

Nicolò Paganini - Trios for Strings and Guitar (1995)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 16 April 2019 15:47 -

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Serenata in C major for viola, cello and guitar, M.S. 17 1. *Allegretto spiritoso* /1/ 2. *Minuetto (Andantino - Amorosamente)* /2/ 3. *Adagio non tanto (Unione con anima)* /3/ 4. *Rondò con maestria e grazia (Canzonetta genovese)* /4/ 5. *Andantino alla polacca* /5/

Terzetto Concertante in D major for viola, cello and guitar, M.S. 114

1. *Allegro* /6/ 2. *Minuetto* /7/ 3. *Adagio cantabile* /8/ 4. *Waltz a rondò (Allegretto con energia)* /9/

Terzetto in D major for violin, cello and guitar, M.S. 69

1. *Allegro con brio* /10/ 2. *Minuetto (Allegro vivace)* /11/ 3. *Andante, Larghetto (Cavate)* /12/ 4. *Rondò (Allegretto)* /13/

Terzetto in A minor for 2 violins and guitar, M.S. 116

1. *Andante sostenuto* /14/ 2. *Tempo di minuetto* /15/ 3. *Andantino - Allegro* /16/

Serenata in F major for 2 violins and guitar, M.S. 115

1. *Introduzione, Largo* /17/ 2. *Tempo di minuetto - Amoroso* /18/ 3. *Andantino scherzando* /19/

Dora Bratchkova (violin) Götz Hartmann (violin) Antonello Farulli (viola) Andrea Noferini (cello) Adriano Sebastiani (guitar)

Paganini holds an esteemed status as probably the world's finest ever virtuoso violinist but his chamber music compositions are, with minor exceptions, almost totally ignored. It is often forgotten that Paganini also played and composed for the guitar. In fact, of the five opus numbers published during his lifetime only the op. 1 set of 24 Caprices for Solo Violin did not include the guitar. It may come as a surprise that Paganini also wrote a sacred choral score entitled *Le couvent du mont St. Bernard* for violin, chorus and orchestra. I have yet to hear it but it was given its first recording by the Dynamic label.

Dynamic, the independent Italian record label, based close to Paganini's birthplace in Genoa, has compiled this ten disc set of their previously issued Paganini recordings. It seems that several of these recordings were receiving their first recording. Although this box includes the

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complete edition of Paganini's fifteen quartets for strings and guitar; the three string quartets and a number of other chamber works there is certainly much of Paganini's chamber music not included here. It omits the large amount of chamber music that Paganini wrote for guitar and violin, solo guitar and for solo violin. There are seventy or so duets for violin and guitar, including the familiar Sonata concertata, MS2, Grand Sonata, MS3 and the Cantabile, MS109. In addition Paganini wrote over a hundred scores for solo guitar. Dynamic have issued discs of a sizeable number of Paganini's works for violin and guitar and a disc of some of his solo guitar scores.

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It seems that Paganini wrote chamber music from an early age and continued to do so regularly throughout his life. Often he would compose whilst on tour as a virtuoso performer during the long and arduous coach journeys. Biographer Danilo Prefumo has written that, "Paganini's chamber music is the genuine expression of the more private side of this composer's musicality ..." The general neglect of Paganini's chamber music is highlighted by the fact that for many decades a large number of the scores have not been generally available for performance. For example his three string quartets MS20 were published as recently as 1976 with a performing edition in 1991; some hundred and fifty years after their composition.

In addition to his fame for composing for the violin Paganini also wrote a substantial amount of music for the guitar. The majority of the scores on this Dynamic release include the guitar. Swiss composer Franz von Wartensee, an associate of Paganini, wrote in his memoirs, "Not everyone knows that Paganini was a first-rate guitarist, since he did not consider it worth the effort to present himself publicly as such." The sources of information that I have checked are rather vague on the origins and dates of Paganini's attraction to the guitar. I understand that the main influence was his father Antonio who was himself a mandolin player and it is likely that from an early age Paganini would have received instruction from Antonio. It seems that from around 1801, during the few years that Paganini lived with a wealthy lady on her country estate in Tuscany, his energies were principally channelled into guitar study and composition.

These rarely encountered chamber music scores from the Genoese Maestro are certainly

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worthy of investigation. --- Michael Cookson, MusicWeb International

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