



Duburk' (1759), however. The concerto was revived under the auspices of RISM in Frankfurt am Main in 2014, but this is its first commercial recording (tracks 6–9).

The traditional Irish air 'Ciste nó stór', here played by a solo violin (track 11), is simply Dubourg's transcription of that song together with badly transliterated Irish words (MS 850 fol. 60r), hardly a valid reason for its inclusion. It is possible that he planned to arrange it for voice and keyboard, as he did with the popular 'Aileen [*sic*] Aroon' ('Eibhlín a Rún' in Irish), printed with similarly bowdlerized Irish words and set in G major in *The Monthly Masque or an Entertainment of Musick consisting of Four Celebrated Songs. Set for the Violin, German Flute and Harpsicord [*sic*]* (volume 41 (Dublin: W. Manwaring, c1742), 34–35). This vocal version would have made a perfect choice for inclusion here, perhaps before Dubourg's theme and two simple variations on the tune for solo harpsichord in D major (Dublin: W. Manwaring, 1746), which is performed here (track 10) without the printed repeats, ignoring the final da capo instruction to reprise the theme, and with the unacknowledged addition of lutes and pizzicato lower strings.

Charles Burney met Dubourg in Chester – where the latter invariably broke his journey between London and Dublin (as Handel also did in 1741) – in the summer of 1744, or possibly in 1743. Although the former year is generally cited (he certainly met Thomas Arne there then), Burney's memoirs cite the latter in a longer and more detailed account of their meeting. Burney accompanied Dubourg in Corelli's 'fifth solo' (Op. 5 No. 5), reporting that he was 'in form, style and execution superior to any player on the Violin that I had heard before', largely owing in no small part to Dubourg's ornamentation of the solo line in the two slow movements (Slava Klima, Gary Bowers and Kerry S. Grant, eds, *Memoirs of Dr. Charles Burney 1726–1769* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 38). He did the same with one such movement in Sonata 7 but freely ornamented (and in two instances wrote variations on) all of the movements in Sonatas 8–11. The decision to include Op. 5 No. 9 here (tracks 12–15) is therefore admirable: Sophie Gent performs what is essentially Corelli's version followed by Dubourg's on the existing repeats with harpsichord (only) continuo. The digitized manuscript, *Correllis [*sic*] solos: grac'd. by Doburg [*sic*]*, is available online (hathitrust.org). Incidentally, William Viner also ornamented Corelli's sonatas, and his manuscript, no longer extant, was later owned by Cousser!

In conclusion, what should have taken pride of place as the first CD devoted exclusively to Dubourg is, despite the fine performances, hindered by the inclusion of music with a tenuous connection to the composer as well as a somewhat cavalier approach to his intentions, not least with regard to scoring and repeats, resulting in a 'curate's egg' overall. It is to be hoped that some other such enterprising musician will now take up the challenge to record a CD dedicated exclusively to Dubourg's finest royal ode music.

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ANTOINE REICHA (1770–1836)

REICHA REDISCOVERED

Ivan Ilić (piano)

Volume 1: Chandos 10950, 2017; one disc, 66 minutes

Volume 2: Chandos 20033, 2018; one disc, 62 minutes

Reicha Rediscovered is a recording project by the pianist Ivan Ilić that spotlights the curious miscellany of works for piano by Antoine Reicha, who is traditionally better known for his chamber, especially wind, music. It is one of several recordings of Reicha's piano music that have been released in recent times. Indeed, the pianist Henrik Löwenmark is undertaking a parallel project of recording the complete piano



works: four volumes have appeared so far (*Antoine Reicha: Complete Piano Music*, four volumes, Toccata Classics 2016–2020). This flurry of activity has gained momentum since 2014 with the publication of Reicha's complete works in a modern edition by Michael Bulley (*Antoine Reicha*, twenty-nine volumes (Lyon: Symétrie, 2014–2020)). The present review considers the first two volumes of what is projected to be Ilić's five-album set. Much of the repertory covered here (such as the Op. 97 études and the Sonata 'on a Theme of Mozart') has already been recorded by others, while some others (such as the selections from *Practische Beispiele*) constitute, to my knowledge, the first ever recording.

Reicha is probably best known to music scholars as a theorist and pedagogue, and particularly for his ideas about musical form. Professor of Counterpoint at the Paris Conservatoire from 1818, he wrote numerous treatises, often supplying his own musical examples. These theoretical and pedagogical interests extend into his compositional endeavours. Though Reicha composed much music intended for performance (especially operas), many of his works for piano exhibit a didactic impulse: their intent is to explore and demonstrate a specific concept. It is precisely here that the challenges of recording such pieces become apparent, for they often seem to originate as exercises or illustrative examples rather than 'art' music. The question naturally emerges: what does it mean to perform this music, and more so, to record it?

The *Études dans le genre fugue*, Op. 97, is a series of thirty-four preludes and fugues of which Ilić records thirteen. In a preface to the score, Reicha remarked that the preludes intended to develop the musicianship, theoretical understanding and historical knowledge of aspiring musicians. This prose commentary situates the collection squarely within the realm of private study, and Ilić understandably compares Reicha's Op. 97 to J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Ilić's performance exhibits an objective distance, as if trying not to insert himself too much into the performance, in order to let the notes speak for themselves. Moments of overt expressive nuance are few and far between, corresponding to Reicha's scores, which are only sporadically adorned with expressive and dynamic markings. Perhaps it is an awareness of the importance of structure, rigour and logic in Reicha's thought (cultivated through his study of mathematics – a subject that, as it turns out, Ilić himself pursued alongside music as an undergraduate student) that disposes Ilić to play this music in this way. The result is a polished and graceful performance. Yet it also makes for a somewhat monochromatic experience that undercuts the opus's figurative variety and contrapuntal forays.

