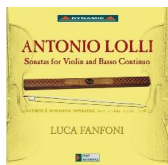


Antonio Lolli - Sonatas for Violin & Basso Continuo (2010)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 05 June 2018 14:19 -

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Sonata In G Major For Two Violins & B.C. Op. 9 No. 2 1 *Allegretto* 5:42 2 *Adagio* 3:19 3
Rondo 2:50 Sonata In A Major For
Violin & B.C. Op. 3 No. 6
4 *Andantino* 0:47 5 *Divertimento* 5:55 6 *Adagio* 3:36 7 *Minuetto* 9:07
Sonata In A Major For Violin & B.C. Op. 1 No. 4
8 *Allegro* 3:55 9 *Adagio* 1:55 10 *Allegro Assai* 2:13
Sonata In C Minor For Violin & B.C. Op. 5 No. 2
11 *Andante* 3:21 12 *Adagio* 2:45 13 *Rondo* 4:01
Sonata In D Major For Violin & B.C. Op. 3 No. 4
14 *Allegro* 4:21 15 *Andante* 1:37 16 *Presto* 2:49
Sonata In G Major For Violin & B.C. Op. 3 No. 5
17 *Allegro* 8:35 18 *Adagio* 3:44 19 *Minuetto Con Variazioni* 6:40
Luca Fanfoni - violin Paola Del Giudice - harpsichord Erich Galliani - guitar [French Guitar]
Antonella Tanetti - violin Chen Marianne - cello

Antonio Lolli is an entirely new addition to my list of composers with amusing names. While this may attract some people to try this repertoire it is not so very far from the better known Jean-Baptiste Lully, a name which is eternally amusing to Dutch music pupils. Very little is known about this violinist and composer, who was one of the eighteenth centuries' ever-migrant virtuosi. He appears from 1758 in the court of Stuttgart, and from 1774 to 1783 he was employed by Empress Catherine II of Russia. He turns up in London in 1785, though apparently made little impact. In 1794 he moved to Vienna, then to Naples and in 1796 he finally settled in Palermo, where he died a pauper having gambled away most of his fortune. His musical education and background is also shrouded in mystery, though many music historians consider him something of an autodidact, and not the member of any particular school of performing. The booklet notes insert a quote from Gervasoni's *Nuova Teoria di Musica ricavata dall'odierna pratica* (New Music Theory based on present-day practice) of 1812, "Everyone who has heard him affirms that he has a prodigious hand and that he could perform certain difficulties that were impossible for others. No one before him had ever drawn from the violin those higher notes that he could achieve with such strength and precision... He delighted then in performing in France,

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in England and in Spain and everywhere he won admiration and astonishment with the magic power of his enchanting skills.”

It is however more for his performing skills that Lolli is mentioned, rather than his talents as a composer. The Dynamic label has released a CD of his complete violin concertos, so together with this companion disc of sonatas they now have a fairly comprehensive survey of Antonio Lolli's surviving compositional output. He left several collections of Sonatas for violin and basso continuo, of which this disc is a selection. A certain amount of thought has clearly gone into the programming, and as a 'best of' collection of Lolli's sonatas this will do very nicely.

The Sonata Op.9 no. 2 in G major which opens the disc is described as having a 'pre-Paganini character', and indeed with 'those higher notes' and technical fireworks from the solo violin, here joined in duet by a second instrument with a lesser role, this is one of the more impressive pieces here. The 'early classical' style of these pieces is fairly consistent, and not particularly stunning in terms of harmonic invention. These sonatas were clearly as much a vehicle for solo display, and while they were clearly marketable as their many printed editions show, the music is more entertaining than intrinsically of memorable substance. We won't know exactly what Lolli would have done with these works himself in terms of extemporisation around the basic material, but I can imagine he would have been more daring than soloist Luca Fanfoni on this recording. These performances are serviceable and competent enough, even with one or two forgivable minor blemishes here and there. Fanfoni has the loan of a 1775 Tommaso Balestieri violin for this recording, but authentic instrument aside he doesn't go in much for extra ornamentation even where repeats might seem to invite a certain amount of improvisation. Admittedly there is frequently a deal of double-stopping and other demands which might stand in the way of too much playful extra invention, but I miss a certain amount of the 'zip' which might have brought these sonatas more to life. Lolli sometimes takes care of technical variation himself, with the Minuetto con variazioni finale of the Sonata in A major op. 3 no. 5 an exemplary study in violin athletics. This contrasts nicely with one of the more effective of a collection of otherwise undramatic slow movements, another fine example being the Adagio from the Sonata in A major opus 1 n. 4. Lolli's attention may have been more on the bravura nature of violin performance, but one can imagine how he might also have been able to move his sensitive 18th century audiences with a certain amount of affect through these movements.

The period character of these performances is assured through some respectable harpsichord and cello basso continuo accompanying. Neither the music itself nor the performances are going to set the world alight with a new rage of discovery, but respect goes to the Dynamic label for this exploration of a fairly untrodden musical byway. ---Dominy Clements,
musicweb-international.com

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