

HELLENDAAAL Sonatas for Violin and b.c.: op. 1/III; op. 2/IV,V; op. 4/III,IV; Fitzwilliam Manuscript, Nos. VII,X, and Hornpipe • Antoinette Lohmann (vn); Furor Musicus (period instruments) • GLOBE GLO 5271 (72:21)

All of the works on this CD are first recordings, with the exception of the third sonata from opus 4. Pieter Hellendaal (1721-1799) is not an overly familiar name, and if you have come in contact with his music before, it probably was one of his concerti grossi or “grand concertos,” which have been recorded a couple of times. (In 1992, Nils Anderson named conductor Roy Goodman’s disc of the same, with the European Community Baroque Orchestra, to his Want List.) Globe’s attractive packaging includes an extensive biography of the composer. He was born in Rotterdam, and his father, a professional candle-maker, trained him not just in the musical rudiments but in what appears to have been a good deal more. When Hellendaal was 16, he was sent to Italy to study with, among others, Giuseppe Tartini. He spent six years in Italy and returned home in 1742, where he continued to perform, compose, and publish his music. Within the Dutch Republic, he traveled to wherever he could find employment. For a still-young husband and father, this was stressful, and so in 1752 he packed his family up and moved with them to England, where he eventually found steady employment and spent the rest of his life. The works included on this disc span the English Channel. The opus 1 and opus 2 sonatas were published in Amsterdam in the late 1740s. The opus 4 sonatas were published in London, however, around 1760. As its name suggests, the Fitzwilliam Manuscript contains unpublished works—some complete, some not, and of an uncertain date. The manuscript is housed in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, which is where Hellendaal spent the last 37 years of his life. Two pages from the manuscript are reproduced in Globe’s booklet.

These are extremely attractive works. The violin (which was the composer’s instrument) is front-and-center, and the music is both idiomatic and challenging. Whether or not is it “surprisingly unconventional” (the annotator’s words) I leave up to you, although I tend to agree. It owes much to Tartini, but probably at least as much to Hellendaal’s imagination and creativity. There are passages that sound like folk music, or even prototypical country music, and violinist Antoinette Lohmann does not shy away from them. We hear drones and hurdy-gurdying in the *Pastorale* movement of Sonata III from opus 4, and the isolated Hornpipe from the Fitzwilliam Manuscript would not be out of place on the city docks. I would dance, but it is hard to do so when you have headphones on. I also find the first movement (*Andante*) of Sonata V from opus 2 remarkable for its double-stopping and dissonances. (Is the violin playing major seconds? That would be pretty goofy and wonderful for music from this era!)

Furor Musicus, in addition to Lohmann’s violin, includes a harpsichord or organ, cello, violone, archlute, the aforementioned hurdy-gurdy, and a Terzgeige, which also is known as a violino piccolo. This is very colorful playing, informed by scholarship and backed by strong technical ability. Even so, there is nothing routine or dull about it. This is fun, fun, fun, so take off that serious expression. Can it really be that most of these works have not been recorded before? If so, how sad, so let’s reward Furor Musicus for their efforts, and lift a stein to them and to Pieter Hellendaal, whom I hope to hear more from very soon. **Raymond Tuttle**