

Beethoven & Pössinger – Violin Concertos (Anton Steck) [2017]

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61 01 I. *Allegro ma non troppo* 02 II. *Larghetto* 03 III. *Rondo: Allegro*

Franz Alexander Pössinger (1767-1827) Violin Concerto in G Major, Op. 9
04 I. *Allegro* 05 II. *Adagio* 06 III. *Rondo: Allegretto*

Anton Steck - violin L'Arpa Festante Matthew Halls – conductor

It is unbelievable that such a popular work in the current repertoire as Ludwig van Beethoven's Violin Concerto Op. 61 only conquered the concert hall around three to four decades after its composition. The work ultimately gained its popularity through two revised printed versions published in Vienna and in London, which both reveal substantial revisions in the solo parts. The quest for Beethoven's original version proves to be extremely complicated, as Beethoven himself offered up to four alternatives to the soloists in some spots of the manuscript. A study of the different inks and quills used in that autograph has allowed the violinist Anton Steck to propose the new and unusual version recorded here, which thanks also to the use of historical instruments results in a tangible and transparent rendering of a very well-known piece. In addition to Beethoven's composition, Steck presents the world premiere recording of the Violin Concerto of the Viennese violinist Franz Alexander Pössinger a friend of Beethoven who was probably involved in the revision of the solo part of his concerto. Pössinger's work was written in 1805, just one year before Beethoven's. --- Editorial Reviews, amazon.com

While there will be a great deal of interest shown in this recording purely by virtue of its claim to be a world premiere recording after the original autograph score, and the fact that the “filler” (who I detest this disparaging description!) was written by a violinist with a very close personal link to Beethoven, for me the disc is a tremendous success simply because it offers beautifully

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recorded, accomplished performances. Anton Steck is a first-class violinist and his accounts of these two very different works are honest and engaging. Yes, of course, there are moments when the subconscious inner ear is surprised by the unexpected, but these are rarely disturbing; even the early published editions of the concerto offer variant readings – Beethoven's score offers violinists up to four different versions of some bars! L'arpa festante (76543 strings) support Steck with some ravishing playing, and enjoy the tunefulness of Pössinger's relatively light work (with a far smaller orchestra and lasting just under 18 minutes, compared to Beethoven's 44!) There is some evidence that Pössinger was the violinist to whom Beethoven turned for technical advice, so the pairing of the two works is appropriate. An especial delight of the recording are Steck's cadenzas for the Beethoven! Perhaps this line-up could be persuaded to follow up the booklet's title: "Viewed in a completely different light" – let's have another couple of contemporary concertos and Beethoven's Romances? ---Brian Clark, earlymusicreview.com

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