VIVALDI Bassoon Concertos: RV 484; RV 479; RV 499; RV 495; RV 483; RV 480; RV 491; RV 498 • Nadina Mackie Jackson (bn); Nicholas McGegan (cond); ensemble • MSR 1451 (66:33)

Vivaldi's instrument was the violin, of course. There exist approximately 300 Vivaldi concertos for one or two violins. But which instrument took second place on his list of muses? If you didn't say "bassoon," you really might consider acquiring (if it exists) a copy of *Vivaldi for Dummies.* Better still, you should buy this disc, which, in case you hadn't noticed, is named "Vivaldi Bassoon Concerti." Either way, you'll learn that Vivaldi left us 39 concertos for the bassoon. That's about twice as many as his oft-recorded oboe concertos, and half again as many as his concertos for the cello. This disc offers eight of the concertos, all in the familiar fast-slow-fast pattern, but in seven different keys, and—*pace*, Sigr Stravinsky—as different as can be. You'll treat yourself to an unalloyed delight, played with breathtaking virtuosity and an irresistible verve and sparkle by Nadina Mackie Jackson and her seven cohorts, whom I did not name in the headnote, but do here: Aisslinn Nosky and Julia Wedman, violins; David Rose, viola; Raphael Dubé, cello; Dominic Girard, bass; Lucas Harris, lute and guitar; and, last but hardly least, Nicholas McGegan, keyboards and conductor. We're told that Jackson plays both modern and period bassoons; she's pictured here with a modern one. It's not known for whom these concertos were written, but unnamed girls at the Ospedale della Pietà are possible candidates. If so, they must have been as accomplished as their violinist and oboist sisters, but there's no corroborating evidence. Whoever they were, though, they would surely be proud to have passed the mantle to Jackson.

More good news! The big number "1" on the cover implies that this is only the first installment of a complete set. Fasten your seatbelts. Incidentally, MSR did not give the timing of the disc. The number shown above is approximate, what I got when I added up the timings of the individual tracks—which were not given either. **George Chien**

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