

Mompou

Cançons i Danses. Paisajes. Scènes d'enfants.

Música callada - Book 1 No 3

Luis Fernando Pérez *pf*

Mirare © MIR364 (80' • DDD)



One needn't know much of the piano music or many of the songs by Federico

Mompou to recognise his distinctive lyric gift. His combination of sensual languor, a seemingly inexhaustible harmonic palate, deep folkloristic roots and the air of delicate intimacy make his niche in Spanish music – and, indeed, in 20th-century European piano music – unique. The fact that a considerable body of music, hitherto unknown, has come to light in recent decades adds a titillating sense of discovery to his oeuvre. Small wonder that, older advocates like Rubinstein and Larrocha notwithstanding, we seem to be in a veritable golden age of Mompou interpretation: witness Stephen Hough's highly acclaimed recording (Hyperion, 9/97), Jenny Lin's inimitable 2011 collection (Steinway, 8/11^{US}), Arcadi Volodos's Sony Classical album (8/13), and the series of Jordi Masó (Naxos) and Martin Jones (Nimbus), to cite but a few.

Another recent contribution – and a distinguished one – is Luis Fernando Pérez's new Mirare disc. He brings to this music an inerrant sense of proportion, conveyed with exquisitely apt sound at the Steinway that seems as natural as speech. A flexible rhythmic spine supports all the textures, maintaining the line even in the most leisurely of tempos. The textures themselves are luxuriant despite their transparent simplicity. The engineers have captured everything with remarkable subtlety.

Pérez writes in his charming booklet notes that he considers the *Cançons i Danses*

the most important of Mompou's piano pieces. He plays all of them written for solo piano (No 13 is for guitar, No 14 for organ) with a dreamy nostalgia that is irresistible. Dating from 1921 to 1961, with No 15 from 1978, they serve as an index of Mompou's creative development. The three *Paisajes*, five *Scènes d'enfants* and one of the *Música callada* bring formal and affective variety to the programme. These deeply personal, lovingly reverent performances of fascinating music make this a disc that yields fresh pleasure with each repeated listening. **Patrick Rucker**

Reicha

'Reicha Rediscovered, Vol 1'

Grande Sonate. Étude, Op 97 No 1. Sonata on a Theme of Mozart. *Practische Beispiele* – No 4, *Fantaisie sur un seul accord*; No 7, *Capriccio*; No 20, *Harmonie*

Ivan Ilić *pf*

Chandos © CHAN10950 (67' • DDD)



Antoine (or Antonín, Anton) Reicha was one of music's originals, with a cosmopolitan

career tracing a trajectory from his native Prague to Bonn, Hamburg, Paris, Vienna and, finally, back to Paris. Today he is probably best remembered for the dozens of wind quintets he published between 1817 and 1820, and as the teacher of an extraordinary list of pupils that included Habeneck, Baillot, Rode, Berlioz, Liszt, Gounod, Onslow and Franck. Apart from his substantial catalogue of original works, Reicha was the author of influential theoretical texts that enjoyed wide circulation during the 19th century. Any genuine measure of this multifaceted figure presupposes familiarity with both his music and his wide-ranging theoretical ideas. Ivan Ilić has studied both.

For his new Chandos disc, the first volume of a projected series, Ilić has chosen two sonatas, thought to date from around 1805 and only recently published, framing them with three pieces from the 1803 *Practische Beispiele* ('Practical Examples: A Contribution to the Intellectual Culture of the Composer') and the first of the *Études in Fugal Style*, Op 97, published not later than 1817.

The sonatas are perhaps closer in texture to Haydn than to Beethoven or Clementi. Of course comparison of virtually any composer with Beethoven seems inherently unfair; but in Reicha's case the temptation is difficult to resist, if only because the two were exact contemporaries and acquaintances. In plan and harmonic layout, Reicha's sonatas belong to the progressive camp, yet what distinguishes them most from Beethoven is a certain conservatism of figuration. Reicha, though doubtless able to get around the piano, was a flautist. While straightforwardly pianistic, these sonatas seldom indulge in the 'play of hand' that seems part and parcel of most virtuoso pianist-composers, from Mozart to Rzewski. When one abandons that expectation, there are riches to be explored. It's also true that, in a piece like the *Étude*, Op 97 No 1, Reicha uses the simplest of means to achieve a haunting sense of pathos with little more than harmonic movement. In the C major Sonata, too, the extended *Adagio* conveys great depth of feeling, followed by a capricious finale that is both witty and resourceful.

Ilić is a sensitive, thoughtful and conscientious pianist and this project is an entirely worthy one. As the series progresses, one hopes he will resist the temptation to deliver verbatim the repeated phrases and sections that form an implicit element of Reicha's musical syntax. Repetition in music, as in everyday speech, lends itself to variety of tone, emphasis and articulation. **Patrick Rucker**

Sei Solo

Bach
Sei Solo

Mats Bergström
Guitar

Sonatas & Partitas
BWV 1001—1006

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