Jan Baptysta Kleczynski - String Trios op.4 (Vol.1) [2013]



String Trio in C major op.4 no.1 *01. I. Allegro moderato [0:07:05.69] 02. II. Andante moderato [0:01:57.27] 03. III. Rondo.Allegro [0:04:11.34]*
String Trio in G major op.4 no.2
04. I. Allegro con brio [0:07:12.47] 05. II. Poco andante con variazioni [0:05:38.17] 06. III. Rondo. Allegro [0:02:25.60]
String Trio in A major op.4 no.6
07. I. Allegro moderato [0:07:47.44] 08. II. Poco adagio [0:04:01.11] 09. III. Andante grazioso con variazioni. Allegretto [0:04:27.02]
Trio Alegrija: Maria Milkowska – violin Magdalena Sierpien-Wywrocka – viola Przemyslaw Wierzba – cello

The Polish composer and violinist Jan Baptysta Kleczynski - also known as Johann Kletzinsky, the name under which he was apparently born - was an exact contemporary of Mozart. That shared birth year is the closest he has come so far to anything even resembling recognition. Acte Préalable (AP), one of the great champions of neglected Polish musicians, hope to rectify that with this double release, probably the very first recordings of Kleczynski's music. Confusingly, there is another Polish composer called Jan Kleczynski (1837-1895), who was also one of Poland's most renowned chess players of the 19th century. He had a son, also Jan Kleczynski (1875-1939) and another chess master, though thankfully not a musician!

Of the Kleczynski heard here - the original, so to speak - AP's blurb has this to say - in its typical slightly strange English: "The String Trios op. 4 may be a grateful material for the modern recipient, being wonderful evidence that the music of the Classical era is much more than just Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven". That is indeed true, but Kleczynski's music does in fact recall now Mozart, now Haydn - it comes as no surprise to learn that he was based permanently in Vienna from 1795. On the other hand, there is little evidence of "a certain turn towards Romanticism" claimed by Lukasz Kaczmarek in his notes. The Trios were published in two sets of three in 1797, but neither Kaczmarek nor New Grove offer actual composition dates -

strange, then, to claim that "Listening and analysing them in their chronological order makes it possible for us to pick up the changes that occurred in Kleczynski's style".

In fact these are all stylistically conservative - or better, non-radical - works, from their basic three-movement allegro-adagio-rondo allegro structure to the emphasis on lyrical and structural elegance. However, despite the obvious debt to Haydn and Mozart, Kleczynski's trios are not pale imitations - the pathos-rich slow movement of Trio no.5, for example, indicates a composer of some depth and imagination. The part-writing too is often quite virtuosic, as befits a violinist of what was once considerable reputation.

These CDs represent the recording debut of the recently-formed Polish ensemble Trio Alegrija, happy winners of AP owner Jan Jarnicki's latest 'Forgotten Polish Music' recording competition last year. Neglected composers are in fact their speciality, according to the biographical notes. That may doom them to very small audiences in the concert hall, but as far as recordings go their future should be brighter - this is a confident, poised start.

Sound quality is good, if perhaps just a shade bright. Kaczmarek's notes are detailed, offering a useful biography not available elsewhere, though he does lean towards prolixity. This tendency is not helped by an imperfect translation from the Polish, producing phrases like "As compositions [the Trios] can be a very grateful material for the modern recipient".

Both discs come with a very low running-time. Clearly, the six trios could not be squeezed onto a single CD, but surely AP could have released them as a discounted double-disc set, rather than two separate items both attracting the label's rather hefty cover price? After all, the two discs were recorded at the same time and their booklets share some material.

On the other hand, there is more to a CD than what it costs. These are a decent introduction to a far from insignificant figure. --- Byzantion, musicweb-international.com

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