

Antón García Abril □ – Piano Concerto - Hemeroscopium - Three Sonatas for Orchestra (1994)

Written by bluesever
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Three Sonatas for Orchestra 1 *Allegro e spiritoso assai* 3:41 2 *Andante* 4:52 3
Prestissimo 3:32 4 *Hemeroscopium (Concerto for Orchestra)* (1969 - 1972) 23:30
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (1994 revised version)
5 *Allegro* 7:44 6 *Coral* 9:26 7 *Allegro deciso* 12:28
Sinfónica De Madrid Orquesta Enrique Garcia Asensio - conductor Guillermo González -
piano

This disc documents a highly successful concert honouring Anton Garcia Abril, then 61 years old, on the occasion of his being awarded the Guerrero Foundation prize (previous recipients of which had been Rodrigo and Montsalvatge). And who, those outside Spain may be asking, is Abril? A prolific composer in many fields (concertos, choral and orchestral music, chamber works, opera and ballet, film and television scores – a partial list is given in the enclosed booklet), he has taught at the Madrid Conservatoire since the age of 24, was a co-founder in 1958 of the influential New Music group (along with such figures as Cristobal Halffter and Luis de Pablo), and has received numerous prizes and honours.

The Three Sonatas are transcriptions of harpsichord movements by Soler. Minor changes from the original in matters of accidentals are of no great consequence, but the scoring for full orchestra (at first for a ballet in 1984) leads to a rather vulgar inflated image of Soler. *Hemeroscopium* (“watchtower of the day”), a concerto for large orchestra, was completed in 1972 (when Asensio conducted the premiere, as here) and only slightly revised subsequently. It is a grandiloquent work in three connected sections, only occasionally recognizably Spanish and revealing some influences from Bartok and Petrassi (with whom Abril studied) yet fighting clear of the dodecaphony then engulfing so many of his contemporaries. Basically melancholy, its course is punctuated by shatteringly loud and violent outbursts. The Piano Concerto is an earlier work but was scrapped in favour of a radical revision in 1994. Showily extrovert, it is easy on the ear, with a lively light-hearted first movement akin to Francaix, a more lyrical “Coral”

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which harmonically is somehow reminiscent of John Ireland, and a diffuse, rather noisy finale. Guillermo Gonzalez clearly revels in the work's bravura, and the recording throughout (particularly in Hemeroscopium's immense climaxes) is spectacular.' ---Lionel Salter, gramophone.co.uk

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