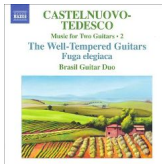


Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco - Music for Two Guitars Vol.2 (2009)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 14 August 2016 14:00 -

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Les guitares bien temperees (The Well-Tempered Guitars): Preludes and Fugues, Op. 199:
Nos. 13-24 1. *Prelude No. 13 in G Major* 00:01:42 2. *Fugue No. 13 in G Major* 00:02:51
3. *Prelude No. 14 in D Minor* 00:03:00 4. *Fugue No. 14 in D Minor* 00:02:18 5. *Prelude*
No. 15 in A Major 00:01:28 6. *Fugue No. 15 in A Major* 00:02:02 7. *Prelude No. 16 in E*
Minor 00:01:21 8. *Fugue No. 16 in E Minor* 00:02:28 9. *Prelude No. 17 in B Major*
00:01:19 10. *Fugue No. 17 in B Major* 00:01:33 11. *Prelude No. 18 in F - Sharp Minor*
00:01:54 12. *Fugue No. 18 in F - Sharp Minor* 00:03:03 13. *Prelude No. 19 in C - Sharp*
Major 00:02:01 14. *Fugue No. 19 in C - Sharp Major* 00:01:55 15. *Prelude No. 20 in G -*
Sharp Minor 00:01:25 16. *Fugue No. 20 in G - Sharp Minor* 00:02:06 17. *Prelude No. 21*
in E - Flat Major 00:01:50 18. *Fugue No. 21 in E - Flat Major* 00:02:16 19. *Prelude No. 22*
in B - Flat Minor 00:01:22 20. *Fugue No. 22 in B - Flat Minor* 00:02:18 21. *Prelude No. 23*
in F Major 00:01:48 22. *Fugue No. 23 in F Major* 00:01:44 23. *Prelude No. 24 in C Minor*
00:03:48 24. *Fugue No. 24 in C Minor* 00:02:09 Fuga elegiaca 25. *Preludio:*
Agitato e tremante 00:01:30 26. *Fuga: Moderato e mesto* 00:03:06
Brasil Guitar Duo (João Luiz & Douglas Lora)

The Brasil Guitar Duo's Naxos recording of the first twelve Preludes and Fugues from The Well-Tempered Guitars (8.570778) gained 5 stars and high praise from Audiophile Audition: 'Sonics are first rate, and the interplay of the two guitars is a delight'. A landmark in the guitar's history and the most ambitious undertaking for two guitars ever conceived, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's tribute to J.S. Bach is equally a demonstration of his own melodic inventiveness, wit, vivacity, introspection and lyricism. The Elegiac Fugue, composed shortly before his death, is a fitting musical epitaph. ---naxos.com

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This 2009 album, together with their earlier “Complete Music for Two Guitars 1” marks the Brasil Guitar Duo’s complete collection of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s (1895–1968) works for two guitars. Coming toward the end of his fertile composing career (1967) and just before his death, these are his most mature works and mark a landmark in the genre. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s preludes and fugues for two guitars have defined the genre for the past 40 years, and they may define it for years to come, they’re that good. If you love classical guitar, this album is a “must have.” If you are new to this form of chamber music, it is merely a near “must have.” It was a welcome surprise for me.

The first work in this collection is Fuga elegiaca , or simply a “Melancholy Fugue,” or a complex “Fugue Lamenting Lost Youth.” It was written to commemorate the loss of guitarist Ida Presti, who died a still-youthful 43-year-old in 1967. It is deceptively simple and never gets too overwrought with death and grieving. It is paradoxical in the way it feels upbeat and celebratory, as many modern funeral services are said to celebrate the life of the recently departed. The Prelude starts with what might be seen as an arrival in heaven of a worthy soul. The Fugue seems, at first, to examine Presti’s personality in a major key, but then shifts to minor mode to emphasize her passing. In this way, the elegiac Prelude and Fugue is subtly successful. It is a complex miniature of high order, packing a lot into 4:36.

The rest of this album is unabashedly successful. An obvious h mage to J. S. Bach in many ways (the way it progresses in fifths around the circle of keys, for one; the use of counterpoint, for another), it is not a slavish repetition of The Well-Tempered Clavier . To demonstrate that it is not, nor will ever be, it begins with an academic sounding Prelude and Fugue No. 13 (tracks 3 and 4) that sounds a bit like Bach in its use of counterpoint. But in tracks 5 and 6, the composer develops a prelude and fugue on “I’ve Got Plenty of Nothin’” from George Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess . These four tracks set the tone and structure for the rest of the collection: classically modern. By looking backward and forward in time, this collection stakes for its playing field the whole of classical music from 1967 backwards, or nearly 250 years. This is done with good will, great taste, and superb musicianship.

This album is very worthwhile as the background for silent meditation, alone in the night, with a good headphone rig. It might also serve as a conversation starter as the background music for a dinner party. Sound is excellent, as Naxos engineers have a trail-blazing way of presenting chamber music; and performance is beyond super with each phrase expressed with much forethought. I am prompted to say something about welcoming the next super-stars of the guitar, but I won’t. It wouldn’t be the Oblomovian thing to do. I’ll just say, most highly recommended. ---FANFARE: Ilya Oblomov, arkivmusic.com

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