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CD: Duo Macke-Bornauw - Curly Music

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Duo Macke-Bornauw's second CD (after 2016's *It's Baroque to my Ears*) continues the couple's reinvention of the baroque, mixing traditional pipe tunes with early music in a way that might shock HIP purists but refreshes the parts some performances never reach.

Pipes (Breughel pipes and musette de cour) and accordion make a true combination of equals, with voetbas (foot-played accordion) adding deeper support. The combination of free reeds and bagpipe reeds works excellently, with at times almost a fairground organ sonority, at other times a much more pipes-forward edginess. The pipes really come to the fore when François Lazarevitch joins the group in four tracks.

The accordion gives a great rhythmic impulse - intensified by the voetbas - enabling the pipes to launch themselves into fast figurework and counterpoint, but it's never limited to mere accompaniment. The Handel sarabande, for instance, starts with gloomy Gothic accordion chords before the pipes enter - the

pipes providing an accompaniment to the accordion rather than the other way around before they finally take off into a variation that ups the tempo and turns the music into almost a French valse.

Elsewhere the accordion and pipes vie with each other in counterpoint.

The CD is quite an adventure through different emotions, musical

styles and repertoire. The latter is eclectic. It includes some tunes that fit into two different piping traditions, from Corrette and Chedeville, composers well known for their love of the musette de cour, and from the Scottish and Northumbrian repertory. But pieces are brought in from the much wider baroque repertory - from Handel, Purcell, Zipoli, and Telemann, as well as from Flemish manuscript sources. There are a couple of modern tunes, too, from the US and Flanders.

And most unusually there's an arrangement of a Pauline Viardot piece, a beautifully meandering minor key piece that provides a nice subdued moment between more extrovert pieces. That was supremely unexpected. (Viardot is well worth the trouble of investigating; she took piano lessons with Liszt, played duets with Chopin, was an internationally renowned soprano, and wrote five 'salon operas' as well as numerous songs.)

Emotionally, the disc runs the gamut from tragedy in Handel's Sarabande through to the raucous humour of 'Arrival of the Queen of Samba'; there are moments of ponderous solemnity ('Trilt den Boer') and stately sadness (a Purcell rondeau), contrasted with almost circus-like bizarreness in Telemann's 'Froesche und Kraehen' and Chedeville's comic Singes verts. ("Frogs, crows, and green monkeys" wouldn't be a bad tune title, now I come to think of it.)

Stylistically, though the baroque/trad mix predominates, there's an almost tangoesque improvisation at the start of l'ordre thérésien, and even hints of jitterbug and jazz in the final Scottish swing. I particularly enjoyed the full-on



fairground cheesiness in the 'Queen of Samba', turning a Handel standard into joyfully blowsy carnivalesque. The musicians always give the music enough air - space between the notes creates an impression of delicacy and clear articulation. And the mood can turn on a sixpence - from the weightiness of Trilt den Boer to the bubbling musette froth of Pachelbel's Frolics, for example. The playing is tight, and the arrangements are anything but banal. For instance, the old Dutch tune 'Stort Tranen Ut' starts with meditative chords and long held pipe notes, from which the tune emerges; an arpeggiated bass figure that feels slightly off-kilter starts the music swaying, and then the tempo increases, the rhythms become choppy, the pipes start varying the tune; and a sudden, abrupt pause introduced the final coda, a simple, bare restatement of a single line of the song. Words do not do this six-minute track justice.

A warning though: this is not a CD you can put on while you're teleworking. It demands proper listening to. As they say on the internet, "don't ask me how I know that."