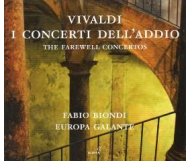


Antonio Vivaldi – I Concerti Dell' Addio (The Farewell Concertos) [2015]

Written by bluesever

Friday, 16 November 2018 14:13 -

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Violin Concerto In B Minor, RV 390 1-1 *Andante Molto* 1:04 1-2 *Allegro Non Molto* 5:16
1-3 *Larghetto* 2:36 1-4 *Allegro* 3:41 Violin Concerto In
E Minor, RV 273
1-5 *Allegro Non Molto* 4:21 1-6 *Largo* 3:42 1-7 *Allegro* 3:43
Violin Concerto In B Flat Major, RV 371
1-8 *Allagro Ma Poco* 4:59 1-9 *Largo* 4:35 1-10 *Allegro* 3:57
Violin Concerto In C Major, RV 189
1-11 *Larghetto* 0:31 1-12 *Allegro Non Molto e Pianissimo* 5:01 1-13 *Largo* 6:04 1-14
Allegro Molto 4:14
Violin Concerto In B Flat Major RV 367
1-15 *Allegro Ma Poco Poco* 6:09 1-16 *Andante Ma Poco* 3:20 1-17 *Allegro* 3:54
Violin Concerto In F Major, RV 286 (Per la Solemnità di San Lorenzo)
1-18 *Largo Molto e Spiccato* 0:29 1-19 (*Allegro Moderato*) 4:45 1-20 *Largo* 2:55 1-21
Allegro Non Molto 4:43
Europa Galante (Orchestra) Cello – Alessandro Andriani, Perikli Pite Harpsichord – Paola
Poncet Theorbo, [Baroque] Guitar – Giangiacomo Pinardi Viola – Simone Laghi, Stefano
Marcocchi Violin – Andrea Rognoni, Carla Marotta, Elin Gabrielsson, Isabella Bison, Luca
Giardini, Rossella Borsoni Violone – Nicola Barbieri Violin, Conductor – Fabio Biondi

Vivaldi concerto discs appear on these pages every month it seems. Rarely do I give them a second glance, let alone a first listen. That doesn't mean I don't like the music; quite the contrary, in fact. When this appeared on the New Releases list, I grabbed it with all speed. For me, no one does Vivaldi like Fabio Biondi and his band.

In January 2002, whilst on holiday in the UK, I attended a concert of theirs in the Christopher Wren-designed Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. There is no doubt that it could have been a tiddlywinks competition and still been wonderful because of the venue. However, despite the uncomfortable hard seats and the foggy weather bringing on an asthma attack for my wife

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sitting next to me, this was perhaps the most memorable classical concert I have attended. The Four Seasons were transformed from pleasant background music into high drama: it was as though the summer storm was inside the theatre, such was their playing.

I bought their Opus 111 recording of the Four Seasons as soon as possible afterwards, and just about everything that they released on Virgin Classics subsequently, Vivaldi or otherwise. I soon found that almost nothing of their work beyond the Red Priest worked anywhere near as well, Boccherini being perhaps the only exception. The Corelli concertos were disappointing, and the Mozart violin concertos a failure. After the demise of Virgin Classics, there was a Telemann release on the Agogique label: again, underwhelming. Now on Glossa, they return to Vivaldi, and the wondrous verve is back.

These six concertos are from a collection held currently in Brno in the Czech Republic, purchased in June 1741 from the composer by Count Vinciguerra Collalto. The "Farewell" in the title refers to the fact that Vivaldi was within six weeks of death, alone and unappreciated in a Vienna preoccupied with the death of an emperor the previous year. As with essentially all his compositions, precise dates are not known, but Biondi in his intelligent booklet article suggests that they show clear signs of being written late in Vivaldi's career.

Biondi's detractors criticise his overuse of abrupt tempo changes, and there is no doubt that some composers suffer from such treatment. However, Vivaldi's music seems to me to revel in the drama that Biondi creates. One criticism that I have of so many period instrument Baroque performances is that everything is fast, even the slow movements. That is never the case with Europa Galante. I can happily report that these concertos show the group back at their very best. Everything that makes their Vivaldi dazzle and wow is here, but there is also a restraint in places, totally apposite, which I believe is a consequence of the style of these late works.

The recording is very clear, though a little close at times, so that we hear Biondi's intake of breath. I have already noted the quality of the booklet article, and it is a well-filled disc. I can only celebrate that Biondi and Europa Galante have returned to their natural habitat, and if you have had reservations about them in the past, please give them another try here in works that you are unlikely to know well or at all. ---David Barker, musicweb-international.com

download (mp3 @320 kbs):

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