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"Romanza" = HUMMEL: Trumpet Concerto; Bassoon Concerto; LACHNER: Horn and Bassoon Concertino; WEBER: Andante and Hungarian Rondo – Guy Few, trumpet and corno da caccia/ Nadina Mackie Jackson, bassoon/ Toronto Chamber Orchestra/ Nicholas McGegan - MSR

An encore recording from two terrific soloists in some really gripping repertory.

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This latest release by Ms. Jackson couples her once again with trumpet wiz Guy Few in a superb program consisting of some wonderful music, basically known and practically unknown. The Hummel Trumpet Concerto is a standard of course, played here to perfection by Few, with ample and gracious support from the reliable Toronto players. While it won't replace my favorite by Maurice Andre with Karajan (I love the large string section, and miss it a bit here), it makes up for any perceived shortcomings with a verve and vigorous performance that ensures full competitive standing. But even my favorite Bassoon Concerto to this date (that of Dag Jensen on a Capriccio release) cannot really top this wonderful reading by Jackson, one of the best, if not the best on disc. Though the standard bassoon sound has always bounced between the twin poles of the German and French (with the German winning most of the time), I have always detected a bit of Italian warmth in her sound that adds great luster to the fluidity of her technique. This is a wonderfully proportioned reading that simply sparkles.

Ignaz Lachner (1807-1895—not brother Franz, the most famous of the three siblings) is not a composer you trip upon too often, but judging by this superlative piece for corno da caccia (a sort of small horn with virtuoso capabilities that sounds amazingly like a Flugelhorn) and bassoon, more frequent trips to his repertory are certainly called for. This piece is a gem, playing to the instruments in a really facile manner, and keeping your attention easily. Finally, though I am hesitant to proclaim it as unseating the Bernard Garfield recording with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Jackson tackles Weber's barn-burning *Andante and Hungarian Rondo*, a bassoon standard if ever there was one, and a test of musicianship with its deceptive melodic first movement and suddenly explosive second. Jackson's reading meets all challenges while kicking up a lot of dust in the dizzy final pages, great fun and spirited playing.

The sound is very naturally captured, as are all of the best MSR releases, without undue microphone placement on the soloists. As mentioned, the orchestra is up to the high standards set by the soloists, and I cannot imagine a better put together recital, for the specialist and the generalist—you will love it.

-- Steven Ritter

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