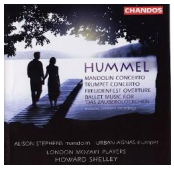
Johann Nepomuk Hummel - Mandolin Concerto, Trumpet Concerto, Ballet Music (2001)



1. Overture in D major, S148 6:27 2. Mandolin Concerto in G major, S28: I. Allegro moderato 7:55 3. Mandolin Concerto in G major, S28: II. Andante con variazioni: [Theme] - Var. 1 - Var. 2 - Var. 3 Alison Stephens 4:34 4. Mandolin Concerto in G major, S28: III. Rondo: Allegro 5:07 5. Trumpet Concerto in E major, WoO 1, S49: I. Allegro con spirito 9:18 6. Trumpet Concerto in E major, WoO 1, S49: II. Andante [versione prima] 5:41 7. Trumpet Concerto in E major, WoO 1, S49: III. Rondo - Minore - Maggiore 4:06 8. Final ballet in Herold's La clochette, WoO 31, S206: I. Ensemble: allegro energico 2:10 9. Final ballet in Herold's La clochette, WoO 31, S206: II. Pas de deux: Un poco lento - Allegretto grazioso 4:14 10. Final ballet in Herold's La clochette, WoO 31, S206: III. Pas seul, et pas de trois a la fin: Grave - Tempo di polacca - Poco piu mosso 3:29 11. Final ballet in Herold's La clochette, WoO 31, S206: IV. Groteschi: Allegro non troppo 4:03 12. Final ballet in Herold's La clochette, WoO 31, S206: V. Ballo generale: Allegro molto vivace 2:33 Alison Stephens (mandolin) Urban Agnas (trumpet) London Mozart Players Howard Shelley (conductor)

Although the packaging cannily plays up the Corelli's Mandolin connection, this disc should simply be treasured as a particularly fine collection of Hummel's music, ably performed by sympathetic soloists and a topnotch orchestra under the baton of the composer's most ardent modern-day champion, Howard Shelley. The Concerto in G was originally composed for virtuoso mandolinist Bartholomeo Bortolazzi in 1799, and its outstanding virtue is that, unlike much other mandolin repertoire, it appeals to non-aficionados of the little Italian instrument too. Its weighty orchestral introduction (there's a joke about that in Louis de Bernières's novel) sets the scene for a work of real substance and broad melodic appeal. Soloist Alison Stephens has captured the market in mandolin performances of late, but in this expressive performance of a tough piece she effortlessly justifies her workload (her cadenza in the Rondo is an especial treat). Here she performs a previously unknown later revision of the concerto that has significant variations in the solo part across all three movements, emphasizing the ringing arpeggios that lend themselves so well to the double strings of the instrument.

Urban Agnas is the forthright soloist in the well-known Concerto in E, a staple of the trumpet repertoire and for years about the only piece that kept Hummel's name alive. The concertos are bookended by two previously unrecorded works: the jolly Freudenfest Overture, which has fun with "God Save the King" among other national melodies, and the ballet suite Das Zauberglöckchen, the kind of breezily tuneful yet ultimately unmemorable work that might have doomed Hummel to obscurity if it were not for the persuasive advocacy of Shelley and his soloists. The depth and clarity of Chandos engineering brings out the best in everybody. ---Mark Walker, amazon.com

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