



*Die Schöne Müllerin* was also Pregardien's first meeting with “Tonmeister” Bert van der Wolf.

Does he still have recollections of that first encounter? “Sure!” he answers with a big smile on his face. “When I first went into the engineer's room to listen to what we just had recorded, I couldn't believe my ears! The sound was so different from what I had heard before. Mind you: I had already done about a hundred recordings. But what Bert is able to create is so direct, so natural, so strong. *Ich war völlig von den Socken!*”

***Bert's recordings really sound as if you are in a concert hall. I had never heard that before...***

Christoph Pregardien

-

***The Northstar recording team is one of the best I've ever worked with...***



Eduardo Banzo / El Ayre Español

-

The second album was to be Ferschtman's first meeting with Bert van der Wolf, Challenge's highly acclaimed recording engineer/producer. “I had heard that Bert was quite a personality, a man with very strong opinions, so I must confess that I was a bit nervous when I left home for that recording session. We recorded in Belgium, just across the border near Eindhoven. To my relief we hit off very well, almost immediately we had that special click that you have to have in such a one-on-one situation. A funny thing was that we soon discovered a mutual fascination for tennis, Bert even more than I. So in between takes- I think we were working on one of Bach's partitas – we watched the Roland Garros final. It was the year that Federer – we both are huge Federer fans - finally won his first Roland Garros Grand Slam. The fact that we were able to do that gave me an enormous sense of freedom. ***The atmosphere was very easy going and the more so because there was no time pressure at all...***”



Liza Ferschtman

-

Two years ago Challenge wanted me to work with Bert van der Wolf, because they wanted a very special sound. I didn't know him, so I said that I would prefer to work with the same guy I had been working with for the last two years. I mean: you don't take risks with your sound. I didn't want to say no, so I finished the discussion before it started by agreeing. So a year ago we did a recording together. After setting up his equipment we did a test and the group, *Ars Antiqua Austria, and me, were very pleased.* Bert himself too, I think. For him, I think, it was a challenge too. We always record in very beautiful baroque locations. At first Bert said that he wouldn't be able to get a good sound there – there was too much reverberation. Then he started moving around his equipment - *high end equipment of a quality I had never seen before.* After an hour he said he was ready and proclaimed that he would always want to work in a hall with such brilliant acoustics. He even took down the acoustic specifications of the hall. That is how we recorded the Challumeaux album with music from Christoph Graupner.



Gunar Letzbor / Ars Antiqua Austria