

The Concordian

April 16, 1999

Concordia College • Moorhead, Minn.

“Winds of Mars” rushes to top as favorite

Ana Rusness
The Concordian

I've always enjoyed both the arts and sciences. Call me a dreamer, but I've also always imagined the two fields combining. I've thought of how this would play out, what amazing and inspiring product or process would result.

Some people can't imagine the two coming together in any meaningful way. When asked what role she saw music playing in space, one of the NASA scientists at this year's symposium said she supposed I would provide nice aesthetics, or "atmosphere" if you will.

About a month ago, it came to my attention that music and outer space had joined forces in a truly astounding way, a way I'd never imagined. "Winds of Mars" was a new CD being advertised in "Minnesota Monthly." Hyped as "the world's first all-digital, extraterrestrial music production," "Winds of Mars" combines Pathfinder's recordings of Mars with the classic melodies of Johann

Sebastian Bach. Throughout the album, the wind of Mars can be heard, ranging from gentle breezes to swift, raging, mercurial gusts. These atmospheric rhythms provide an ongoing backbone for the dancing rifts of Bach's heartfelt compositions, as performed by Roderick Kettlewell, the Julliard-trained artistic director of the Bach Society of Minnesota.

Wind and piano, the two elements presented on this wonderful CD, are a perfect duo. They dance and skip through star-speckled darkness, leading to heightened relaxation and creativity. The drifting winds are featured and given a solo at the beginning and end of each piece, which allows listeners to truly appreciate exactly what is so completely astounding about "Winds of Mars." It is during these moments that one can perceive the variations in the wind.

At first, the striking sound from "Winds of Mars" sounded a lot like a film score. I even has

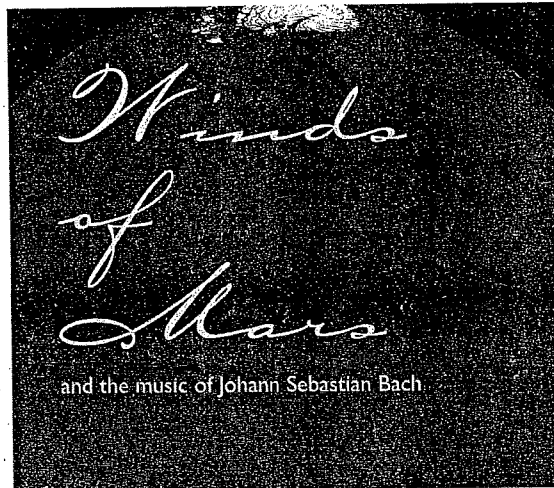
traces, during certain moments, of James Horner's compositions for "Titanic." The common elements of the unknown or mysterious are what lead me to this comparison. As the CD continues onward, fragments of recognition and familiarity to Bach's music place the experience of "Winds of Mars" on its own plane of interpretation and appreciation.

The wind and where the wind came from adds a new dimension to the recording. The uniqueness of this element should be emphasized

in the mix itself, by preventing the piano's strong chords from overpowering the volume of the wind.

While it is this wind from Mars that captures my attention and imagination, the piano playing is a crucial element of "Winds of Mars." Kettlewell is obviously a talented pianist whose fingers seem to enjoy the clusters of sound that skip across the ivory keys. A time or two, the speed demanded by the rhythm of the wind causes Kettlewell's

◆see MARS on page 16



◆Mars

from page 15

A time or two, the speed demanded by the rhythm of the wind causes Kettlewell's fingers to stumble a bit. Despite this, he always reaches the next notes without allowing the sometimes racing wind to move ahead of the notes he must play.

I can already sense the sequel to this highly recommended CD. It will be a showcase of Pachelbel, particularly his "Kanon," accompanied by sounds of the wind and water of Mars or maybe a moon, as performed by George Winston. Until that album is created however, gain a new relationship with nature through "Winds of Mars," available at www.windsofmars.com or call 612-338-5461.