

Amaya Fernández Pozuelo is a Madrid-born harpsichordist who has been based for years in Milan where she is professor of harpsichord at the *Civica Scuola di Musica Claudio Abbado*. In a way, hers is a story similar to that of Domenico Scarlatti to whom this album is dedicated. The Italian musician followed almost his entire career in Spain, to the point that he would have been considered Spanish by all means, if it were not for those stupid complexes we suffer here (for example the French don't have any problem in considering Lully French or the British considering Haendel English). She has followed the opposite path: her career takes place in Italy. She is not generous in recordings. In fact, I only remember one of hers: *El canto del caballero*, with pieces of Cabezón, Bull, Merula, Byrd, Sweelinck or Mayone, performed when she was already residing in Italy.

*Alio modo* - title of this second record - contains sonatas of Scarlatti, as well as of other Spanish composers. Some, contemporaries of the Neapolitan musician (Antonio Soler and Sebastián de Albero); others, later (Mateo Pérez de Albéniz and Félix Máximo López). But all of them strongly influenced by him. Why *Alio modo*? The harpsichordist says without ambiguities that what can be heard here is the result of a deeper understanding and a different reading of the Scarlattian *opus*. She has played it and, above all, she has studied him so much that Scarlatti is now almost part of her family.

Fernández Pozuelo does not pursue *per se* the underlying virtuosity present in the Scarlattian sonatas (which practically all her colleagues do) but tries - and she succeeds fully in doing so - to focus on expressive, emotional, theatrical, improvisational and, of course, popular elements that one finds in the Neapolitan composer. In few places like here, the typical pure folklore that almost all attribute to Scarlatti is palpable, and that almost no one is able to evidence, when facing his music. For this reason, she does not hesitate to sacrifice that vertiginous rhythm that most harpsichordists - and pianists - exalt. Whimsical vision? Not much less! Such was the way to play in the Italy of the *Seicento*, and that was the way Domenico learned to play from his *maestro*, that is his own father, Alessandro.

The clash which took place between that way of contemplating the music of Italy of the *Seicento*, and the peculiarities of the Iberian folklore, is not only found in Scarlatti, but also in other authors. For the listener to verify this, several sonatas and variations of the native composers mentioned above are included. It would be a mistake to think that we are facing a mere musicological exercise. What the Spanish harpsichordist maintains is not only full of logic: she also plays masterfully. What an astonishing reading of the Sonata K. 208!