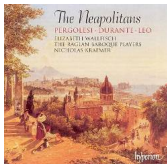


The Neapolitans – Pergolesi Durante Leo (2001)

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Pergolesi 1. *Violin Concerto in B flat major: Allegro* 2. *Violin Concerto in B flat major: Largo*
3. *Violin Concerto in B flat major: Allegro* Durante 4. *Concerto No. 2 in G minor: Affettuoso - Presto*
5. *Concerto No. 2 in G minor: Largo affettuoso* 6. *Concerto No. 2 in G minor: Allegro affettuoso*

Pergolesi

7. *Work(s): Sonata in A major*

Leo

8. *Concerto for 4 violins & continuo in D major: Maestoso* 9. *Concerto for 4 violins & continuo in D major: Fuga*
10. *Concerto for 4 violins & continuo in D major: [Larghetto]* 11. *Concerto for 4 violins & continuo in D major: Allegro*

Durante

12. *Concerto No. 8 in A major ('La Pazzia'): Allegro - Affettuoso* 13. *Concerto No. 8 in A major ('La Pazzia'): Affettuoso*
14. *Concerto No. 8 in A major ('La Pazzia'): Allegro*

Pergolesi

15. *Sinfonia, for cello & continuo in F major: Maestoso sostenuto* 16. *Sinfonia, for cello & continuo in F major: Andante grazioso*
17. *Sinfonia, for cello & continuo in F major: Allegro*

Durante

18. *Concerto No. 5 in A major: Presto* 19. *Concerto No. 5 in A major: Largo* 20. *Concerto No. 5 in A major: Allegro*

Elizabeth Wallfisch – violin Raglan Baroque Players Nicholas Kraemer – conductor

This is a beautifully played disc. The Neapolitan composers of the early 18th century were famous for their operas. The city of Naples had four music conservatories and officials were on the lookout for promising pupils. This disc celebrates Neapolitan instrumental music and reveals what a wonderful gift of melody they had developed as a distinct group. Although their music sounds like Vivaldi there are subtle differences in the way melodies are treated with the Neapolitans having a bit more color. This CD includes the music of Francesco Durante, his famous pupil Giovanni Batista Pergolesi and Leonardo Leo.

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This disc begins with a marvelous violin concerto by Pergolesi, who himself was a virtuoso. Cast in three movements, the outer one has brisk and contrasting melodies while the middle movement resembles a sad and reflective aria. This is followed by a Concerto in G minor by Durante characterized by graceful melodies sometimes with a surprising harmonic shift. A very short Sonata by Pergolesi follows played here by violin and cello. The score was found among other instrument works written two staves and might have been intended for keyboard.

A Concerto for four violins and string by Leonardo Leo follows. Leo was much more active as an operatic composer but, like all Neapolitan composers, turned his hand to instrumental works too. The concerto is in four movements beginning with a playing by the full orchestra accentuated by violin solos. The second movement has brisk themes with the violins engaging in a dialogue. A sweetly melancholy slow movement follows with a return to bright melodies in the finale. This work is followed by a highly interesting concerto by Durante subtitled "La Pazzia" (Folly). This concerto is akin to Vivaldi's opus 8 for its invention and contrasts. The opening is much like a Vivaldi concerto with its agitated theme which is followed by a more improvisatory section. There is a wide variety of contrasting music, something like C.P.E. Bach's Sinfonias in the quirky display of music.

A final Pergolesi selection follows, a Sinfonia in F major scored for strings and continuo. This work owes much to Alessandro Scarlatti, who helped develop the musical form. The music is light and graceful with the strings playing highly ornamental passages. The closing work is Durante's Concerto No. 5 characterized by sparkling outer movements and a reflective inner Largo movement.

This is a CD that lovers of Baroque music will treasure. While the music is strongly reminiscent of Vivaldi there is an element of invention that sets it apart. The music could not be better played or recorded. --- David A. Wend, amazon.com

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