

Giovanni Battista Cirri - Cello Concertos op. 14 (2014)

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Cello Concerto No. 1 in A Major, Op. 14, No. 1 *I. Allegro maestoso II. Adagio cantabile III. Tempo di Minuetto*
Cello Concerto No. 2 in G Major, Op. 14, No. 2 *I. Allegro spiritoso II. Largo assai III. Rondo: Allegro*
Cello Concerto No. 3 in D Major, Op. 14, No. 3 *I. Allegro con spirito II. Adagio III. Allegretto*
Cello Concerto No. 4 in B-Flat Major, Op. 14, No. 4 *I. Allegro II. Adagio molto III. Allegretto*
Cello Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 14, No. 5 *I. Allegro moderato II. Andante cantabile III. Allegro*
Cello Concerto No. 6 in C Major, Op. 14, No. 6 *I. Allegro spiritoso II. Larghetto III. Rondo: Allegretto*
Balázs Máté (baroque cello) Aura Musicale (on period instruments)

Late-18th century virtuoso cellist/composer Giovanni Battista Cirri's six Op. 14 cello concertos receive premiere performances on this Hungaroton 2-CD set. These mildly stylish works are somewhat reminiscent of the efforts of Cirri's younger contemporary Boccherini, though they clearly lack the more celebrated composer's inspired creative touches. For instance, the instrumentation intended to be on par with or at least supportive of the soloist rarely transcends the routine, ultimately serving as little more than a foil for many of cellist Balázs Máté's historically informed solo cello cadenzas. This would not be so disconcerting if the cadenzas were interesting—which they're not. For example, the one featured in the second-movement *Adagio cantabile* of Cirri's A major first concerto is less an inventive ornamental flourish and more a dull series of variations on a trill. Likewise in the quicker, more virtuosic solos—such as the first-movement *Allegro spiritoso* of the sixth concerto—we hear little more than rapid successions of glorified higher-register scales. As evinced by his committed performances and sympathetic booklet notes, cellist Máté obviously has abundant enthusiasm for rescuing Cirri's concertos from obscurity. The outcome however, will appeal strictly to specialists of 18th century cello performance practice and to baroque completists. Hungaroton's sound is true to the demands of musical context and instrumental configuration. --- John Greene,

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