

CD REVIEW 9

VIOLINO O CORNETTO

Italian Sonatas of the 17th century.

Theresa Caudle (violin and cornet) with Canzona: Mark Caudle bass viol (bass violin) and cello, Alastair Ross organ and harpsichord and David Miller chittarone.

Nimbus Alliance N16134 (73.34)

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| Giovanni Paolo Cima | Sonata for bass violin, organ and chittarone
Sonata for violin, bass violin, organ and chittarone |
| Giramo Frescobaldi | Canzone terza detta La Lucchesina for cornett, organ and chittarone
Canzone secondo detta La Bernardina violin and harpsichord |
| Fontana | Sonata Primo for cornett, organ and chittarone |
| Castello | Sonata seconda for violin and organ |
| Marini | Sonata per sinar con due cori Op 8 for violin and organ |
| Uccellini | Sonata Qunita for violin and harpsichord |
| Cazzati | Sonata primo La Pellicana for cornett, bass violin and organ Op 55 |
| Stradella | Sinfonia in F for violin and harpsichord
Sinfonia in D minor for violin, cello and organ |
| Corelli | Sonata in G minor Op 5 no 5 for violin, cello and harpsichord |



This is an important disc of 17th century Italian sonatas although I would not call them solo sonatas. It may not suit everyone to listen to the whole CD in one go and the music is varied in quality.

I have to say at once that the performances are very fine indeed with an elegance and refinement second to none. The sound is also very good. All lovers of early music must acquire this disc.

I lament that there are music lovers who cannot identify with this type of music, much of which is choice.

Some of these composers will not be known to everyone and we must be grateful for these introductions. Giovanni Paolo Cima was a revelation. He was born around 1570 and died in 1622, a contemporary of Monteverdi and Frescobaldi. Cima was a director of music and an organist and the first composer to publish some Trio Sonatas. His music is fresh, mellow, clean, lyrical and effective as are the performances. His scores are in the Werner Icking Music Archive (WIMA) available on the internet. His choral works are also impressive.

His music is not trammelled by fussy ornamentation which can be infuriating.

Frescobaldi (1583-1643) is noted for his keyboard works. He became an organist at the age of 14 having probably been influenced by the dissolute Gesualdo and, in turn, Frescobaldi influenced the great J S Bach. Frescobaldi's music is more serious than Cima and alternates virtuosity with a calmness than many find dull. Elizabeth Lutyens rated Frescobaldi as one of her favourite composers.

Fontana was a violinist influenced by dance rhythms and recitatives. He died of the plague in 1630. We need to hear more of his work.

Castello's music was challenging for its time. He lived from 1590 to 1658 and probably succumbed to a plague as well.

Biagio Marini's birth year varies from 1587 to 1594. His works on this CD are exemplary. The Op 22 Sonata was quite gorgeous as was the performance.

Marco Uccellini's work is worth hearing. He lived from 1610-1680 and also wrote music challenging for its time. It is also virtuosic. The splendid sonata represented here only whets the appetite for more.

The qualities of the music of Maurizio Cazzati (c1620-1677) are many notably its expressiveness and almost vocal quality,

Stradella was even more dissolute than Gesualdo. He was born in 1639 and was murdered in Genoa in 1682. He stole other men's wives, had affairs with innumerable women and, consequently, made enemies. But if we are not to judge the man but only his music, we have to say that his music is often sound.

Corelli (1653- 1713) was a great violinist. His music is melodious and flows mercurially. He broke away from the restrictions of counterpoint and one of his pupils, Locatelli, extended the range and virtuosity of the violin considerably.

Just marvel at the playing of this sonata, as I did.

See my article Locatelli and the Italians.

As I have said this is a very important disc, beautifully performed and recorded. And it contains some gems.

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