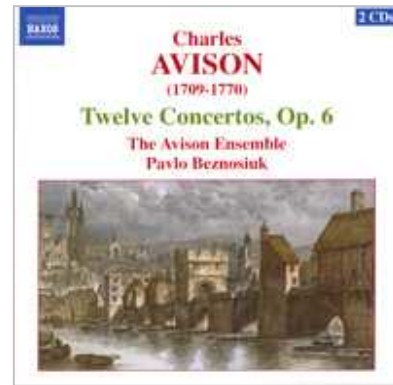


Avison

ENSEMBLE

reviews

CHARLES AVISON 12 CONCERTOS OPUS 6



THE AVISON ENSEMBLE
PAVLO BEZNOSIUK (DIRECTOR & VIOLIN)
2 CDs on Naxos, Naxos 8.557553-54

*... bounce with vim and vigour
... the playing is full of character and charm
... heartfelt performances of these pieces*

THE PENGUIN GUIDE TO CLASSICAL MUSIC January 2009

Avison's ability to pattern his works on the music of others stood him in good stead throughout his career...His concertos are skillfully fashioned, have plenty of vitality and show perceptive use of dynamic contrast...Played as vibrantly and freshly as it is here, on period instruments by this expert ensemble from Avison's own city, and led by the excellent violinist Pavlo Beznosiuk, one cannot help but respond to the vitality of the writing...

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE Nicholas Anderson

This is an important release for all lovers of 18th-century English music, since it is the first time that Charles Avison's complete set of 12 string concertos, Op.6, has been recorded. Hitherto, only his 12 concertos drawing upon harpsichord sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti have found much favour with record companies, though Emanuel Hurwitz and his ensemble recorded six concertos from Avison's Op.6 for L'Oiseau-Lyre back in 1970. Newcastle-born Avison was a contemporary of Arne, Boyce and Stanley and a prolific composer of concertos of which some 50 or so were published during his lifetime. Like his teacher, Geminiani, Avison preferred a four-part concertino group consisting of two violins, viola and cello, rather than the more usual trio of two violins and cello favoured by Corelli and Handel. While the

musical interest in the set as a whole is uneven there are many finely constructed movements whose character of often individual and whose idiom is distinctive... Among the most impressive works is the Eight Concerto in E minor which shows off Avison's strengths both as an able contrapuntist and as a melodist. There is plenty of formal variety within the 12 concertos which, Janus-like, look both backwards towards Corelli (No. 9) and forwards towards the Italian three-movements sinfonia (No. 12).

The period-instrument Avison Ensemble under Pavlo Beznosiuk's experienced direction gives heartfelt performances of these pieces. Upper strings are not always entirely unanimous but the playing is full of character and charm. A voyage of discovery.

THE OBSERVER

Anthony Holden

January 2004

It takes an Irish-Ukrainian violinist-conductor, of course, to lead a period-instrument band in the world premiere recording of these 12 short works by the man hailed in the New Grove as 'the most important English concerto composer of the 18th century'. Born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Charles Avison (1709-70) was a teacher, conductor and entrepreneur as well as a prolific composer, better-known for his 12 concertos based on Scarlatti keyboard sonatas than these 12 original, fresh-minted works, which bounce with vim and vigour in the hands of this excellent ensemble. Bridging the Italian concerto grosso style and the sonata form recently developed by Hadyn and J.C. Bach, they do Tyneside proud indeed.

YORKSHIRE POST

David Denton

August 2004

More than able to stand comparison with any composer of his time, the fast outer movements of these delightful concertos are full of vivacity in the hands of the Avison Ensemble with Pavlo Beznosiuk as solo violin and conductor. The transparent sound quality ensures we hear every instrumental strand. Fervently recommended.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (AUSTRALIA)

Elizabeth Roche

July 2004

The arrival of this splendid issue should surely win Avison the host of new friends he certainly deserves. The scores are also unusually well supplied with very precise phrasing and dynamic markings, of which the Avison Ensemble take full advantage in spirited, crisply articulated and expressive performances.

THE SUNDAY HERALD

Frank Carroll

January 2004

On this world premiere recording the excellent Avison Ensemble play on period instruments. Directed by Pavlo Beznosiuk, they bring both fluency and flair to these performances. For those who want to know more of Avison, this will be a journey of discovery.

THE INDEPENDENT

George Hall

July 2004

Published in 1758, these concertos show real flair, and come up fresh as paint in these idiomatic performances by an ensemble dedicated to neglected figures of the English Baroque.

THE GUARDIAN

Andrew Clements

06 August 2004

Born in Newcastle upon Tyne, Charles Avison (1709-1770) was an organist and composer. He studied in London with Geminiani but spent his working life back in the north-east, as well as becoming a trenchant critic who gained considerable notoriety when he proclaimed his teacher as a far better composer than Handel.

His own music, little-known now, consisted mostly of instrumental concertos. Some of them were transcriptions of keyboard sonatas by Scarlatti, but others, such as the 12 concertos of his Op 6, published in 1758, were entirely original, modelled on the concerti grossi of Corelli and Geminiani but also revealing that Avison was well aware of what younger composers in Europe such as JC Bach and Haydn were doing.

They certainly emerge characterfully enough from these performances by Pavlo Beznosiuk and the Avison Ensemble: not great music, but certainly worth hearing.

THE BIRMINGHAM POST

Christopher Morley

July 2004

On this new bargain-price Naxos double-CD release they receive delightful performances from the crisp and lively period-instrument Avison Ensemble directed by Pavlo Beznosiuk. The cover picture of an old Newcastle scene is a delight, and the portrait of Avison within does have something of the canny Tynesider about him.