Niccolo Paganini - Violin Concerto Nos.1 & 2 (Accardo) [1999]

Violin concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 6 *1. Allegro maestoso 2. Adagio 3. Rondo (Allegro spirituoso)* Violin concerto No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 7 "La Campanella" *1. Allegro maestoso 2. Adagio 3. Rondo à la clochette*
Salvatore Accardo, violin London Philharmonic Orchestra Charles Dutoit, conductor

The first violin concerto of Paganini's has been recorded by the best violinists (and more) by now, and sometime more than once by the same. Fortunately, this give us a wide choice of good recordings, each of which can be singled out for some different feature. However, reading reviews about this concert will reveal that almost always a comparison with this Accardo's recording is present. And the reason is quite simple: this is the best overall recording.

The performance by Accardo is simply flawless. He keeps is known style of simplicity and clarity. For example he doesn't use any doubling of voice where others like Perlman does, or he prefer the pizzicato where some others stick with a staccato. Anyway, in my personal view of the Paganini stile's, I think that Accardo's is the closest I've heard. As a note he plays an elaboration of the full cadenza by Emile Sauret while virtually all the others (Perlman and Vengerov with them) use the abbreviated Sauret. This result in a much longer first movement: more than 22 minutes instead of the average of 19-20 (the rhythm is quite the same in most respected recordings).

This recording benefits too from a wonderful performance by the LPO directed by Charles Dutoit. Differently from other concertos like Beethoven's, the Paganinian idea of a violin concerto was to place the violin over everything else, and the LPO perfectly respect this idea playing a secondary but perfect role. They have played the integrale of Paganini's violin concertos with Dutoit and Accardo, and the overall feeling is so evident.

The coupling with the second violin concerto is a classic, but for me always good choice. Paganini has his idiosyncratic style and it's not so simple to couple it with other concerts. Another good coulping, too, is the one with the "Carmen Fantasy" by Sarasate, in the EMI Perlman's recording.

The disc is an ADD, and the difference with better and more modern DDD is not so hidden, especially in the "tutti". Anyway, among the ADD this is surely one of the good ones, in this DG has done a good work. ---G. Avvinti, amazon.com

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