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Sophia Giustina Corri: Works For Solo Harp / Floaleda Sacchi



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CORRI Introduction and Waltz. A French Air with Variations. La chasse. Sonatas, op. 2/1–6 • Floaleda Sacchi (hp) (period instrument) • TACTUS 772801 (75: 09)

Sophia Giustina Corri (1775–1830?) was the unhappy wife of composer Jan Ladislav Dussek, known to millions for his piano sonatinas, and at one time, much more than those. I say “unhappy,” for the marriage was fraught with deception and adultery, critics still unsure whether it was a he-first, she-first, or both at the same time sort of liaison. Be that as it may, this woman defied the conventions of the time. The 17-year-old girl married the debonair and woman-wise musician in 1792, and she and her husband began to play in public quite often, and it was during this time of their marriage in London that she completed her first compositions for harp, an instrument she knew well.

But upon turning 25, Sophia took advantage of her husband’s absence on a trip to plan her escape with a new lover, and only after Dussek chased her down and confronted her, declaring his love and begging her to return, did she acquiesce. But all was not well, and it is likely that her daughter was not Dussek’s child. With all of the scandals of her life, this woman, the privileged child who received a quality musical education from a young age, continued to perform boldly in public, even though her father had been imprisoned for bankruptcy and her scandals were well known. Finally, at age 46, after the death of Dussek (and I can’t begin to capture the details offered in the excellent notes), she married a man 10 years her junior, performed and taught with him, and was successful in business.

One would think that a tempestuous temperament like this would lead to some striking music. It does not. Despite some of the adulation present in the notes to this release, the music, while nice and well organized with more than a semblance of skill, is *echt*-salon. Granted, the melodies she gives us are a cut above the usual when considering this genre, but it is doubtful that any of these melodies are going to enter into anyone’s book of favorites.

Floaleda Sacchi is an outstanding proponent of this composer. Her affection for the music is obvious, and her command of its challenges is formidable. The sound on this Tactus release is a little close in—I would have preferred a slightly warmer ambiance—but the harp, like wind instruments, is a difficult thing to capture properly (though Telarc has been doing it well for years) and I am quite satisfied with the outcome. While not for everyone, harpists will need this, and others might find it of more than passing interest.

FANFARE: Steven E. Ritter

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1. Introduction and Waltz by Sophia Giustina Corri

Performer: Floaleda Sacchi (Harp)
Period: Classical

2. French Air with Variations by Sophia Giustina Corri

Performer: Floaleda Sacchi (Harp)
Period: Classical

3. **La chasse** by Sophia Giustina Corri

Performer: Floraleda Sacchi (Harp)

Period: Baroque

4. **Sonatas (6) for Harp, Op. 2** by Sophia Giustina Corri

Performer: Floraleda Sacchi (Harp)

Period: Classical

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