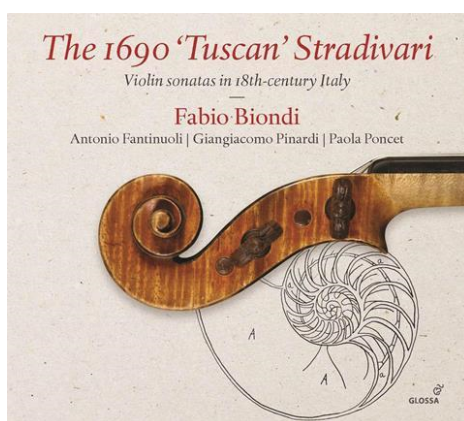


Fabio Biondi: The 1690 'Tuscan' Stradivari

A glowing tone show the instrument is great but the player is greater still



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Musicians: Fabio Biondi (violin) Antonio Fantinuoli (cello) Giangiacomo Pinardi (theorbo) Paola Poncet (harpsichord)

Works: CORELLI Violin Sonata in A major op.5 no.9 GEMINIANI Violin Sonata in D minor op.4 no.8 LOCATELLI Violin Sonata in G minor 'Leufsta' TARTINI Violin Sonata in G minor op.1 no.10 'Didone abbandonata' VERACINI Violin Sonata in D minor op.2 no.12 'Accademica' (Ciaccona) VIVALDI Violin Sonata in B flat major RV34

Catalogue Number: GLOSSA GCD 923412

Had Fabio Biondi made no other record, we would know from this one that he was a great violinist. Ostensibly he is demonstrating the 1690 Strad, now known as 'Il Toscano', from the quintet of instruments made for Ferdinando de' Medici.

In the Ciaccona that ends Veracini's D minor Sonata, his superb tone and rhythm are at once evident – my one complaint is that there is room for the entire sonata, although Biondi did record it complete in 1995. The works by Geminiani, Locatelli and Vivaldi are sonate da chiesa: their slower movements are broadly phrased, finely shaped and even profound, their faster ones almost improvisatory; ornaments are beautifully tucked into the musical line. Corelli's piece is a sonata da camera with a Preludio, very eloquent, and dance movements: a lovely Giga, a brief Adagio and a forthright Gavotta. Tartini's famous 'Didone abbandonata' consists of an Affettuoso – really affecting here and faster than on Biondi's 1991 recording – followed by a characterful Presto and a graceful Giga.

Paola Poncet and her two colleagues are sympathetic partners for Biondi and the sound quality is exemplary – the violin's overtones really ring out in the acoustic of the Auditorium at the Parco della Musica in Rome.

TULLY POTTER