

October 2007

One does not often encounter Paganini's Fourth Concerto outside complete recorded cycles, so this beautifully played version is doubly welcome.

The music is attractive enough to put all other Paganini concertos out of your mind while you are listening to it.

Thomas Albertus Irnberger, born in 1985 in Salzburg, has studied with Jürgen Geise, Josef Sabaini (his conductor here) and Ivry Gitlis (who writes a little testimonial in the booklet). He is superbly equipped in every department and provides his own cadenza, which is both apt and virtuosic without going on too long.

Il particularly enjoy his staccato.

The Allegro maestoso is nicely laid out by both soloist and conductor ; the operatic Adagio gets a suitable bel canto treatment ; and the delightful finale, in which Irnberger's harmonics are excellent , is given a wonderful rhythmic lift in its main theme and convincing changes of character in its episodes. However, I can hardly hear the important triangle, which is supposed to be playing " obligato ".

The relatively brief Suonata varsavia has not come my way since Accardo's EMI recording. It features variations on a Polish tune and is great fun.

Irnberger again gives faultless display and the chamber orchestra plays Pietro Spada's deft scoring skillfully.

Ernst Ludwig Leitner's six minute piece is rather like " Paganini meets Hindemith ". It is very pleasant and is given what seems to be a definitive performance.

Apart from the too-tactful triangle, the recordings are nicely set in a good acoustic.

Tully Potter