THE DOUBLE REED
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Continuo by Joseph Bodin de Boismortier: **Mathieu Lussier**, solo bassoon; **Nadina Mackie Jackson**, bassoon; **Fraser Jackson**, contrabassoon; Sylvain Bergeron, theorbo; Richard Paré, harpsichord and organ.
MSR Classics (website previously given)
MS 1170.

This lovely CD could almost serve as a "companion" recording to the one above. It contains mostly the same personnel, but with a different "starring" role and a different composer, Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755) featured as well. Now the principal bassoon parts are ably taken by Mathieu Lussier with Nadina Mackie Jackson and contrabassoonist Fraser Jackson performing backup roles.

The recording contains many of Boismortier's numerous and most well-known bassoon sonata collections - two from Op. 14, three from Op. 26, two from Op. 40 (plus a lovely *Rondeau in A minor*), two from Op. 50, and finally a sparkling *Chaconne in A minor, Op. 66*, which brings the CD to a solid conclusion. As with the other album, the second bassoon and contra often alternate playing the second continuo part, with both playing it together from time to time. Also, accompanist Richard Paré can be heard alternating between harpsichord and organ throughout.

While this is an excellent recording, I have to admit, however, that I prefer the Corrette recording to this one for a number of small, but important reasons, at least to me. First of all, Boismortier is, to my ears, not as exciting or innovative a composer as Corrette. Boismortier seems more firmly entrenched ("stuck"?) in the standard Baroque style and practice, so that a whole CD of his music lacks for variety, mostly - no matter how well played.

Secondly, again a personal preference, I simply like the playing of Nadina better than that of Mathieu. This is splitting hairs, of course, because both are such fantastic players. But it is the little things that make the difference. I love Nadina's use and non-use of vibrato, as opposed to Mathieu's almost total non-use, substituting an expansive use of dynamics for vibrato. Also when Mathieu plays staccato articulation passages - marvelously, I might add - I hear too much tongue in them, while Nadina's fast passage work is always impeccable. This is not to take away anything from the interpretive skill of either performer. They are both fabulous artists!

I encourage you to get BOTH CDs and do your own comparison test. It is, to be sure, a good lesson in comparing high level interpretive skills by two wonderful modern bassoonists. Then you can decide for yourself! It goes without saying that the technical qualities of the recording, as with the Corrette are excellent - sound presence, balance, etc. So get both albums and enjoy!

Rating: 4 Crows