



Antonio Janigro & The Zagreb Soloists

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ClicMag N° 35 Février 2016 (Jean-Charles Hoffelé - 2016.02.01)



La surprise de ce très bel hommage vient plutôt du côté des modernes: le ton ému de la Trauermusik d'Hindemith où l'alto de Stefano Passagio prie littéralement, l'élégance désolée de l'Adagio de Barber où la poésie de l'Andante lyrique de Reger, les inflexions hongroises de l'Improvisation concertante que Milko Kelemen écrit à leur intention et qui rappelle plutôt Bartok que la musique populaire croate, le mordant du jeu d'attaque dans le Scherzo de l'Octuor de Chostakovitch, tout cela compose le vrai portrait d'un ensemble qu'on a trop souvent rangé dans la poussière des formations pour le répertoire baroques stylistiquement dépassées.

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[Der Kurier](#) 05.02.2016 (Alexander Werner - 2016.02.05)



Schon bei Corellis Concerto grosso besticht die schillernde Aura, die enorme Transparenz in reinstem Streicherklang bei flotten Tempi, subtiler Ausdifferenzierung und expressiver Kraft. Eigenschaften, die das ganze Programm auszeichnen, das vom Barock über die Klassik mit einem glänzenden Divertimento Mozarts bis ins 20. Jahrhundert mit Hindemith, Reger oder Schostakowitch reicht. Schillernd und impulsiv.

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Fanfare June 2016 (James A. Altena - 2016.06.01)

fanfare

The names of The Zagreb Soloists (or I Solisti Zagreb, as it often appeared instead) and its director, cellist Antonio Janigro, will doubtless be thrice familiar to many longtime collectors of classical music, particularly for its numerous recordings that appeared on the Vanguard label. (I have a personal soft spot for the renditions of the Bach concertos for multiple harpsichords with Anton Heiller and assisting soloists.) This disc offers as a tribute to the ensemble a collection of broadcast performances, dating from between 1957 and 1966. Alas, it does the ensemble no favors, and one wonders why it even was issued. The playing is often scrappy and provincial, the monaural recorded sound is thin and harsh, and the interpretations are undistinguished or worse. (The Barber Adagio, a piece that normally requires eight to nine minutes to traverse, is here garroted in a mercilessly unfeeling 5:50!) As a soloist in the Vivaldi Cello Concerto, the normally estimable Janigro is unstylish and seems to be simply going through the motions. Absolutely, take a pass on this.

Radio Bremen 11.06.2016 (Marita Emigholz - 2016.06.11)

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www.artalinna.com 1 février 2016 (Jean-Charles Hoffelé - 2016.02.01)



Souvenirs sonores

Mais la surprise de ce très bel hommage vient plutôt du côté des modernes : le ton ému de la Trauermusik d'Hindemith où l'alto de Stefano Passagio prie littéralement, l'élégance désolée de l'Adagio de Barber ou la poésie de l'Andante lyrique de Reger, les inflexions hongroises de l'Improvisation concertante que Milko Kelemen écrit à leur intention et qui rappelle plutôt Bartók que la musique populaire croate, le mordant du jeu d'attaque dans le Scherzo de l'Octuor de Chostakovitch, tout cela compose le vrai portrait d'un ensemble qu'on a trop souvent rangé dans la poussière des formations pour le répertoire baroque stylistiquement dépassées.

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I always associate the Zagreb Soloists with their excellent recordings of Bach cantatas and Handel arias performed by the Canadian contralto Maureen Forrester, and the two Mozart piano concertos (nos. 9 and 14) with Alfred Brendel, recorded in the mid-1960s (now on Alto) before he hit the big time.

An ensemble of twelve string players, they were formed in 1953 through the auspices of Zagreb Radiotelevision. The Italian cellist Antonio Janigro became their artistic director, acting both as conductor and soloist until 1968. They exist to this day, having travelled the world and made many recordings of a wide-ranging repertoire. The performances here are all radio productions, made between 1957 and 1966 during Janigro's distinguished tenure; all are in mono. They were taped whilst on their frequent visits to Berlin.

This programme of music showcases the Zagreb Soloists' wide-ranging repertoire, extending from the Baroque to the twentieth century. On their travels they saw themselves as cultural ambassadors of Yugoslavia, later Croatia and they ensured that the majority of their concerts featured at least one work by a Croatian composer. The country is represented here by Milko Kelemen, a name new to me, but he was closely associated with the ensemble. His brief four movement Concertante Improvisations gives plenty of scope for them to shine. The first movement has echoes of Bartók's night music, and is reminiscent of his Divertimento for String Orchestra. Pizzicato features prominently in the third movement Allegro scherzando, whilst the finale is, once again, of a Bartókian persuasion. The only bad apple here is the Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber, which is rushed (compare). Maybe they were having a bad day, as the performance lacks feeling and expression; it's as if they're playing on auto-pilot, failing to savour the eloquence of this marvellous score. In Reger's Lyric Andante, on the other hand, the players luxuriate in the music's lyricism. Their fervent expression and rich, velvety tone, makes this a performance to relish. There's some superb playing from the unnamed solo violist in Hindemith's Trauermusik. The performance projects the deep sorrow and grief of this poignant score.

In Vivaldi's Concerto in D major, Janigro takes centre-stage as cello soloist in a transcription of this violin concerto, probably made by Janigro himself, though not stated as such. He transcribed several Vivaldi concertos for his instrument, so it is a treat to have one example. His rich, warm tone and spotless intonation lend graceful simplicity to this well managed account. Added to this, an ideal balance has been struck between soloist and orchestra. The Corelli Concerto grosso, Op. 6/4 is notable for its subtlety and finesse.

Despite the mono sound, the audio quality throughout is exceptionally fine on this generously timed disc. Annotations in German and English are comparable to Audite's usual high standard.

Goldene Zeit der 'Zagreb Soloists'

Als ich 2015 die Zagreber Solisten live hörte, war ich maßlos enttäuscht: nur ein müder, fahler Abglanz war vorhanden von dem, was mir aus früheren Zeiten in Erinnerung war, u.a. von einem Konzert, das ich in den Siebzigerjahren in Luxemburg mit zu veranstalten das Glück hatte.

Die vorliegende Aufnahme präsentiert das mit 12 Streichern besetzte Ensemble unter seinem langjährigen Leiter Antonio Janigro. Die Erstveröffentlichungen aus dem RIAS-Archiv bieten ein gemischtes Programm, das auf hohem Niveau musiziert wird. Janigro ist ein ebenso inspirierter Dirigent wie Solist auf dem Cello.

Ob Corelli, Rossini oder Mozart, die Musik ist immer elegant, perfekt modelliert und feinnervig ziseliert. Im Barber-Adagio erreicht das Ensemble eine größtmögliche, tief empfundene Emotionalität.

Dass dies so sehr zum Genuss wird, trotz Mono-Klang, liegt am erstaunlich guten Remastering der originalen Tonbänder durch Audite-Chef Ludger Böckenhoff, der wohl mit allen möglichen Lichtquellen bis hin zu Infrarotbeleuchtung am Werk war, um diesen phänomenalen Detailreichtum zu erzielen, den man hier hören kann.

Here we have recordings from the Golden Age of the Zagreb Soloists, under the direction of their legendary conductor Anonio Janigro. The performances are vivid, colourful, with an extremely rich sound which has come out of a perfect remastering.

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