

# Ma'alwyck's first CD charming

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## "Music in the Schuyler Mansion"

The Musicians of Ma'alwyck have released their first CD, and it's a charmer. "Music from the Schuyler Mansion," recorded last August in the Albany historic site, features trios and duos by four composers of the classical era, which is the same timeframe that Philip Schuyler and his family lived in the 1765 house.

Listening to the disc, it's not hard to picture the Schuyler family and some of their notable guests — folks like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton — sitting in one of the well-appointed parlors happily enjoying these merry tunes.

In her brief notes to the disc, Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, the violinist and ensemble director, credits the mansion and its acoustics as an equal player. That's an apt observation, since the recorded sound is clear and fresh.

Flutist Norman Thibodeaux plays with an appealing rounded body to his sound, and "body" isn't a word that often comes to mind when it comes to the flute. Likewise, guitarist Sten Yngvar Isachsen's playing comes through prominently, in comparison to how one often has to strain to hear a guitarist in concert. As for Barker Schwartz, her violin has a warm tone that weaves the ensemble into a whole.

The composers represented on the disc are Joseph Kruetzer, Carlo Canobbio, Philip Ernst and Carl Wilhelm August Blum. As talented and gentlemanly as they appear to be, they're largely forgotten outside the specialty realm of Early Music. Yet the lineup of their works, taken together, will have a familiar and pleasing ring to devoted fans of the Musicians of Ma'alwyck.

My favorite piece is Ernst's seven-movement suite titled "La Danse Pastoral: Pic-Nic Quadrilles." The name pretty much tells it all. Add in the elegant environment of the Schuyler Mansion and you just want to get up and dance.

The Musicians of Ma'alwyck's next concert at the Schuyler Mansion takes place at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 7. Pick up a copy of their recording at the concert or order online at: <http://www.musiciansofmaalwyck.org>.

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