

Stravinsky - Apollon musagète & Pulcinella Suite (2009)

Written by bluesever

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01] Apollon Musagete - Naissance d'Apollon 02] Apollon Musagete - Variation d'Apollon 03] Apollon Musagete - Pas d'action 04] Apollon Musagete - Variation de Calliope 05] Apollon Musagete - Variation de Polymnie 06] Apollon Musagete - Variation de Terpsichore 07] Apollon Musagete - Variation d'Apollon 08] Apollon Musagete - Pas de deux 09] Apollon Musagete - Coda (Apollon et les Muses) 10] Apollon Musagete - Apotheose 11] Pulcinella Suite - I. Sinfonia 12] Pulcinella Suite - II. Serenata 13] Pulcinella Suite - III. a) Scherzino 14] Pulcinella Suite - III. b) Allegro 15] Pulcinella Suite - III. c) Andantino 16] Pulcinella Suite - IV. Tarantella 17] Pulcinella Suite - V. Toccata 18] Pulcinella Suite - VI. Gavotta 19] Pulcinella Suite - VII. Vivo 20] Pulcinella Suite - VIII. a) Menuetto 21] Pulcinella Suite - VIII. b) Finale
Chamber Orchestra of Europe Alexander Janiczek, conductor

The pairing of Igor Stravinsky's Apollon musagète and the suite from Pulcinella makes an excellent program because the works balance each other reasonably well and share some similarities of style, yet provide suitable contrasts in moods since the elegant pathos of Apollon is nicely set off by Pulcinella's rowdy comedy. Both pieces reflect Stravinsky's cool and witty neo-Classicism, yet provide enough differences in instrumentation, melodic quality, and harmonic textures to demonstrate the great variety of methods he employed within his middle stylistic phase. The 2008 hybrid SACD by Alexander Janiczek and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe presents these ballets with great polish and charm, and the multichannel recording gives the performances credible presence, appreciable depth, and sonorities so rich in timbres and dynamics they will make audiophiles salivate. The only regret one might have after hearing this splendid album is that the complete Pulcinella wasn't recorded for it because it surely could have fit within normal time limits, and in consideration of the fine job Janiczek and the orchestra did with the suite, the full work would have been nicer to have, even if it would have made the program more lopsided. This album is highly recommended as one of the best of 2009. --- Blair Sanderson

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