Bassoon RECORDING REVIEWS

REVIEWS BY RONALD KLIMKO
McCall, Idaho

Musica Franca:
The Music of Michel Corrette (1707-1795)
Nadina Mackie Jackson, solo bassoon; **Mathieu Lussier**, **Kathleen McLean**, bassoons; **Fraser Jackson**, contrabassoon; Terry McKenna, baroque guitar; Paul Jenkins, harpsichord and organ.
MSR Classics (www.musicafranca.com Available online at Magnatune www.magnatune.com)

Holy Mackeral! Every time bassoonist Nadina Mackie Jackson comes out with a new CD I have to "revise" the standards by which I evaluate bassoon recordings - always to a higher standard in her case! This is one of the most delightful recordings I have ever heard. It contains the classic *Le Phénix* bassoon quartet and the six sonatas for two bassoons and harpsichord: *Les Délices de la Solitude, Op 20*, by Michel Corette (1707-1796) as well as an exciting *Concerto No. 1 in G Major, Op. 28 for Organ*, also by Corrette, this latter work in an especially delightful arrangement for organ, bassoons, contrabassoon and baroque guitar by Fraser Jackson.

These are, to be sure, traditional Baroque pieces. These performances are anything but "ordinary", however. First of all, you have the delightful interpretation, phrasing and ornamentation by consummate artist, Nadina Mackie Jackson playing the solo bassoon parts throughout. What a delight it is to hear how she can make the music "dance" for your ears! Most impressive is her expressive use of vibrato (and non-vibrato) in the slow movements - truly exquisite. Secondly, you have an accompanying cast of bassoon artists adding their excellent assistance as well in absolutely perfect ensemble playing, with kudos also to Paul Jenkins for his crystalline harpsichord accompaniments. Finally, you have lots of "surprises" throughout the recording, such as contrabassoonist Fraser Jackson often playing the second bassoon parts in the *Délices* two bassoon sonatas in style and technique that can only be described as "awesome" (to borrow a word from the present generation). Sometimes the contra plays all three movements of the six sonatas, sometimes Mathieu Lussier plays the second bassoon part on some of the slow movements, and occasionally both Mathieu and Fraser play the second part, with contra as a kind of "continuo" voice. And to hear Fraser "trucking" along so powerfully on the contra with these "second-but-equal" parts is worth buying this disc for all by itself! The Fuga third movement of the third sonata, for instance, is guaranteed to "knock your socks off" technique-wise! This wonderful music is performed with just the right amount of elegance throughout - it is an absolute thrill to hear.

Everything is so beautifully handled in this record, from the musical interpretation, balance, recording technique, sound presence, etc., etc. And what a nice touch it is to both open and close the CD with the bassoon ensemble pieces and have the lovely six sonatas sandwiched between them. Exquisite programming as well!

Once again Nadina and company have "raised the bar" to a new height of artistry toward which we "mortal" bassoonists must ever strive. I simply can't say enough positive about this CD. You must all get it and enjoy it as much as I have. (Nadina, I'm still "jealous" of your marvelous bassooning!)

Rating: 5 Crows!!!