

Fanfare Consort—The Intimate Sonate

The Fanfare Consort, based in Connecticut, is one of the more interesting period instrument ensembles on the early music scene. Led by trumpeter Thomas Freas, this group's repertoire includes a significant number of works for the natural trumpet. Freas is ably assisted on this CD by Baroque violinists Jorie Garrigue and Mary Hostetler Hoyt, Baroque contrabass player Peter Al Hoyt, and harpsichordist Margaret Irwin-Brandon. Four of the works do not include trumpet; those will be ignored for purposes of this review. The sonatas are all edited by Freas from copies of the original manuscripts or early prints, with the Corbett, Corelli, and anonymous sonatas taken from two sets of manuscripts in the British Museum. Freas uses a natural trumpet (4-hole system) by David Edwards, after an original by Simon Beale, London, 1667. As a player, Freas is fluent and quite adept at performing the diminutions, ornaments, and improvisatory passages that were expected from competent players in the Baroque period. His grasp of the uneven articulations of the period is very good, and the musical concepts and interpretation of all the sonatas is exceptional. It is worth comparing Freas' interpretations with those of Paul Plunkett on his 1992 CD *Baroque Trumpet and Strings* (reviewed in the May 1993 issue of the *ITG Journal* by Craig Hurst) as an example of how two different players will arrive at very different approaches to the same works (Corelli and Biber), yet each within the bounds of accepted Baroque performance practice. The group as a whole also has a good grasp of the Baroque concept of rhythmic vitality; in other words, many of the pieces "dance." If there is a flaw in this recording, it is the use of the contrabass alone as the sustaining bass instrument of the continuo. Without the upper octave of the bass line represented by either a cello or a bassoon, the continuo becomes somewhat "grumbly." *The Intimate Sonate* is recommended without reservation to anyone interested in hearing Baroque music performed well on historically accurate instruments, and as a model to trumpet players interested in studying the stylistic improvisations of the period.

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