

Tomaso Albinoni – Balletti a Tre (2006)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 10 February 2010 23:35 - Last Updated Tuesday, 06 August 2013 13:19

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1. No. 1 in Do maggiore: Preludio: Largo
2. No. 1 in Do maggiore: Allemanda: allegro
3. No. 1 in Do maggiore: Corrente: allegro
4. No. 1 in Do maggiore: Gavotta: presto
5. No. 2 in Mi minore: Allemanda: largo
6. No. 2 in Mi minore: Sarabanda: allegro
7. No. 2 in Mi minore: Giga: allegro
8. No. 3 in Sol maggiore: Preludio: largo
9. No. 3 in Sol maggiore: Allemanda: allegro
10. No. 3 in Sol maggiore: Corrente: allegro
11. No. 3 in Sol maggiore: Gavotta: presto
12. No. 4 in La maggiore: Preludio: largo
13. No. 4 in La maggiore: Allemanda: allegro
14. No. 4 in La maggiore: Sarabanda: allegro
15. No. 4 in La maggiore: Giga: allegro
16. No. 5 in Re minore: Allemanda: largo apoggiato
17. No. 5 in Re minore: Corrente: allegro
18. No. 5 in Re minore: Giga: allegro
19. No. 6 in Fa maggiore: Preludio: largo
20. No. 6 in Fa maggiore: Allemanda: allegro
21. No. 6 in Fa maggiore: Sarabanda: allegro
22. No. 6 in Fa maggiore: Gavotta: presto
23. No. 7 in Re maggiore: Preludio: largo
24. No. 7 in Re maggiore: Allemanda: allegro
25. No. 7 in Re maggiore: Corrente: allegro
26. No. 7 in Re maggiore: Sarabanda: allegro
27. No. 8 in Do minore: Allemanda: largo
28. No. 8 in Do minore: Corrente: allegro assai
29. No. 8 in Do minore: Giga: allegro
30. No. 9 in Sol minore: Preludio: largo
31. No. 9 in Sol minore: Allemanda: allegro
32. No. 9 in Sol minore: Sarabanda: allegro
33. No. 9 in Sol minore: Giga: allegro

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34. No. 10 in mi maggiore: *Preludio: largo*
35. No. 10 in mi maggiore: *Allemanda: presto*
36. No. 10 in mi maggiore: *Corrente: allegro assai*
37. No. 10 in mi maggiore: *Giga: allegro*
38. No. 11 in La minore: *Allemanda: larghetto*
39. No. 11 in La minore: *Sarabanda: allegro*
40. No. 11 in La minore: *Gavotta: presto*
41. No. 12 in Sib maggiore: *Preludio: largo*
42. No. 12 in Sib maggiore: *Allemanda: allegro*
43. No. 12 in Sib maggiore: *Corrente: allegro*
44. No. 12 in Sib maggiore: *Giga: allegro*

Ensemble Benedetto Marcello

Tomaso Albinoni, through the intrigue of the musicologist who loved him too well, Remo Giazotto, is largely known to the public through a work he'd no part of, the completely spurious Adagio for organ and strings. Had it not been for Giazotto's appealing forgery, drawn from J.S. Bach, the public might never have known Albinoni's name and he would remain a specialist taste. But on the other hand, it obscures Albinoni's genuine works, which are immediately appealing; in one respect dance-like and filled with close, busily polyphonic textures that we associate with Bach, and in others with a loving, generous kind of melodic line that has its roots in the 83 or so operas he composed, all but three lost to us. There have been occasional attempts to represent Albinoni's catalog a bit more fully, and a major catalog gap in his output is filled by Bongiovanni's Albinoni: Balletti a tre, Op. 3. Performed by the Ensemble Benedetto Marcello, this disc contains the 12 trio sonatas contained in Albinoni's Opus 3 set, which appeared in 1701 and is such a rare edition that only two copies of the early print are known to exist.

Like Hyperion's recording of Albinoni's Trattinamenti armonici, Op. 6, performed by the Locatelli Trio, makes clear, there is a lot to love in Albinoni's instrumental music, and recording whole published sets of it, as is common for his contemporary Vivaldi, is a good idea. The Ensemble Benedetto Marcello succeeds in making the case for the Balletti, but just barely. Bongiovanni's recording is almost totally lacking in low end, so the cello is rather hard to hear, and the clavicembalo (which suspiciously sounds like a harpsichord, but who can really tell?) is absent for the whole recording. That leaves the two violins in the foreground carrying most of the musical weight, and between these two players, there is almost no vibrato employed. There is no information about precisely what instruments are employed -- they look old in the photograph -- or about tuning, so the playing, while rhythmically fleet and stylish, is compromised by the fact that instruments and recording both sound underfed and scrawny.

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This doesn't mean, though, that this recording is unlistenable. It can be quite pleasant to listen to in short stretches, and for those whose systems can artificially add some bass to the sonic picture may be able to enjoy it for longer spans of time. Nevertheless, Bongiovanni cannot be excused for making the listener work so hard to enjoy this disc. It's great middle-Baroque dance music, and one can easily hear in this what Bach gained from listening to Albinoni. Despite it being touted as a "World-Premiere Recording," one cannot be blamed for pretending that the Opus 3 set will not be truly recorded until someone else does it, or until Bongiovanni scraps its exiting Albinoni: Balletti a tre, Op. 3, and issues it in better sound than this. --- Uncle Dave Lewis, allmusic.com

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