Cantius
Gail Archer, Casavant Frères organ
Opus 1130 (1926), St John Cantius
Church, Chicago
Meyer Media MM22051 [65:14]

Gail Archer’s traversal of eastern
European organ
music continues
with this satisfying compendium
of Polish pieces from the 19th to
the 21st centuries. The shifting
harmonic centre of Feliks
Nowowiejski’s Symphony no.8
catches the ear, as does
Mieczysław Surzyński’s eloquent
Improvisation on a Polish Hymn,
the swelling grandeur of Pawel
Łukaszewski’s Icon, and
diaphanous modal alterations of
Wincenty Rychling’s miniature
Pastorale in F sharp minor. Two
familiar names – Górecki (the
engorged chordal thunder of
Kantata) and Bacewicz (her
rhythmically vibrant Esquisse) –
ad add ballast without ever
overshadowing contributions by
others. Archer puts a 1926
Casavant Frères to poetic use
while also landing the occasional
telling punch.

MICHAEL QUINN