

## *Easter Sunday in Imperial Vienna 1666* Early Music America

Recording Reviews | Craig Zeichner | Summer 2007

Yale Schola Cantorum,  
Yale Collegium Players,  
Simon Carrington, director  
Rezound RZCD 5013 (available at [www.gothic-catalog.org](http://www.gothic-catalog.org))  
54:03 minutes

Antonio Bertali, the Verona-born kapellmeister to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, is best remembered for his instrumental music. Bertali (1605-1669) was doubtlessly a gifted sacred music composer: while he served at the Viennese court, he was commissioned to compose the wedding music for the future Ferdinand III and a Requiem for Ferdinand II.

Bertali's *Missa Resurrectionis* was performed on Easter Sunday 1666 and is one of a dozen Bertali settings that contain all five sections of the Common of the Mass.

This is a splendid work with a grandeur that is perfectly suited to a celebration of the most sacred of all Christian feast days. Paradoxically, some of Bertali's most fetching writing is for small groups (usually pairs) supported by winds or strings. The *Missa Resurrectionis* is strong enough to stand on its own, but what makes this an essential recording is the music by other composers that is interspersed, according to the custom of the day, between the Mass movements. There are two sublime motets by the North German composer Christian Geist (1640-1711), a magnificent sonata for trumpets, sackbuts, and strings by Pavel Josef Vejvanovsky (c.1616-1667). Bertali's instrumental gifts are showcased with sonatas for sackbut and strings, as well.

The performances are A level all the way. Sopranos Abigail Haynes and Melissa Hughes sing beautifully in the Geist motets, and the voices of the Yale Schola Cantorum make strong contributions throughout with their bright, youthful, and beautifully balanced sound. The hand of that choral magician, Simon Carrington, is in evidence here. The instruments are equally fine. While there are some scrappy bits of brass playing at times (this is a warts-and-all live recording), this recording does the rarest of things: it recreates a celebratory feeling with the highest levels of musicianship and erudition.