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music was composed for funerals and funeral processions, which had a much more important role in Western societies than today. One need only think of the works by Wagner, Berlioz, Grieg and Ponchielli. Thus the second conductor of the Guides' Band, Julien Jean Simar, is represented here by his *Symphonie Funèbre*, which he composed for Georges Warocqué, owner of the Mariemont estate, who died unexpectedly while on a trip to Beijing. Upon the return of his remains to Belgium three months later, the *Symphonie Funèbre* was performed at Warocqué's funeral by the Mariemont Wind Band under the direction of the composer. This one movement composition is divided into four sections. The work contains some nice music, but it is a rather formless composition with too little development and lacking in direction.

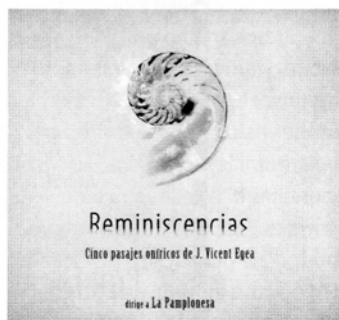
Arthur Prevost, who was conductor of the Guides' Band from 1918 to 1944, made the band into one of the finest Symphonic Bands in the world, and the major Belgian composers of the time dedicated works to him and the band. Prevost arranged a great amount of symphonic literature for the band, including compositions by Bach, Strawinsky, Bartok, Ravel, Moussorgsky, Dvořák, Smetana and Respighi. He is represented here by his excellent transcription of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's *Rondo Capriccioso*, Opus 14, which receives a wonderful rendition, and his *March of the Red Cross of Belgium*, which he wrote in 1954 and recorded with the National Orchestra of Belgium. It is performed here in a revised version for Symphonic Band by Yves Segers with added cavalry trumpet parts.

Norbert Nozy, who was conductor of the Guides' Band from 1985 to 2003, premiered numerous compositions with this band and recorded over fifty CD recordings. He is represented here by a little, four minute composition that he wrote for the birth of the Belgian Princess Elisabeth, the oldest daughter of Crown Prince Philip and Princess Mathilde. Listed on the CD cover as a novelty, *Elisabeth* is an occasional piece that consists of three short sections, a stately introduction announcing the birth of Elisabeth, a celebratory martial section and a closing lullaby.

The rest of the conductors are represented by marches. The third conductor, Léon Walpot, is represented by a delightful polka-march, *Le Trompette Amoureux*, but there is nothing very distinctive about the marches by Dené De Ceuninck, Franz Wangermee and Simon Poulain. The regimental marches by Karel Torfs (*March of the 13th Artillery Battalion*) and Yvon Ducene (*Westfalen*) are quite good and excellently instrumentated.

However, both reflect how difficult it had become by 1950 to write an original march in the traditional style.

As with most of the recordings by the Symphonic Band of the Belgian Guides, this CD is accompanied by fine liner notes in French, Dutch and English by former WASBE President Francis Pieters. The CD does what it's set out to do very well, i.e. pay tribute to the conductors of the band by giving their compositions performances of the highest quality. Since only two of the works have ever been recorded before, it provides an opportunity to hear excellent performances of some lesser known music. *Leon J. Bly*



Reminiscencias (Banda de Música La Pamplonesa, J. Vicent Egea, conductor)
www.bandapamplonesa.com

This CD was produced for the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the Banda de Música La Pamplonesa, Spain in October 1919. It contains five compositions by the band's conductor, J. Vicent Egea. After studies at the Conservatories of Pamplona and San Sebastian in Spain, Egea, who is a WASBE member, studied conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at the Manhattan School of Music. Among his composition teachers were Tomás Marco, Luigi Nono and Elliot Carter. His five compositions for Wind Band on this recording demonstrate an eclectic style, which incorporates the various compositional devices of the 20th and 21st centuries, but always strives to be audience friendly.

The CD receives its title from the first composition presented here, which was commissioned by the Banda de Música La Pamplonesa in commemoration of its 90th Anniversary. The composer uses the number nine and multiples thereof to create the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and formal structure of this composition, which has a duration of almost seventeen minutes.

Reminiscencias has much to say and produces a fascinating sound world. It is a composition that deserves our attention.

The second composition on the CD, *Constestania Ibérica*, was composed in 2006 and is a symphonic poem relating the history of the Iberian culture from the 6th century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. The various periods are vividly portrayed and the first half of the composition has some fine writing and terrific dance sections. Unfortunately, the concluding sections reflect too much influence from film music and North American band music.

The composer tells us that the third composition, *Americanism*, reflects the influences of Charles Ives, Edgard Varese, John Corigliano and David Noon, and to a certain extent that is true, but this writer finds more influence here from the composers for the silver screen. In an attempt to reflect America as a musical melting pot, several styles and compositional techniques are incorporated, including elements of Asian music and jazz. However, the composition contains too many ideas and disjunct styles, and thus, despite its many beautiful sections, it lacks coherence.

The fourth composition, *Suite Céltica*, was inspired by the composer's visit to a Celtic settlement in Galicia. The three movement, nineteen minute suite is strongly influenced by Celtic folk music. The first movement, *Allegro giusto*, is most enjoyable with a nice dance section. The second movement, *Adagietto*, is very beautiful, but it is a pastorella that one has heard in other shades. The finale, *Allegro moderato*, is a most pleasing, if not very unique, dance movement.

The final composition on this CD is *Timanfaya*, the title of which refers to the Mountains of Fire on the island of Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. The work, which combines melodic writing and pointillism and whose harmonic language is a combination of the axis system often used to describe the music of Bartok and expanded tonality, wonderfully captures the awe that the Mountains of Fire evoke. It was commissioned as a test piece for the 2004 *Certamen Internacional de Bandas Ciudad de Valencia*.

The playing on this recording by the Banda de Música La Pamplonesa, which has no cellos or string basses, is excellent, and one clearly detects the hand of a fine conductor at the helm. It is certainly worth the trouble to contact the band to obtain a copy of this CD, which for € 10.00 is a bargain, in order to hear the fine playing and to become acquainted with Egea's music.

Leon J. Bly