Albinoni - Sinfonie a Cinque op. 2 (2009)

1. Sonata No. 2 in C major, Op. 2/3 (T. 2/3): Largo 2. Sonata No. 2 in C major, Op. 2/3 (T. 2/3): Allegro 3. Sonata No. 2 in C major, Op. 2/3 (T. 2/3): Grave 4. Sonata No. 2 in C major, Op. 2/3 (T. 2/3): Allegro 5. Sonata No. 6 in G minor, Op. 2/11 (T. 2/11): Adagio 6. Sonata No. 6 in G minor, Op. 2/11 (T. 2/11): Allegro 7. Sonata No. 6 in G minor, Op. 2/11 (T. 2/11): Grave 8. Sonata No. 6 in G minor, Op. 2/11 (T. 2/11): Allegro 9. Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Op. 2/7 (T. 2/7): Grave 10. Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Op. 2/7 (T. 2/7): Allegro assai 11. Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Op. 2/7 (T. 2/7): Adagio 12. Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Op. 2/7 (T. 2/7): Allegro 13. Sonata No. 5 in B flat major, Op. 2/9 (T. 2/9): Largo 14. Sonata No. 5 in B flat major, Op. 2/9 (T. 2/9): Allegro assai 15. Sonata No. 5 in B flat major, Op. 2/9 (T. 2/9): Grave 16. Sonata No. 5 in B flat major, Op. 2/9 (T. 2/9): Allegro 17. Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 2/1 (T. 2/1): Grave - Adagio 18. Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 2/1 (T. 2/1): Allegro 19. Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 2/1 (T. 2/1): Adagio 20. Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 2/1 (T. 2/1): Allegro 21. Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 2/5 (T. 2/5): Grave 22. Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 2/5 (T. 2/5): Allegro 23. Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 2/5 (T. 2/5): Adagio 24. Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 2/5 (T. 2/5): Allegro
Ensemble 415
Chiara Banchini – violon & direction

One of the darkest corners of Tomaso Albinoni's worklist is his chamber music. Albinoni's Opus 2, published in 1700, is particularly problematical, as half of its 12 numbers are chamber sonatas and the other half consists of concertos, chamber concertos to be sure, but the very word concerto is often taken automatically to mean orchestral music. There is a longstanding tradition of playing this music, even the sonatas, as though it were orchestral music, and at least two recorded editions of all 12 pieces -- by Claudio Scimone and I Solisti Veneti in the 1970s and the Insieme strumentale di Roma in the 1990s -- that make no major distinction between what is a concerto and what is a sonata. Chiara Banchini and her Ensemble 415 will have none of that; on the Zig Zag Territories recording Albinoni: Sinfonie a Cinque, Op. 2, Banchini decides to isolate the sonatas only from the published set and perform them in an unmistakably

chamber-oriented setting, and the result is the best Albinoni recording since the Locatelli Trio recorded works taken from Opp. 4 and 6 for Hyperion back in the early '90s.

Albinoni's Op. 2 is a critically important publication; it was a major building block of Venetian Baroque style and was well known to Antonio Vivaldi and Johann Sebastian Bach; it represents, in many ways, the next step forward from the work of Arcangelo Corelli. While Albinoni's effort is essentially popularly oriented, he fashions these pieces out of technical resources more commonly associated with serious composition; internal canons, fugal procedures, imitation (a favorite technique of Albinoni's even in concertos), and so forth. The music is harmonically lush, rhythmically dynamic, and compositionally solid as rock, and the ensemble dimensions of Ensemble 415 are just the right fit for it. The performances are emotionally responsive and strive for a beautiful ensemble blend; they are exquisite overall, although careful ears might detect some confusion in the theorbo part in the Largo of the Sonata No. 5 in B flat. Nevertheless, if you've ever wondered where J.S. Bach got the idea for the second Allegro in the Third Brandenburg Concerto, you need look no further than the one that concludes Sonata No. 5 in this set. If that's not enticement enough, suffice it is to say Zig Zag Territories' Albinoni: Sinfonie a Cinque, Op. 2, is urgently recommended for those afflicted with a taste of high-quality Baroque music and will happily appeal to less specialized musical interests who just want to hear something pleasing, yet substantial. --- Uncle Dave Lewis , Rovi

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