Cavatina Duo refreshes the repertoire

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It's a real challenge to take something very familiar and make it sound new. And not just novelty new, but new that retains the substance of the original. I think the Cavatina Duo successfully met that challenge, not once but twice with this new recording.

They present an arrangement of Marin Marais' "Follies d'Espagne." The tune was a common theme for variations in the Baroque. Marais' set is perhaps one of the best.

Moving the melody from the viola da gamba to the flute does more than significantly brighten it. To me, it threw Marais' intricate reworkings of the theme into sharp clarity.

Plus, Denis Azabagic's guitar accompaniment brought out the Spanish origins of the tune. Something I was intellectually aware of but hadn't really heard in most recordings.

Georg Philipp Telemann's Twelve Fantasias for Solo Flute is a staple of the repertoire. And while every flutist seems intent on recording them, I personally never found them that interesting — as a whole.

The duo commissioned Alan Thomas to create a guitar part for the Fantasias, and the difference is revelatory. The accompaniment sounds stylistically correct, so it supports rather than detracts from the flute part.

But it does more. Harmonies are fleshed out. Countermelodies are introduced. And all of it serves to bring out details in Telemann's original music. Details that were implied by the single line instrument, but not realized.

This was one version I enjoyed from start to finish.

And of course, part of that enjoyment was listening to the performances. Eugenia Moliner plays with a full, round tone that adds to the beauty of the music. And Azabagic's playing is as impeccable as always.

If you're familiar with these works, then you should definitely check out Cavatina Duo's take on them. And if you're not, well, go ahead and get this release and you might not have to bother with others.

Folias and Fantasias
Cavatina Duo plays Marais and Telemann
Bridge Records 9541