

An apt description, for *Cantate domino cantica obsoleta*:

Forgotten Works from the Düben Collection mines a rich trove of some 2,300 manuscripts in the library of Uppsala University. The holdings were assembled by a small dynasty of composers who served as *Kapellmeisters* to the Royal Swedish Court in Stockholm during the 17th and 18th centuries.



"It's a fascinating archive," Kivie Cahn-Lipman said by telephone from Youngstown, where he teaches cello at Youngstown State University. "It's mainly a collection by German composers with a smattering of other folks. There's Latin and German choral music, a small number of pieces in French and Swedish, and one vocal work in a nonsense language."

Cahn-Lipman selected a dozen works for the recording. "It was so hard to choose," he said. "Although the whole archive has been digitized,

there are no scores, only part books, so it's difficult to tell if a piece is strong."

Like the good cellist he is, Cahn-Lipman vetted pieces from the bottom up. "I started with the continuo part and quickly mashed it and the top line together. I decided early on not to record anything that had been done previously, to only choose works involving a string band, and to limit voices to four singers. There's one solo for every vocalist, a few for vocal quartet, and a few instrumental pieces."

Lipman also wrote the liner notes, which reveal some very interesting details about the composers. "It's a real cast of characters. One referred to the cornetto as a 'cow horn,' and two of them ripped each other's counterpoint apart. And one sounds like a real scoundrel — he was also secretary of the local mint and fled the city when the mint was audited."



The recording also contains a rarity among the Düben Collection: a piece by a woman. Caterina Giani's *Liebster Jesu, trautes Leben* is her only known work.

ACRONYM recorded the disc at Oktaven Audio in Mount Kisco, NY, where Cahn-Lipman has been involved with some 50 recordings. "New York's Music Before 1800 took a chance and hired us to give a concert last October before

hearing any of these works," Cahn-Lipman said. "We rehearsed for four days, played the concert, and spent the next three recording it."

One immediately arresting feature of the album is the cover art, which shows the bell tower at Reschensee, Italy submerged in an artificial lake (the bells were removed before the valley was flooded). "I was trying to find an image that would conjure up some strange and forgotten past, and settled on a ruin," Cahn-Lipman said.

Largely composed of musicians who did their early music training at Oberlin, ACRONYM is scheduled to give two concerts there in November. Other local performances are slated for next April at the Baldwin Wallace Bach Festival.

All of that depends on how the pandemic plays out. Meanwhile, this recording safely in the works, Kivie Cahn-Lipman is spending his time on special projects.

“Transcribing a lot of music for a few different ensembles, practicing, learning new repertoire, conducting a YSU violin professor search, gardening, cooking, becoming an artisan baker. It’s a gentler lifestyle with less travel, and a lot quieter and simpler. I wish that could happen without all the tragedy.”

The new CD can be ordered directly from ACRONYM’s [website](#).

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