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BRASS BRITANNIA!
ENGLISH MUSIC FOR BRASS

Capital BrassWorks.
Alain Cazes, conductor.

CAPITAL BRASSWORKS CBW3 (16 Forest Gate Way, Nepean, ON, K2G 6P3, Canada; 1.613.843.7789; www.capitalbrassworks.ca).

William Byrd/Elgar Howarth: *The Earl of Oxford's March*. Traditional/Elgar Howarth: *Greensleeves*. Traditional/Richard Bissill: *The Foggy, Foggy May*. Charles V. Stanford/Roger Harvey: *The Bluebird*. Benjamin Britten: *Fanfare for Saint Edmundsbury*. Gordon Langford: *London Miniatures*. Derek Bourgeois: *William and Mary*. Simon Wills: *Aubrey's Maske*. John Lennon/Paul McCartney/Colin Traquair: *Penny Lane*.

Upon listening to the newest release from Capital BrassWorks for the first time, one will most likely find the most impressive element of the recording to be the quality of the “ensemble” in every sense of the term.

From a musical standpoint, the ensemble and soloists project beautiful lyrical phrases and melodies that eloquently weave into and out of each other, underscored at times by thick, rich harmonies presently perfectly in tune, well-balanced, and tasteful at all times.

Technically, the precision and clarity with which the entire ensemble articulates and releases is stunning. Any time the ensemble is scored low, the lower brass sound is full but not overpowering. When required, they execute technically demanding passages with impressive clarity and maintain the integrity of the quality of sound and intonation extremely well.

Stylistically, the ensemble seems to have the same concepts in terms of sound, breadth, articulation, dynamics, and musicality. No one tries to be a “star” and the entire group shines as a result of their collective talent.

Despite the diversity and quality of the music selected for this recording, a few pieces stand out as aural gems. The group makes a bold statement right from the beginning with Elgar Howarth's arrangement of *the Earle of Oxford's March*. This unique arrangement offers powerful fanfare figures from the trumpets and horns accompanied by deep, resonant harmonies perfectly balanced and in tune from the lower brass. Howarth's setting of *Greensleeves* is equally as unique and interesting, and the group presents this piece nicely.

Britten's *Fanfare for Saint Edmundsbury* is brilliantly written and skillfully executed by the upper brass. The lyrical playing is smooth and full, and the fanfare passages are sharp and clear, all with beautiful tone and intonation.

Both the Langford *London Miniatures* and the Bourgeois *William and Mary* are powerhouse pieces laced with stellar solo performances. Each explores dense and complex harmonies, which the group presents perfectly balanced and tuned. Effective use of dynamics and special effects such as mutes, glissandi, and flutter tonguing make the music burst with character.

This disc successfully accomplishes what most if not all brass players strive to do ... take the quality of brass playing to the next level, both individually and collectively.

—James Meador
Yucatan Symphony Orchestra