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Northwest Reverb

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CD Review: Romanza--Works for Trumpet, Corno da Caccia, Bassoon and Orchestra

In a new release from MSR Classics, Nicholas McGegan conducts the Toronto Chamber Orchestra and soloists Guy Few (trumpet, corno da caccia) and Nadina Mackie Jackson (bassoon) in works by Hummel, von Weber, and Ignaz Lachner (1807-1895.)

The opening of the Hummel *Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major* seems merely concise and professional: virtuoso Guy Few plays in a mellifluous legato, but if one is looking for a radical new interpretation of this old chestnut, this CD is not the place to find it. Instead there is a well-polished gem that should please those familiar with the work but offer no brand-new insights. The Andante, however, is particularly luscious and lingers in the senses like the memory of a gourmet meal long after it has been consumed.

Hummel's *Grand Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra in F Major* delivers all the excitement and freshness one could hope for. Jackson's chops are fantastic, and the occasionally audible click-clacking of keys adds a delightful verisimilitude to the recording. Her playing can be described as nothing short of saucy and supremely confident; those who love the bassoon would be hard-pressed to find more liquidity and precision of articulation. Jackson removes all doubts as to the bassoon being a born solo instrument: the *Romanza* contains the most delicious, heart-achingly sincere bassoon cadenza I've ever heard.

In a unique offering, the two virtuosi pair up for Lachner's *Concertino in E-flat Major for Corno, Bassoon and Orchestra* (Op. 43). This work, sometimes nobly Beethovenian in character and other times reminiscent of a Rossini overture, presents a canvas that allows the masterful concertino free reign; their lightning-quick parallel runs are breathtakingly exact. To McGegan's credit, the maestro's fingerprint is nowhere too distinct—the immensely capable soloists constantly shine through the even texture.

The CD ends with a short *Andante and Hungarian Rondo for Bassoon and Orchestra* (Op. 35) by von Weber. Everyone seems to expect nothing but the best from McGegan, and thanks to the wonderful soloists this recording certainly lives up to that standard.

Posted by Lorin Wilkerson at 12:51 PM

Contributors

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