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***J. S. Bach: Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord*, Stephen Schultz, baroque flute; Jory Vinikour, harpsichord, Music & Arts CD
1295–55 minutes**

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Audio Review

J. S. Bach: Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord. Stephen Schultz, baroque flute; Jory Vinikour, harpsichord. Music & Arts CD-1295—55 minutes.

This attractive program comprises four sonatas: the two large sonatas for flute and obligato harpsichord in B Minor and A Major (BWV 1030 and 1032)—the latter with the missing measures reconstructed by Alfred Dürr—and the attributed sonatas in E-flat Major and G Minor (BWV 1031 and 1020). Mr. Schultz performs on a 2012 flute by Martin Wenner (after Carlo Palanca) and Mr. Vinkour on a John Philips harpsichord built in 2010 and modeled after a 1722 instrument by J. H. Gräbner.

Steven Zohn’s brief but excellent notes nicely explain the pieces, their sources, and their historical context. In the case of the attributed sonatas, Zohn notes scholarship arguing that BWV 1031 is closely modeled on a Quantz trio sonata and that the work might be his. In addition, Carl Heinrich Graun possibly wrote BWV 1020 and 1031. Zohn mentions a recently discovered manuscript from the late eighteenth century transmitting BWV 1031 in a trio-sonata scoring. Almost as an afterthought, he observes that “it is tempting to imagine the young C. P. E. Bach composing his G minor sonata in conscious emulation of his father’s E-flat sonata, itself modeled on a work by Quantz.”

Mr. Schultz’s full, round tone and enviable breath supply prove particularly useful in the longer phrases of the B-minor sonata. Mr. Vinikour—an old friend from my undergraduate days at Peabody Conservatory, and an artist whose career I have followed for a number of years now—uses the full technical resources of harpsichord playing (for example, articulation and overlegato) to complement perfectly Mr. Schultz’s musical decisions. In the face of many period instrument players that seem interested in little more than showing how fast and evenly they perform, Schultz and Vinikour offer changing, nuanced phrasing, for instance in the first movements of BWV 1030 and 1031. They also go much farther than many in revealing the wide and often bizarre expressive range in the B-minor sonata’s first movement. Finally, the recorded sound is perfect.

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