Arguably nowhere is the tension between Reicha's didactic and artistic impulses more obvious than in the 'Fantaisie sur un seul accord', the fourth of the twenty-four *Practische Beispiele*. These pieces are demonstrations of the ideas he expounds in the accompanying *Philosophisch-practischen Anmerkungen*, and they present various forms, genres and concepts, as well as challenging sightreading exercises. The 'Fantaisie sur un seul accord' consists of a single E major triad in various positions and textural variations. One would think that, given such a harmonic constraint, the onus would fall on the performative elements – the variety of figurations – to carry the sense of 'fantasieren' at the piano. Yet here too one might say that Ilić's performance conveys an urtext approach premised on the concept of *Werktreue*, where the counting of the pulse is so exact and the playing so diligent that it suggests the act of outstandingly accurate score reading. (I should note that Ilić does not adopt a universally urtext attitude: he is happy to ornament on occasion when sections repeat in the Op. 97 *Études* discussed above.) The element of fantasy is minimal, which seems at odds with the commentary given in the liner notes for volume 1: written by Louise Bernard de Raymond rather than by the pianist himself, the notes discuss improvisatory elements of the music. (Ilić wrote the liner notes for volume 2.)

One finds an inkling of Ilić's rationale for his approach in the videos that accompany the audio recording: a four-part series of short documentary clips that contextualize Reicha and the repertory recorded. These are elegantly produced and accessible online. Ilić himself is the narrator and demonstrates several of the pieces in the videos as well. In his comments about the 'Fantaisie sur un seul accord', one gets a sense of why he might have approached the pieces in the way that he does. He compares the extreme and self-imposed compositional constraint in the fantasy with minimalism in the twentieth century, and the unusual metres and harmonic progressions in other pieces from the *Practische Beispiele* with modern experimentalism. Thus the concept of fantasy becomes less about the rhetorical improvisation that we typically associate with eighteenth-century 'fantasieren'



and more about what one might call improvisation by design, or, as in Ilić's own words, 'musical games': coming up with an arbitrary rule or constraint and seeing if '[Reicha] can get away with it'.

Ilić's somewhat cerebral approach to performance extends beyond Reicha's didactic pieces to those more clearly designed for performance, such as the Sonata in F major 'on a Theme of Mozart' and the more virtuosic Grande Sonata in C major (both unpublished). To my mind his approach, unfortunately, works to the detriment of both pieces. The absence of gestures that signal formal junctions and the underdetermined characters of the various movements, sections and topoi cause me at times to lose my way in the form, and lend the music a run-on quality that rubs against classical forms (such as sonatas and minuets) that are constructed on the basis of highly differentiated surfaces. To take an example: the minuet movement of the 'Mozart' sonata is built on the contrast between the minor mode (of the A section) and the major mode (of the B section). Yet there is scarcely a discernible shift in affect in Ilić's performance. His 'objective' disposition might derive from a familiar twentieth-century premise that forms and their features are more clearly projected 'as they are' by letting them 'speak for themselves'. Yet for me the clarity of formal shapes has to be created in connection with performance: cadences, modulations, transitional passages and so on are punctuating functions that orient the listener, even if they are somehow inscribed 'in the music'. (In this connection, Victoria Vassilenko's more rhetorically driven, if somewhat rushed, recording of the same movement provides a productive point of comparison: *Reicha: Musique de chambre* (Alpha Classics, AJ 0369, 2017).) Moreover, in light of the comings and goings of the many musicological and performance-practice tendencies to this current point, we now are more aware than ever that even that which purports to be neutral is anything but. Any statement, pronouncement or utterance represents an intervention and stakes an a priori position. Thus even Ilić's restraint is part and parcel of a modernist sense of what 'neutral' denotes. Most obviously, his pedalling decisions represent a highly modernist notion of musical beauty and polish.

In conclusion, I return to the question of what it means to undertake a recording project such as this one. Ilić's contribution certainly increases the visibility of this otherwise hard-to-access music. The documentary videos that accompany the audio recordings are an innovative way to help bring additional life to this oeuvre. But there is more to be done. The project as a whole betrays the positivist inclination that characterizes the infancy of so many areas of study: this is a phase driven by an impulse to archive the lesser-known artefacts of human creation, putting them on the record literally and figuratively. Then come the approaches that are more comfortable with the notion of interpretative risk. To expand from Ilić's apt comparison of Reicha's Op. 97 etudes with Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the parallel may also prove illuminating in the following sense: the transition from the realm of private study to public performance was gradual and at times even contentious. Perhaps we too remain for now in this initial phase with regards to Reicha's keyboard music.

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DOMENICO SCARLATTI (1685–1757)

ZONES: DOMENICO SCARLATTI

Lillian Gordis (harpsichord)

Paraty 919180, 2019: one disc, 82 minutes

The search to balance textual fidelity, historically informed performance practices and artistic independence has occupied leading figures of the early-music movement since its beginnings. As the so-called pioneers of the revival sought to establish new ways of approaching first the 'authentic' and later the 'historically