

Niccolo Paganini - Paganini For Two (1994)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 19 December 2010 10:31 - Last Updated Friday, 07 March 2014 17:09

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1. Sonata concertata M.S. 2 per chitarra e violino in A major - Allegro spiritoso 7:53
2. Sonata concertata M.S. 2 per chitarra e violino in A major - Adagio, assai espressivo 3:42
3. Sonata concertata M.S. 2 per chitarra e violino in A major - Rondeau. Allegretto con brio, scherzando 2:40
4. Sei sonate M.S. 27 (op.3) per violino e chitarra / Sonata n.1 - in A major - Larghetto 2:06
5. Sei sonate M.S. 27 (op.3) per violino e chitarra / Sonata n.1 - in A major - Presto Variato - Variazione 1:18
6. Sei sonate M.S. 27 (op.3) per violino e chitarra / Sonata n.4 - in A minor - Andante largo 3:04
7. Sei sonate M.S. 27 (op.3) per violino e chitarra / Sonata n.4 - in A minor - Allegretto 1:27
8. Sei sonate M.S. 27 (op.3) per violino e chitarra / Sonata n.6 - in E minor - Andante 2:35
9. Sei sonate M.S. 27 (op.3) per violino e chitarra / Sonata n.6 - in E minor - Allegro vivo e spiritoso - Minore 1:51
10. Grand Sonata M.S.3 per chitarra e violino - in A major 4:35
- . Centone di sonate M.S.112 per violino e chitarra - Lettera A: / Sonata n.2 - in D major - Adagio cantabile 2:54
12. Centone di sonate M.S.112 per violino e chitarra - Lettera A: / Sonata n.2 - in D major - Rondoncino. Andantino, Tempo di Polacca - Minore 4:08
13. Centone di sonate M.S.112 per violino e chitarra - Lettera A: / Sonata n.4 - in A major - Adagio cantabile 2:43
14. Centone di sonate M.S.112 per violino e chitarra - Lettera A: / Sonata n.4 - in A major - Rondo. Andantino. Allegretto - Minore - Maggiore 5:51
15. Cantabile M.S.109 - in D major - per violino e chitarra (pianoforte) 3:48
16. Sonata a preghiera M.S.23 - in F minor per violino IV corda e chitarra - transcrip. f. guitar L.Hannibal
 - 1. Introduction. Allegro 2:51
17. Sonata a preghiera M.S.23 - in F minor per violino IV corda e chitarra - transcrip. f. guitar L.Hannibal
 - 2. Thème. Tempo alla Marcia - 1:09
- . Sonata a preghiera M.S.23 - in F minor per violino IV corda e chitarra - transcrip. f. guitar L.Hannibal
 - Var. I - 0:58

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19. *Sonata a preghiera M.S.23 - in F minor per violino IV corda e chitarra - transcrip. f. guitar L.Hannibal*

- Var. II. *Vigoroso* - 1:13

20. *Sonata a preghiera M.S.23 - in F minor per violino IV corda e chitarra - transcrip. f. guitar L.Hannibal*

- Var. III. 0:33

21. *Sonata a preghiera M.S.23 - in F minor per violino IV corda e chitarra - transcrip. f. guitar L.Hannibal*

- 3. *Finale* 0:31

22. *Allegro vivace a movimento perpetuo M.S.72 (op.11) in C major - per violino e chitarra*

- *Revision of guitar part Lars Hannibal* 3:22

Gil Shaham – violin

Goran Sollscher – guitar

This is a delightful cd that still sets the standard for these varied violin/guitar pieces even though they were recorded in November '92. Gil Shaham plays with an aristocratic charm that makes every piece sound so refreshing and witty; he has imbued into these Paganini works the purest violin tones and cleanest approach of everyone who has tackled the same works including Monica Huggett's recordings on Harmonia Mundi and the inexpensive Naxos recordings. Indeed while listening to both Huggett's and Shaham's interpretations of the "Sonata Concertata", I prefer the latter simply because it is so much more refined; Huggett's playing seems more raw and less polished even though there may appear to be more energy. Huggett plays the piece as if it was a Baroque Miniature Masterpiece; Shaham plays it in the Classical Mold full of romance and feeling- imparting a greater degree of mystery and spirituality. Shaham makes every note sound just right and no quips with the interpretation; his refinement of technique reminds me of a young Arthur Grumiaux but with a even greater sense of mastery and control.

It is an interesting fact that Paganini wrote over 100 solo pieces for the guitar even though he is now known primarily for his violin works. Paganini is believed to have used the guitar as the instrument of choice during composition. Although his guitar pieces do not approach the virtuosic exuberance of the more famous violin counterparts such as the "24 Caprices", they define an intimate and private Paganini; one who indulges in a more relaxed and quiet setting- away from the fireworks of the stage performances. However make no mistake- many of these pieces from this recording are meant to be played with a lot of fire and splendid bowtapping such as the "Moto Perpetuo" (the last selection) and Shaham's rhythmic attack never slackens even in the most demanding passages.

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"Paganini for Two" on first glance sounds like any other recording made especially for background dinner music (even the tiny sticker on the packaging highlights this point!) but there is a lot of lyrical refinement for even the serious Paganini collector and classical music lover. A number of Sonatas are included although at times the guitar plays a lesser role. I would have preferred to see the entire "Grand Sonata" appear in this recording but only the "Romance" from it- a very short four and a half minute piece is included. The rest of the programme if not generous is still varied and interesting- stretching slightly over 60 minutes.

All this talk of Shaham certainly does not detract from the wonderful accompaniment provided by veteran guitarist Goran Sollscher who was known previously for his luminous recordings of the Bach Lute suites (also on DG) and refreshing interpretations of even the music of the Beatles! You can hear every one of Sollscher's notes and this partnership is certainly a very successful one. To cap it all off, the sound is crystal clear with a lot of depth and proper soundstaging. The violin and guitar sound very holographic and on a good hi-fi equipment, this disc can be worthy of demonstration material. -- *Jason Liu*

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