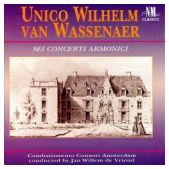
Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer - Concerti Armonici (Jan Vriend)



1 Concerto No. 1 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Grave 2 Concerto No. 1 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Grave. Staccato 3 Concerto No. 1 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Allegro 4 Concerto No. 2 in B flat major (Concerti Armonici): Largo andante 5 Concerto No. 2 in B flat major (Concerti Armonici): Da Capella. Presto 6 Concerto No. 2 in B flat major (Concerti Armonici): Largo affettuoso 7 Concerto No. 2 in B flat major (Concerti Armonici): Allegro moderato staccato 8 Concerto No. 3 in A major (Concerti Armonici): Grave 9 Concerto No. 3 in A major (Concerti Armonici): Largo andante 10 Concerto No. 3 in A major (Concerti Armonici): Vivace 11 Concerto No. 4 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Largo 12 Concerto No. 4 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Da Capella. Non presto 13 Concerto No. 4 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Largo affettuoso 14 Concerto No. 4 in G major (Concerti Armonici): Allegro 15 Concerto No. 5 in F minor (Concerti Armonici): Adagio 16 Concerto No. 5 in F minor (Concerti Armonici): Da capella 17 Concerto No. 5 in F minor (Concerti Armonici): Con sordini 18 Concerto No. 5 in F minor (Concerti Armonici): A tempo giusto 19 Concerto No. 6 in E flat major (Concerti Armonici): Affettuoso 20 Concerto No. 6 in E flat major (Concerti Armonici): Presto 21 Concerto No. 6 in E flat major (Concerti Armonici): Vivace Combattimento Consort Amsterdam Jan Vriend – conductor

Who was the composer of the six highly enjoyable concertos to be heard on this CD? They were attributed first to Ricciotti, then more recently to Pergolesi. Musicologists have long pondered the unknown identity of the composer, particularly since Ricciotti though well known as an Italian publisher/violinist, had not himself composed any music. It was the Dutch musicologist Alfred Dunning who solved the mystery in 1980 when he was exploring the library in the Wassenaer family castle at Twickel in the Netherlands. Here he discovered the scores for six concertos, with a foreword by the composer which answered the two questions which had long puzzled musicologists: who had composed these concertos, and why had the composer not identified himself. Indeed the foreword revealed that the composer had deliberately concealed his identity. Dunning's researches are documented in his publication Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer. A master unmasked, or the Pergolesi-Ricciotti puzzle solved. Dunning quotes the composer's foreword in full.

Score of my concertos, engraved by Signor Ricciotti. These concertos were composed at different times between 1725 and 1740. When they were ready, I took them along to the musical gathering organized in The Hague by Mr Bentinck, myself and some foreign gentlemen.

Ricciotti played the first violin. Afterwards I allowed him to make a copy of the concertos. When all six were ready, he asked permission to have them engraved. Upon my refusal he enlisted the aid of Mr Bentinck, to whose strong representations I finally acquiesced, on condition that my name did not appear anywhere on the copy and that he put his name to it, as he did. Mr Bentinck wanted to dedicate them to me; I refused absolutely, after which he told Ricciotti to dedicate them to him. In this way these concertos were published against my wishes.

Some of them are tolerable, some middling, others wretched. Had they not been published, I would perhaps have corrected the mistakes in them, but other business has left me no leisure to amuse myself with them, and I would have caused their editor offence.

The true identity of the composer is thus established beyond doubt, together with the reason for the anonymity and resultant confusion: simple modesty on the part of the author! But what modesty... Listen to this music for yourself - it is uniformly pleasing, and very frequently arresting with its unusual turns of harmony and flights of counterpoint. No. With respect Count Unico Willem, they are always more than tolerable, and at times outstanding. --- baroquecds.com

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