

# SOFTWARE REVIEWS

Fantasia  
Similia  
Analekta AN 2 9819



**Lessard:** Finding this duo on a new album is a joy! The album contains a number of Fantasias, hence the title, originally composed for flute and violin, or for flute and piano or organ. All are adapted for Nadia Labrie's flute and her twin sister Annie's guitar.

In musical terms a fantasia is an instrumental piece that you make up as you go along, an improvisation. By its nature a fantasia ceases to exist once the last note has sounded, or at least it *shouldn't* exist, because once it is written down it ceases to be a veritable fantasia. Notwithstanding the semantics, a number of "fantasias" *have* been written down, to become, with time, favorites of both musicians and music lovers. The first group sees an opportunity to demonstrate virtuosity and perhaps add in a few of their own variations. Familiar are Mozart's *Fantasies*, as well as those of Chopin, Purcell, and Bach, who loved to amuse his children by the "pastime" of improvising fantasias.

Three of the fantasias on this recording are from operas: *Carmen*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*. Also on the same superb disc are two pieces by contemporary composer Erik Marchelle, an *Elegy* originally for flute and organ by another contemporary, Michael Conway Baker, who arranged his own piece, the *Fantaisie pastorale hongroise* by Franz Doppler (1821-1883), and Sarasate's familiar and gorgeous *Zigeunerweisen*. The guitar arrangements are mostly done by Annie. There is a guest flutist on the *Rigoletto* fantasia, Denis Bluteau.

These pieces are full of dynamic flights, decorated in rich colors, like those of an Indian Summer.

Our regular readers will be familiar with the two experienced musicians who make up Similia, since this is their third recording. They are much appreciated if one judges from sales of their previous recordings, *Cantabile* (AN 2 9810) and *Nota del sol* (AN 2 9817). Having listened to this CD a number of times, I predict the same success for it.

The recording, like a number of others from Analekta, was done in the fine acoustics of the old stone church of Saint-Augustin de Mirabel, north of Montreal. It is impeccable. Run, don't walk, to add it to your collection.