



“Adalberto Maria Riva

plays with real tonal richness, finding plenty of colour in his well recorded Bösendorfer Imperial. This is a fine inaugural volume to what looks like being an intriguing series.”

Joseph WOELFL (1773-1812)

Piano Music - Volume 1

Sonate, précédée d'une Introduction et Fugue, in C minor, WoO 113 (c.1804) [30:36]

Piano Sonata in B minor, Op.38 (1808) [17:40]

Piano Sonata in F major, Op.27 No.2 (1803) [24:46]

Adalberto Maria Riva (piano)

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TOCCATA CLASSICS TOCC0383 [73:05]

Joseph Woelfl was born in Salzburg, taking lessons from Leopold Mozart there, and after his mother's early death was even taken into the Mozart household. There he was given piano lessons by Nannerl, Wolfgang's older sister, so intertwined were the Woelfl-Mozart relations. A sojourn in Poland, on Wolfgang's recommendation, led to tours and to a celebrated gun-slinging piano duel with Beethoven about which much has been written. In 1805 he moved to London where he was to write by far the majority of his extensive compositions before dying, aged only 39 but wealthy, in 1812.

The three works in the first volume of this edition from Toccata presents music composed between 1803 and 1808. Only the Sonate précédée d'une Introduction et Fugue, in C minor, WoO 113 has been recorded before. It's

a large-scale half-an-hour piece that shows only the vaguest Beethovenian lineage. Rather more to be encountered are elements that may remind the listener of Clementi, but there are also personal qualities that will intrigue, such as the quasi-improvisational opening section that seems to be striving for proper direction. The Fugue that follows, arguably influenced again by Clementi, ends in dramatic arpeggios and the play of stormy and more limpid writing in the fast central section of the Sonata is well calibrated. Lyricism and terpsichorean elements ensure that the work has plenty of contrast and is full of Viennese spirit.

The B minor Sonata is the most compact of the three works in this disc, its singing lyricism, said in the notes to anticipate Schubert – one can take that with a pinch of salt – having nevertheless sufficiently complex harmonies to intrigue the ear as well as delight the senses. There is some dissonance here, too, that provides grit enough to dispel easy simplicity. The opening of the F major Sonata marries lyricism and structural probity, added to which the melodies have a delicious quality that tends to stop one in one's tracks. Woelfl has a pronounced habit of ending works with extensive Allegretto finales and does so here in two of the works, the exception being the B minor.

Jonathan Woolf, MusicWeb