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NEWS in studio

Un altro modo

Another Way

The new record by harpsichordist Amaya Fernández Pozuelo

is devoted to the Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti

by Giuseppe Scuri

Amaya Fernández Pozuelo is one of the most appreciated interpreters and scholars of ancient harpsichord repertoire. After studying at the Conservatory of Madrid, her hometown, she moved to Italy where she completed her education. Harpsichord teacher at the Civica Scuola di Musica Claudio Abbado in Milan, she now makes her *début* for Stradivarius with a CD entitled *Domenico Scarlatti Alio Modo*, dedicated to the harpsichord music of the Neapolitan composer and of a few Iberian authors inspired by him. The disc follows the concerts *Domenico Scarlatti and Flamenco* that the Spanish musician is holding in various cities among which are Salerno (Irno Festival), Ferrara and Modena (Estense Music Festival “Grandezze & Meraviglie”). On October 26th, the composer’s birthday, it will be presented in Naples.

How was this album born and what is your relationship with Scarlatti?

«Reality and knowledge go hand in hand, but while the former is an accomplished present, the latter is flowing. In the field of music one must cultivate knowledge through study and research, in order to arrive at a different way of seeing reality. This happened to me through the progressive and constant study of Domenico Scarlatti Sonatas. My almost daily relationship and closeness to Domenico ended with him becoming almost one of the family».

What underlies the title *Alio modo*?

«It refers to another way of understanding Scarlatti. It is the result of a deeper comprehension and a different reading of his text. Reading “*alio modo*” is a response to the dominant interpretation that privileges the virtuosistic aspects of some of his Sonatas. My reading proceeds in the opposite direction. In my interpretations I have taken into account the expressive, emotional, theatrical, improvisational and popular elements that characterize his writing».

How did you come up with this new approach?

«This vision of mine has materialized in recent years. While studying I often found myself in the situation where sections of some Sonatas did not convince me. I felt that maintaining the initial speed, which has always been more or less done, did not allow the emergence of the emotional values of the text. The flexibility of the *tactus* represents a reminiscence of what was common in Italy in the 17th century, a faithful tradition of Scarlatti. This new view has been associated with the knowledge of the Iberian popular culture that permeates some of his compositions. The union of these elements represented my personal *Stele of Rosetta*. The curious fact is that the single conflicting points of connection, within the piece that hindered the smoothness and musical logic, suddenly fell into place. We find such a problem in some works by contemporary Spanish authors: examples of this are the pieces on the CD. In this way - *alio modo* - the dialogical aspects of the music, that finally becomes spoken, are highlighted».

Does Scarlatti's name refer to the Italy-Spain relationship?

«The connection between Scarlatti and Iberian-Andalusian folk music is not in itself a novelty. Several studies and interpretations over the past few decades highlight this. Mine is not a revolution, but a different way of highlighting the subtleties of his writing. What in another author should be read according to conventions, in Scarlatti it must be interpreted looking for a potential traslate meaning.

Everything becomes more understandable if one thinks that Scarlatti performed his Sonata before noting it on paper. In the concluding refinement and drafting there were both the improvised execution and the formal completeness. This explains, in my interpretation, the added notes, the rhythmic variations, the fluctuations of time, the asynchrony between the hands, the suspensions, the unwritten repeated notes, the momentary accelerations, the declamatory freedom, the different colours of the phrasing, up to the rhetorical value of silence».

What names did you choose to associate with Scarlatti?

«For obvious musical qualities, I have chosen some Spanish authors who, even if they are less known, are great: Soler, *in primis*, but also Albero, López and Pérez de Albéniz. In these authors, the Scarlatti style is handed down, declined in a different way. The “*alio modo*” also refers to the use of this style, which becomes not only pure imitation but cultural heritage».

Is Italian-Spanish union also embodied in your biography?

«This deep relationship that has always existed between Spain and Italy is in the facts: in history, religion, art and common feeling. As a proof of this, I found myself being an unconscious witness of the development of my Italian spirit. I would like to believe that the same thing happened to Scarlatti with his *hispanidad*».