

Bach chorales with often angular chromatic action. II unfolds as a slow march, III is a gentle pastorale with an exquisitely serene ending, and the finale transforms its chorale into good old American optimism. This could easily be titled "Bach in America": remember one of Foss's most notorious pieces was his later *Baroque Variations*.

His final symphonies are from the 90s. They represent a return to "normalcy" as it were after the loony 60s and aftermath. 3 (1991), *Symphony of Sorrows*, juxtaposes quiet mysticism with harsh, angular serial ejaculations. II is a haunting Elegy for Anne Frank, followed by a gloss on Eliot's *Waste Land*. The work closes with a Copland-esque prayer.

Symphony 4, *Window to the Past* (1995), refers to Foss's own past, with quotations from earlier pieces. It opens with a clear sonata form complete with fugal episodes. II shifts from the clean 40s style to the even earlier world of Ives, reminding us that he was also a quintessential American, maybe in many ways even more so than Copland. The latter offers the recurring relief. There is a jovial American scherzo, a cyclic return to the symphony's opening, and a jumpy, snappy tune juxtaposed with music of optimistic nobility.

This is all terrific stuff and couldn't be better presented. Unless I'm missing something, I don't see any of these pieces listed in our index. I find this shocking. It makes this release all the more invaluable: if you like American music, don't miss it. Performances are spectacular.

GIMBEL

### FRANCHOMME: *Cello Pieces*

Louise Dubin, Julia Bruskin, Saeunn Thorsteinsdottir, Katherine Cherbas, vc; Helene Jeanney, Andrea Lam, p—Delos 3469—67 minutes

This is really Louise Dubin's project. She has been searching out the works of famed cellist-composer August Franchomme (1808-84) for a long time. The pieces recorded here include several for two cellos, Caprices Op. 7:1 & 9, Nocturnes Op. 14:1 and Op. 15:1-3, and for cello and piano, Op. 18:3. The rest of the program consists of arrangements by Franchomme of music by other composers, for instance a Caprice for cello & piano from Weber's opera *Preciosa* and one from Bellini's *Norma*. The rest are arrangements of music by Chopin, who was one of Franchomme's closest friends. These include several for four cellos including Chopin's Ballade 2, Prelude 9, and

the Funeral March from Sonata 2. The program ends with Chopin's Polonaise Brillante, Op. 3 for cello and piano. It turns out that this elaboration of the cello line is the one that I have been playing all my life.

This is an interesting introduction to a composer I thought I knew. His music is not particularly unusual in itself, but it gives one a warm feeling for the cello; and his arrangements of other people's music is notable for its accuracy and affection. The cellists and pianists playing this program are also notable for their warmth of tone and love for what they are doing. I ended up enjoying this more than I expected to. Perhaps you will, too.

D MOORE

### FRITZ: *Symphonies, op 6:1+2;* *Violin Concerto*

Leila Schayegh; Kesselberg Ensemble  
Musiques Suisses 6283—66 minutes

Don't run; you'll be glad you stayed when I tell you that Gaspard Fritz (1716-83) was from Geneva, and that Leila Schayegh is a baroque violinist who studied at the Basel Schola Cantorum, and that the Kesselberg Ensemble is a period-instrument ensemble—here with five violins, one viola, one cello, one string bass, two flutes, two French horns, and one harpsichord—that was founded in 2004 by Latvians who were graduates of the Basel Schola Cantorum. Its purpose is to revive music of forgotten early composers. The ensemble plays with a distinct early-music sound that at first I found ugly but soon warmed to (once I turned up the bass) because these are bright-eyed performances of truly inventive rare works. Some revived baroque and classical works are the kind that should stay buried—not these!

The two symphonies (Opus 6 was published in the early 1770s) have the same structure: sonata-allegro I, slow II, minuet, and *prestissimo* finale. At first, the album sounds like it was recorded in a swimming pool. But even grace notes are transparent. Each section of instruments is clear, balanced, and pungent. Tuning is exquisite—definitely not sour—and ensemble is so tight that harmonic movement is highly effective and contrasts and rhythms are not just pungent but really dramatic when need be. The transverse flute and (natural?) horns add plenty of color and kick. All repeats are taken in every movement—that includes repeated exposition plus repeated development-and-recapitulation in the first movements, and a repeat of both the