

Domenico Gallo - 12 Trio Sonatas (2000)

Written by bluesever
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1. Son No.1 in G: Moderato - Andantino - Presto 2. Son No.2 in B flat: Presto - Adagio - Presto 3. Son No.3 in c: Allegro - Andante - Allegro 4. Son No.4 in G: Moderato - Adagio - Allegro 5. Son No.5 in C: Allegro - Larghetto - Allegro 6. Son No.6 in D: Presto - Andante Non Tanto - Allegro 7. Son No.7 in g: Non Presto - Andante - Allegro 8. Son No.8 in E flat: Allegro Ma Non Tanto - Andantino - Allegro 9. Son No.9 in A: Presto - Larghetto - Allegro 10. Son No.10 in F: Moderato - Andantino - Tempo Di Minueto 11. Son No.11 in d: Comodo - Largo - Allegro 12. Son No.12 in E: Allegro - Adagio - Presto Parnassi musici: Margaret MacDuffie - violin Matthias Fischer - violin Stephan Schrader - violoncello Martin Lutz - harpsichord

How intriguing it is to press play on this seemingly obscure Baroque collection and be confronted by the Overture to Stravinsky's Pulcinella! The reason for this is the result of a deliberate misattribution perpetrated in London around 1780. There was published Twelve Sonatas for two Violins and a Bass or an Orchestra compos'd by Gio. Batt.a Pergolese [Giovanni Battista Pergolesi]. Author of the Stabat mater. The collection went through three editions by 1795, its success due in part to Pergolesi's popularity (he died in 1736 at the age of 26; his Stabat Mater was first published, in London, in 1749), but also to the evident quality of the music. The collection is not unique, Robert King estimates that of the 148 items published in the Opera omnia of Pergolesi (Rome, 1939-42), only 30 may be considered genuine.

As early as 1789, Charles Burney, an English scholar, raised doubts about the sonatas' provenance; however, it was not until the 1950's that it was firmly established that Pergolesi was not the author and that Domenico Gallo was. In the interim, in 1919, Igor Stravinsky accepted Serge Diaghilev's commission to score a ballet, entitled Pulcinella after a stock character from Neapolitan comedy, with music adapted from Pergolesi's canon. Unwittingly, he wound up setting seven movements from Gallo's sonatas, including using the opening movement of the Sonata No. 1 as his Overture and the concluding movement of Sonata No. 12 as the Finale.

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Gallo appears to have been born in 1730 in Venice, where he worked as a violinist and composer. There was a family of musicians named Gallo based in Naples, Pergolesi's birthplace, and it is possible that Domenico was connected to them. The Trio Sonatas were probably written between 1750 and 1770, a period of transition between the Baroque and classical eras. Like most early classical sonatas, they contain three movements (fast - slow - fast); however, the development of these movements tends to be simple and straightforward, with most sonatas containing a fugue movement. What elevates them, and what made the Pergolesi attribution creditable, are the strong memorable themes. Just the thing to provide Stravinsky with fodder for his neo-classical machinations.

The playing of the period instrument group Parnassi musici is elegant, tuneful and exhibits a splendid lightness of touch. This is music to delight rather than astound, and, along with compositions by Bach's sons, gives an aural snapshot of the moment when the formality of the Baroque period gave way to classical exuberance. ---Tony Gualtieri, classical-music-review.org

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