

Act I

CASTEREDE: *Sonatine*; **PUCCINI:** *Arias*; **DONIZETTI:** *Una Furtiva Lagrima*; **UBER:** *Romance*; **MOLINEUX:** *Manipulations*; **TOMASI:** *Trombone Concerto*; **PRYOR:** *Starlight*; *Blue Bells of Scotland*

Weston Sprott, trb; Hanako Yamagata, p
WS 1—72 minutes (503-595-3000)

Weston Sprott is a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. What a life that trombone section must lead, waiting through interminable rests until called on to play at the big moments. But they get to listen to great singers during those rests, and that would be quite an education. You can hear that influence in Sprott's readings of five arias by Puccini and Donizetti. While I'm never completely happy with instrumental renditions of vocal works—repeated notes can be very boring without text, to name just one reason—it is clear that Sprott knows these inside and out. He feels the emotion of every note and phrase, which is exactly what they need. David Uber's 'Romance' fits well with these beautiful vocal works.

The program opens with Jacques Castere-de's *Sonatine*, a wonderful but vexing work, and one without a recording that seems just right. This might come closest. Everyone does fine with the lovely II, but the lively outer movements demand lightness and the right tempo for the sake of clarity in the fiendish piano accompaniments. In I, Sprott captures the breezy, French folk-song quality perfectly. The tempo is just fast enough to be lively while allowing the excellent pianist Hanako Yamagata to handle the metric and contrapuntal complexity. In II, Sprott takes his time and plays very tenderly; but in III, although clarity is once again superb, the tempo seems just a bit slow. Also from the core repertory, and also played superbly, is Henri Tomasi's *Trombone Concerto*.

I had to go to the web to learn that Allen Molineux was born in 1950 and teaches at Claflin University in Orangeburg SC. His five-minute 'Manipulations' for solo trombone reminds me of Leslie Bassett's *Suite for Unaccompanied Trombone*. Molineux has the soloist shift abruptly from contemplation and scampering and back, but he asks for no extended playing techniques.

Sprott and Yamagata end the program with two turn-of-the-20th-Century works by Sousa's trombone virtuoso Arthur Pryor. 'Starlight' is a lively, often sentimental waltz; and 'Blue Bells of Scotland' is a renowned showoff piece. Sprott gives it plenty of stylistic variety, adds his own touches to the cadenzas, handles the considerable technical demands with ease, and maintains excellent intonation

and beautiful tone at all times. It is an exemplary ending to an outstanding recording.

KILPATRICK

After a Dream

Carsten Svanberg, trb; Birgit Marcussen, org
Danacord 710—54 minutes

A lovely-melodies recording with the beautiful tone qualities of trombonist Carsten Svanberg and Birgit Marcussen on the 1993 Gunnar Husted organ in Denmark's Egebjerg Church. Some of the melodies are quite familiar: Purcell's 'Trumpet Tune', Parry's 'Jerusalem', Grieg's 'Song of Solveig', Schumann's 'Traumerei', Brahms's 'Lullaby', Rossini's 'Cujus Animam', and 'Ravel's 'Apres un Reve'. Others are probably known by Scandinavians. Several works for organ solo are also heard, including one of my all-time favorites, Oskar Lindberg's beautiful and melancholy 'Gammal Faboldpsalm'.

KILPATRICK

Best of Guy Touvron

Trumpet concertos by HAYDN, L MOZART, HUMMEL; BELLINI: *Oboe Concerto*; ARBAN: *Carnival of Venice*; *Cavatine et Variation*; *Traviata Fantasia*; BACH: *Suite 3*; SCHUBERT: *Ave Maria*; SCHUMANN: *Reverie*; MOZART: *Queen of the Night Aria*; MASSENET: *Meditation*; RACHMANINOFF: *Vocalise*; GAUBERT: *Cantabile et Scherzetto*; RAVEL: *Pavane*

Nelly Cottin, p; Olivier Vernet, org; I Soloist Veneti/ Claudio Scimone; Prague Chamber Orchestra—Ligia 105220 [2CD] 139 minutes

French trumpeter Guy Touvron turned 60 last year, so Ligia has released this collection compiled from seven 1990s albums. The selections I enjoy most are three sets of variations by 19th-Century cornet virtuoso Jean-Baptiste Arban. Two are on themes from the Verdi operas *Nabucco* and *La Traviata* (Jan/Feb 1997: 59), but best of all is the famous 'Carnival of Venice'—not the standard one with boring piano accompaniment, but Gilles Herbillon's imaginative, quirky one with orchestra. Then there are the trumpet concertos. I was moderately enthusiastic when I heard Touvron play the Haydn and Hummel almost two decades ago (May/June 1992: 169), but now they strike me as uninteresting—nothing more than tone, elegance, and technical skill. It's pretty, but the phrases lack shape and emotion.

Arrangements of Bellini's *Oboe Concerto* and familiar works by Schumann, Mozart, Schubert, Massenet, Rachmaninoff, and Ravel are lovely vehicles for Touvron's beautiful tone, expressiveness, and singing style.

KILPATRICK