

Flotow - Piano Concertos; Incidental Music (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1. Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor: 1. *Allegro risoluto - Animato* 2. Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor: 2. *Adagio* 3. Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor: 3. *Rondeau. Allegretto grazioso - con fuoco* 4. Piano Concerto No. 2 in A minor: 1. *Andantino - Allegro - Marziale pī mosso* 5. Piano Concerto No. 2 in A minor: 2. *Scherzo. Vivace e leggieramente* 6. Piano Concerto No. 2 in A minor: 3. *Adagio* 7. Piano Concerto No. 2 in A minor: 4. *Rondo. Allegretto scherzando - Maestoso - Tempo 1* 8. for orchestra *Jubel Overture* 9. Incidental music: 1. *Introduction. Moderato - Allegro Wilhelm von Oranien in Whitehall* 10. Incidental music: 2. Act 2. *Andante Wilhelm von Oranien in Whitehall* 11. Incidental music: 3. Act 3. *Maestoso, "Rule Britannia" Wilhelm von Oranien in Whitehall* 12. Incidental music: 4. Act 4. *Andante Wilhelm von Oranien in Whitehall* 13. Incidental music: 5. Act 5. *Moderato - Andante - Allegro Wilhelm von Oranien in Whitehall* Carl Petersson - piano Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra Hans Peter Wiesheu - conductor

An entirely new perspective on Friedrich von Flotow's compositions. This composer is best known on account of his opera Martha. Here we find newly discovered concertos, which must be considered as sensational. The first is brilliant and melodic, the second is probably influenced by Carl Maria von Weber's concertos. The Oranien suite is most charming, with Thomas Arne's Rule Britannia as one of the movements. --- sterlingcd.com

Flotow was born near Rostock in North Germany. His family was musical but considered the profession unbefitting the family's aristocratic status. Young Friedrich was intended for the civil service. After tribulations he managed to secure the family's support to study in Paris with Pixis and Rejcha. It was there that he met Wilhelm Riese, the Hamburg-born poet, who provided the librettos for several of his operas including the one work that has kept Flotow's name prominent:

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the 1847 Martha.

His First Piano Concerto runs to only 14 minutes. It has a chivalric Allegro, a bejewelled Adagio recalling Chopin and Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto and a bobbing and gallant Rondeau with heroic cross-currents. Schumann and Bellini can be discerned among these pages. The Second Concerto is scarcely longer at approaching 18 minutes. It is in four movements: a noble lapidary Andantino may remind you of the slow movement of The Emperor. After a very brief skipping and bowing Scherzo we have an unhurriedly unfurling and luxurious Adagio. Proceedings close with a hop and jump Rondo which has something of early Tchaikovsky about it. The Jubel Overture with its decidedly fairy-delicate second subject must have had Mendelssohn as an influence. It's an attractive overture with just a surfeit of bombast at the close. As for the incidental music to Wilhelm von Oranien in Whitehall the introduction is stiff and stormy with some stagy Hungarian bagpipe music. The Act II Andante unfolds a long slow Tchaikovskian strand of melancholy. I mentioned bombast earlier - you can hear it again in the brassy strut of the Act III Maestoso where Rule Britannia is played verbatim. After this we get a Rossinian skittishness, a dignified Andante and a grand final Moderato.

There's really good playing by the Pilsen orchestra and the lustre of their string choir - often a weakness in orchestras outside the greats - is excellent. No problems at all. Wiesheu who also provides the liner-notes has included the 1992 premiere of Kempff's last orchestral piece Un Giorno a Positano and the first German performance of Donizetti's cantata Parafraasi del Christus in his honours list.

There you have it. Premiere recordings of music by a romantic era composer. Will appeal to anyone who know they will enjoy music in the thrall of Schumann, the showier sentimental Chopin and the lyrical Beethoven. It's all done with style, documented deeply, and performed and recorded with commitment and skill. ---Rob Barnett, musicweb-international.com

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