

JACQUELINE ROSS

Violinist



The Italian Connection

BELL'ARTE ANTIQUA: LUCY VAN DAEL and JACQUELINE ROSS, violin • WILLIAM HUNT, viola da gamba • TERENCE CHARLSTON, viola da harpsicord

Robert Maxham, Fanfare

"The Italian sun never shone more brightly than when it lit the early journeyings through the world of sonatas for that brash new instrument, the violin."

This is an appealing group of sonatas and trio sonatas of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The significance of the title is that each of the composers represented is believed to have traveled to England and left his musical mark there. Bell'Arte Antiqua are Lucy van Dael and Jacqueline Ross, violins, William Hunt, viola da gamba, and Terence Charlston, harpsichord. They are a very fine group that ornaments tastefully and is well recorded. Some may be attracted to this because of the quality of the instruments (period instrument players can seldom afford first-class instruments). Van Dael plays a Nicolo Amati violin of 1643, and Ross plays an Andrea Amati of 1570. The violins blend and contrast beautifully. Their sound is quite mellifluous, but they throw in the occasional accent, giving their performances a fine rhythmic spring.

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The Italian sun never shone more brightly than when it lit the early journeyings through the world of sonatas for that brash new instrument, the violin. Bell'arte Antiqua's violinists Lucy van Dael and Jacqueline Ross, balancing musicianship and imagination with the strong personalities of the individual composers, never permit either academicism or experimentation to obscure the musical message. Despite their exuberant rhythmic verve, bracing textural variety, and coruscatingly brilliant ornamentation, Corelli's nobility, Vivaldi's lyricism, Matteis's ingenuity, Lonati's earnestness and grandeur, Veracini's irrepressibility, and Geminiani's solidity all emerge with the integrity of a literal reading of Bartók. Lucy van Dael's 1643 Nicolo Amati and Jacqueline Ross's 1570 Andrea Amati sound rich in the lower registers and pure in the upper ones--and well matched throughout. The recorded sound is clear enough, though reverberant, and close enough, though at a distance, to convey the works' and performances' full impact. Providing a joyous hour's worth of listening, ASV's collection of Italian sonatas should appeal more broadly than simply to violinists or to those with special historical interests: It can be enjoyed as well as studied, indexed, and filed. Highly recommended.

FANFARE, ROBERT MAXHAM