

either to articulate the individual notes of the chords, which sound particularly clumsy in the first D major Gavotte, or to omit some, as he did at one point in the fiendishly difficult but exquisite D major Sarabande. If these points may be construed as matters of taste, questionable intonation cannot. Performers accustomed to playing with a pianist tend to play in equal temperament; Bach's music, however, depends on playing in specific keys and modes. I need say no more.

Julie Anne Sadie

JS Bach

'The Transcriptions of Concertos by Vivaldi'
Concertos - BWV972; BWV973; BWV974; BWV975;
BWV976; BWV978; BWV980; BWV981

Sophie Yates *hpd*

Chandos Chaconne © CHAN0796 (76' • DDD)



Yates and her Garlick play Bach's Vivaldi arrangements

Sophie Yates offers eight of Bach's 16 Weimar-period concerto transcriptions in performances that outclass most of the catalogue competition. In contrast to the more robust-sounding instruments used by Elizabeth Farr (Naxos) and Peter Watchorn (Hänssler) in their Bach concerto transcription cycles, Yates favours an Andrew Garlick harpsichord modelled after a French 1748 Goujon instrument, whose

lighter, more transparent sonorities more subtly differentiate the music's solo and ensemble textures. At times one might miss Watchorn's tonal heft and tasteful agogics, yet Yates's crisp, direct interpretations satisfy more consistently than Farr's relatively mannered playing.

Compare, for example, Yates's ebullient treatment of the famous main theme of the first movement of the C major Concerto (BWV976) with the way it alternately lurches ahead or lags behind in Farr's hands. Watchorn's rhythmically stiff reading of the Gigue of the G minor Concerto (BWV975) also yields to Yates's swiftly singing version. Notice, too, how Yates embellishes the opening *Adagio* of the C minor Concerto (BWV981; not a transcription of Vivaldi but of Benedetto Marcello) while her slow basic pulse remains firm yet never rigid. Her finely honed *legato* technique shines in slow movements: one telling instance occurs in the C major *Largo* of BWV976 (based on Vivaldi's *L'estro armonico*, Op 3 No 12), where Yates's slight finger overlapping between note attacks and releases create a sense of sustained resonance that justifies her measured pace. Yates's informative, well-written notes complement the stylish sensitivity of her harpsichord artistry, together with Chandos's vivid, realistic sound. Let's hope that the remaining eight Bach concerto transcriptions with Yates are on the horizon.

Jeff Distler

Selected comparisons:

Farr (3/10) (NAXO) 8 572006/7

Watchorn (HANS) CD92 111

Beethoven

'Piano Sonatas, Vol 3'

Piano Sonatas - No 1, Op 2 No 1; No 2, Op 2 No 2;
No 3, Op 2 No 3; No 26, 'Les adieux', Op 81a; No 27,
Op 90; No 29, 'Hammerklavier', Op 106; No 30,
Op 109; No 31, Op 110; No 32, Op 111

François-Frédéric Guy *pf*

Zig-Zag Territoires © ③ ZZT318 (3h 30' • DDD)

Recorded live



Guy's live Beethoven sonata cycle concludes

The many virtues and occasional drawbacks characterising the first two instalments of François-Frédéric Guy's Beethoven cycle spill over into this final three-disc volume. Compared to the hurling momentum and biting accents with which others imbue the first two sonatas' opening movements (Pollini and Kovacevich), Guy is relatively sedate, although he always finds subtle shifts in emphasis and nuance during repeats. He does not entirely avoid the arch *tenutos* that most pianists deem necessary in the Rondo of Op 2 No 2, yet he makes up for it with a beautiful *Largo appassionato* highlighted by impressive textural differentiation. In Op 2 No 3's *Allegro con brio*,