sustain themselves with long phrases and flowing harpsichord arpeggios.

The Sonatas by Corrette, a younger contemporary of Boismortier, are even more playful and colourful than those by Boismortier.

The Sonata III in C major has some brief "funky" rhythms that solo bassoonist Nadina Mackie Jackson handles adeptly and with clear relish. Baroque guitarist Terry McKenna gets in his syncopated licks in the Sonata IV in B-flat major and the bassoons do wonderful hunting horn imitations in the fourth movement of the same sonata.

Fraser Jackson plays contrabassoon with alacrity and lightness, holding back the otherwise formidable power of this leviathan. Jackson also does some very fine arranging as in the Corrette Organ Concerto No.1 in which the bassoons and baroque guitar take the string parts.

These players clearly have a great affection for this entire repertoire and the instruments chosen to express it. There's a good deal of freedom with tempo and phrasing. It offers deep feeling to the music in a way that seems completely natural to both composers' intent. Tone throughout the bassoons' register is delicious - never constricted at the top or rude at the low end. This is ensemble playing of great mutual respect and undeniable musicality.

The ensemble's production values are high. They balance the intimacy of their audible breaths and instrumental key clicks with the spacious acoustics of St. Anne's Anglican Church – Toronto's architectural homage to Byzantium. Engineer David vR Bowles' achievement is noteworthy.

If you're suspicious that a little bassoon music might really go a long way - these recordings will provide more satisfying listening than thought possible. Musica Franca knows what they're doing. Enjoy these and look forward to their next release.

Alex Baran

Boismortier - Sonatas for 2 Bassoons and Continuo
Musica Franca
MSR Classics MS 1170

Corrette - Le Phenix; Les Delices de la Solitude
Musica Franca
MSR Classics MS 1171

Bassoons? It's about time someone took them seriously. The bassoon-centric ensemble Musica Franca is determined to make that point with these two very fine recordings. They present the work of two 18th century French composers, Boismortier and Corrette. The Boismortier sonatas are from his large body of instrumental works, many written for optional solo instruments. These selections are presumably the most bassoon-friendly.

The performances are light and transparent as the players meet the textural needs of the different tempi. Fast movements are wonderfully weightless and slower movements