

Andrea Zani – Divertimenti for Violin & Cello (2015)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 18 March 2018 12:24 -

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Disc#1 Divertimento No. 9 in A Minor 1 I. *Allegro* 2:32 2 II. *Larghetto* 1:55 3 III. *Allegro assai* 1:32
Divertimento No. 1 in D Major 4 I. *Allegro* 3:09 5 II. *Adagio* 3:06 6 III. *Allegro* 2:13
Divertimento No. 10 in B Minor 7 I. *Allegro ma non tanto* 2:23 8 II. *Largo* 1:43 9 III. *Allegro* 1:59
Divertimento No. 5 in E Major 10 I. *Allegro* 2:24 11 II. *Andante* 2:25 12 III. *Allegro assai* 2:34
Divertimento No. 3 in C Major 13 I. *Allegro* 3:14 14 II. *Siciliana: Cantabile* 2:08 15 III. *Allegro* 2:13
Divertimento No. 7 in G Minor 16 I. *Non tanto allegro* 3:00 17 II. *Larghetto* 2:12 18 III. *Allegro* 2:08
Disc#2 Divertimento No. 2 in G Major 1 I. *Allegro assai* 3:06 2 II. *Largo* 2:14 3 III. *Vivace* 2:08
Divertimento No. 8 in C Minor 4 I. *Allegro* 3:01 5 II. *Adagio* 2:14 6 III. *Allegro* 1:47
Divertimento No. 6 in B-Flat Major 7 I. *Allegro* 2:15 8 II. *Adagio* 2:13 9 III. *Allegro* 2:54
Divertimento No. 11 in D Minor 10 I. *Allegro assai* 3:21 11 II. *Largo* 2:45 12 III. *Con spirito* 1:59
Divertimento No. 4 in A Major 13 I. *Allegro* 3:18 14 II. *Andante* 2:08 15 III. *Vivace* 1:50
Divertimento No. 12 in F Minor 16 I. *Allegro* 2:58 17 II. *Largo* 2:05 18 III. *Allegro ma non tanto* 2:08
Lena Neudauer, violin Martin Rummel, cello

With great likelihood these twelve duos for violin and cello composed in 1734 are the earliest works with this instrumentation in which the violin and cello parts enjoy equal rights. The fact that Andrea Zani is largely forgotten today is probably due to the circumstances that saw the bulk of his music tucked away and preserved in handwritten form in different monastery and palace libraries throughout Europe and thus, rarely recorded. With these duos, featuring the fine

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playing of Lena Neudauer, violin and Martin Rummel, cello we can experience this nascent and minimal form of chamber music that Zani authored and hope more of his compositions will be brought to light along with the recent release of his cello concertos (Capriccio CD C5145).

Andrea Zani (1696-1757) is a fine Italian composer on the earlier border of the classical period. These three-movement divertimentos are duos without a basso continuo. Like much of his music, they certainly deserve publication as much as anything else of the period. The present recording follows up Rummel's fine recording of the cello concertos. These readings are excellent in mood and technique, as is the recorded balance and sound. The order of the program seems arbitrary. They are played with care and polish, and the players are clearly enjoying their work together. I think Zani would have enjoyed them too. And so will you! Yes, the timing is short. Your move! ---hbdirect.com

This release follows on from Martin Rummel's recording of Andrea Zani's Cello Concertos (review). Zani is largely unknown today and this is connected to a lack of publication, his music having mainly been preserved in manuscript form and remaining hidden in libraries throughout Europe, possibly with more yet to be discovered. Zani's origins were in the province of Cremona, and after a few years spent in Vienna in the service of nobility – during which he would have written these Divertimenti – he returned to his native Casalmaggiore. Collectors of unusual deaths of composers can add Zani to their list, as he apparently died as the result of an accident when the carriage in which he was travelling overturned.

The claim made for these Divertimenti is that they are the earliest works with this instrumentation in which the violin and cello parts enjoy equal rights. The musical dialogue is indeed striking from the outset, with a touch of Vivaldi's influence around some of the music's features in the opening Ninth Divertimento but more in the sense of fashionable style than in slavish imitation. Other reference points indicate that these pieces inhabit that world between the Baroque and early Classical – the fields occupied by Bach's sons for instance – but more important is the enforced economy of means with just two instruments. There are plenty of sequences, repeated motifs either rising or descending, but the ever inventive Zani rises to the challenge of making this combination as interesting as possible by making the parts a sheer delight to play. What one performer delivers the other is sure to take up, and these lively interactions in the fast movements contrasting with sublime simplicity in the slow make these works much more entertaining than you might expect.

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Lena Neudauer and Martin Rummel communicate their joy in performing these works, and their vibrant and expressive playing makes for compelling listening. The studio recording is very good, with plenty of detail but not too close for comfort. There is presumably a light sprinkling of added reverberation effect but even if this is the case it has been kept to a discreet minimum and adds the barest hint of a halo around the instruments. Andrea Zani's Divertimenti may not shake your world to its foundations, but they have been a delight to discover and should become a popular choice for this instrumental combination. ---Dominy Clements, musicweb-international.com

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