



*Artistic Quality* **9/9** *Sound Quality*

IN DULCI JUBILO--Baroque Music for Christmas  
Traditional carols, songs, & dances; original works by Corrette,  
Bruhns, Rameau, Couperin, & J.S. Bach

Julianne Baird (soprano)  
The Aulos Ensemble

Centaur- CRC 2831(CD)

Julianne Baird and her frequent collaborator, the period-instrument group The Aulos Ensemble, offer some of the fruits of their many Christmas concerts together in a pleasingly varied, Baroque-focused program of vocal and instrumental works. Most of the 16 selections feature Baird's bright, clear, and very agreeable soprano, supported by some combination of flute, recorder, baroque oboe, violin, and cello, and harpsichord or organ. Most familiar are the title tune, plus such mainstays of today's Christmas repertoire as *Remember O thou Man*, *Gently the Fragrance* (better known as *Whence is that goodly fragrance*, or by its French title, *Quelle est cette odeur*), and *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day*. Another favorite is a beautiful Advent cantata aria by Bach (from BWV 36), usually heard as *Auch mit gedämpften...* but for some reason performed here in the version from the decidedly non-Christmas secular cantata *Die Freude reget sich* (BWV 36b). Regardless, the music is still just as lovely.

The instrumental playing is first-rate, and the accompaniments to Baird's singing are smartly arranged and well-balanced with the voice. My only reservation concerns a couple of the longer selections--Böddecker's *Veni Salvator hominum* and the instrumental "Symphonie" by Corrette--whose musical material isn't substantial enough to fully command our interest for six or eight minutes. On the other hand, Corrette's *Noël Provençal*, an instrumental number that closes the disc, is a wild, wonderful, colorful rustic dance that leaves you smiling and uplifted, a perfect complement to the opening *In dulci júbilo*. The sound, from Princeton Theological Seminary's Miller Chapel, is suitably vibrant, clear, and natural. [10/26/2006]