



The WholeNote Magazine

Recording Review

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Impressionisme – Para Arpa Harp Duo

Caroline Léonardelli, harp, Caroline Lizotte, harp

Impressionisme, the debut recording from the Canadian harp duo of Caroline Léonardelli and Caroline Lizotte, offers a distinctively Parisian view of the repertoire for harp duet. The crown jewels of this collection are transcriptions of works by Debussy and Ravel. Both compositions were originally conceived for piano four hands and later cast in orchestral versions. Claude Debussy's *Petite Suite* is one of his most engagingly melodic compositions and lends itself well to the harp in this fine arrangement which makes effective use of antiphonal exchanges between the instruments. With the exception of the chorale-like finale, the arrangement of Maurice Ravel's enchanting *Ma Mere l'Oye* (Mother Goose Suite) is also surprisingly effective. The startling inclusion of percussive effects (strokes from a gong and antique cymbals) in this work is a clever touch that might seem more convincing to me recorded at a greater distance, reflecting their actual placement of the orchestral stage. Generally however the recording quality is excellent throughout.

Also on offer is an elegant set of *Four Preludes* crafted in the luxurious Paris Conservatoire style by the eminent harpist Marcel Tournier. Another distinguished alumnus of the Conservatoire, Bernard Andrès, is represented by the delightful *Parvis*, an engaging carnival of dance rhythms performed with considerable panache. Pierick Houdy's *Pour Deux Harpes* is uncommonly chromatic, an effect not normally associated with the harp due to its inherently diatonic nature but achieved here through an ingenious manipulation of harmonics. Enrique Granados' well-known *Spanish Dance Number 5* dates from a time the composer was living in Paris and is heard in an evocative arrangement by the innovative Carlos Salzedo.

These are performances of sensitivity and grace, exhibiting a wide range of subtle colours and an excellent sense of ensemble.