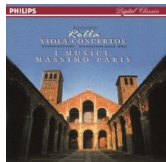


Alessandro Rolla - Viola Concertos (1995)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 19 August 2014 17:20 -

Alessandro Rolla - Viola Concertos (1995)



Viola Concerto in E flat, Op.3 1. 1. *Andante sostenuto – Allegro* 13:14 2. 2. *Largo* 7:13 3. 3. *Allegro* 6:18 Divertimento in F for Viola and Strings 4. *Rev.*

Franco Sciannameo 9:54

Concertino in E flat for Viola and Strings *Rev. Massimo Paris*

5. 1. *Allegro maestoso* 3:57 6. 2. *Andante un poco sostenuto* 4:23 7. 3. *Allegretto (Polonese)* 7:01 8. *Rondo in G* 9:51

Massimo Paris - viola I Musici (Ensemble)

The music of Alessandro Rolla (1757-1841), on the evidence of this interesting CD — and I confess that my knowledge of Rolla does not extend beyond it — is quite conventional in tone and idiom but by no means empty or cliché-ridden, as is so much music of this period. The Op. 3 Concerto is a big, expansive piece (its first movement, with a short introduction, lasts more than 13 minutes); its style is quite austere, it has a number of unexpected if not deeply original ideas, while its handling of the viola (Rolla's own instrument, of course, though he was also a violinist and for many years leader at La Scala) is highly effective — its darker colours tellingly used, the emotional appeal of its reedy, readily plaintive upper register well exploited. There is no want of eloquence in the *Largo* and the finale is a cheerful, spirited polacca. I would guess that it dates from the 1780s or 1790s, when he was at the Parma court.

The Concertino is clearly rather later, musically and formally less solid and more intent on virtuosity and expression, with a shortish first movement leading directly into the quite intense *Andante* and this time a polonese finale. Clearly, Rolla relished these Polish rhythms: the second section of the Divertimento here is once again a polacca, after an *Andante* of considerable depth of expression and with some appealing ideas. The Rondo, seemingly earlier, is quite a brilliant piece, with a spirited main theme and also some cantabile writing.

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Massimo Paris is an extremely accomplished player who clearly has the measure, technically and musically, of these pieces; he also composed the cadenzas, allowing himself perhaps more space, and wider scope, than Rolla himself might have done. But I have nothing but praise for his performance, his handling of the instrument's colours, his command of the idiom and his management of the virtuoso music. The accompaniments, too, are prompt and efficient. The adventurous listener might well like to try this unusual disc. --- Stanley Sadie, Gramophone [11/1995]

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