



Golliwog's Gymnopedia
Review of CD (WM108)
by *Chris Lunn* in the *Ancient Victories*
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Fogel has delivered superb classical concerts and performances, and I have had the privilege of seeing his classical work at the Antique Sandwich Sunday Classical series. Not only does Fogel play and bring every nuance of this difficult instrument to your ear's delight, he teaches and makes hammered dulcimers. He made all the dulcimers you hear on this recording. And if you are a musician, he has produced a companion booklet for this CD that has the music transcriptions for these pieces. Bach's "Now Let Us To the Bagpipe Sound" puts you in a lightly touched piano mode, not the traditional rapid-fire of the traditional folk or Celtic music that the hammered dulcimer is known for. Precise, lightly ringing notes walk so elegantly here and on Debussy's "Golliwog's Cakewalk" where the sprightly walking has these dissonant steps, but always you are brought back in line. I felt myself just hanging on each note in both tunes as he uses almost entirely just the high register. His original "Bachelbel" builds slowly using the mid register and loving touches of lower register and then a very plucked like sound to again walk you through a wonderful musical space, where you hang on each note. Fogel builds it (closer to a march) to some of the fuller hammered dulcimer sounds with which you might be familiar, and he does it with clarity and definition. "Minuet in F Minor" by Bach uses both the 5-octave dulcimer and bass dulcimer overdub. It begins in a waltz dance feel building ever so slowly to a fuller lower end, kind of like an organ filling the room in a church sensation. My knowledge of classical music is very limited, but somewhere along the way, I heard a set of Satie recordings and was very taken by the work. Satie's "Gymnopedia" will give you a glimpse at why I was struck by the beauty and yet unique construction of his work. Fogel brings both to a full focus and depth. The hammered dulcimer is often known and described for its shimmering. Handel's "Water Music" is more the quick dropping water sound that is the shimmer, as we move in mostly joyful dance motif. This sets us up well for Mozart's "Turkish March" with a plucked opening and then rapid high-end clear delicate note work as you are led into the mid range marching. Rapid, but oh so clean. Fogel on his own "December 8" uses bass, soprano and 5 octave dulcimers calling us to the song with a big bass open, then high end clear runs as the mid range builds in and then the bass has a wonderful rumble to release to the highest end. There is a great shower of notes from all three instruments that is closer to what you may have expected from your past hearings of dulcimer work. The longest song is an original written for his wife "Marcia at Folklife" with a plucked like low-end opening and then a drifting mid range suspend. Another Fogel original "Incline" has these hints, suspensions to stretch our ear and exploring the vast sound and potential of the instrument. You will really understand that there is so much more to this instrument in the hands of someone like Fogel in this exploration. Debussy's "Claire de Lune" is a favorite of piano and hammered dulcimer players, but as usual, Fogel delivers his special twist with the opening "Stairway to Heaven" from Led Zeppelin and Hoagy Carmichael's classic "Stardust". Yes, it works with loving care. I have seen concerts and music presentations by Irish harpers, or classical harp folks, or even Celtic bands end a show or even a recording with Turlough O'Carolan's "Farewell" and it is a gorgeous fitting end here for a superbly executed set a basically classically focused tunes. This will give you a greater appreciation of the instrument and the work of one of our Northwest treasures, Rick Fogel.