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Gilmore Festival John Williams

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BOISMORTIER: *Sonatas*
Musica Franca—MSR 1170—75 minutes

Musica Franca's name, according to the liner notes, is inspired by the synthesis of the Italian and French styles of the two composers Michel Corrette, whose works by Musica Franca are reviewed this issue as well, and Joseph Bodin de Boismortier. I am happy that, although these musicians are experienced performers on period instruments, they chose to use modern instruments and make music "in the spirit of pleasure".

Perhaps most pleasing about the instrumentation is the wonderful dark and sonorous blend of two bassoons, contrabassoon, organ, and theorbo. The adagio, largo, and lentement movements in the sonatas, because of this, are an aural delight. They note that Boismortier was an "alchemist of sound" and would have appreciated their use of the theorbo and contrabassoon in the continuo. Indeed, I am sure he would have; their interpretations and instrumentation are exactly what this music needs.

At the end of the program are a Rondo in A minor and a Chaconne in A major. These two works stand nicely alone and round off the recording delightfully.

My favorite sonata is No. 6 in C, for two reasons: the color of C major in the ranges of these instruments is very nice, and this otherwise bright key is made bittersweet by the unique timbre of the theorbo.

Musica Franca has taken the little-known sonatas of Boismortier and dressed them up with superb technique, great energy, and charming musicianship. I like this recording very much.

SCHWARTZ

CORRETTE: *music*
Musica Franca—MSR 1171—70 minutes

Musica Franca and MSR have released this recording of Michel Corrette works and one of Joseph Bodin de Boismortier, also reviewed in this issue. It is appropriate that they should release them simultaneously seeing that their name Musica Franca, according to the liner notes, is derived from the influences of these two composers.

With the exception of *The Phoenix*, which was on Centaur 2704 (S/O 2005) Corrette's Op. 20, *The Delicacies of Solitude*, a series of sonatas for two solo bass instruments and continuo, and the arrangement of Concerto No. 1 in G for organ are new to me.

The Phoenix sounds gorgeous on this recording, with this instrumentation. On Centaur the musicians chose baroque bassoons and used viols, harpsichord, and theorbo for continuo. The sound they generated was disparate and lacked the warmth and depth that this recording has in abundance. Using the modern bassoon and contrabassoon brings a more homogenous sound to the music, accentuating its inherent beauty.

The six sonatas are wonderful little gems of music. The fourth one is my favorite, partly because it is in B-flat, a particularly resonant key for the bassoon, not to mention that there is the treat of a low B-flat from the contra at the end. Aside from my trivial interest in hearing the low notes on the bassoon and contra, I enjoy hearing musicians who are enjoying themselves, making music and taking liberties with it. They make each of these sonatas their own. As they point out in the liner notes, the notes on the page are deceptively simple; the spirit that comes across is from the performers.

Finally, there is Fraser Jackson's arrangement of the Organ Concerto. The positiv organ works nicely and sometimes comically with the other instruments. This piece is my favorite on the album.

The music of Corrette is comical, energetic, and beautiful. This is a very enjoyable recording, and I look forward to hearing more from Musica Franca.

SCHWARTZ