

Domenico
SCARLATTI

Complete Keyboard Sonatas Vol. 15

Orion Weiss, Piano



Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) Complete Sonatas Vol. 15

Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples in 1685, sixth of the ten children of the composer Alessandro Scarlatti, Sicilian by birth and chiefly responsible for the early development of Neapolitan opera. The Scarlatti family had extensive involvement in music both in Rome and in Naples, where Alessandro Scarlatti became *maestro di cappella* to the Spanish viceroy in 1684. Domenico Scarlatti started his public career in 1701 under his father's aegis as organist and composer in the vice-regal chapel. The following year father and son took leave of absence to explore the possibilities of employment in Florence, and Alessandro was later to exercise paternal authority by sending his son to Venice, where he remained for some four years. In 1709 Domenico entered the service of the exiled Queen of Poland, Maria Casimira, in Rome, there meeting and playing against Handel in a keyboard contest, in which the latter was declared the better organist and Scarlatti the better harpsichordist. It has been suggested that he spent a period from 1719 in Palermo, but his earlier connection with the Portuguese embassy in Rome led him before long to Lisbon, where he became music-master to the children of the royal family. This employment took him in 1728 to Madrid, when his pupil the Infanta Maria Barbara married the heir to the Spanish throne. Scarlatti apparently remained there for the rest of his life, his most considerable achievement the composition of some hundreds of single-movement sonatas or exercises, designed largely for the use of the Infanta, who became Queen of Spain in 1746.

The keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti survive in part in a number of eighteenth-century manuscripts, some clearly from the collection of Queen Maria Barbara, possibly bequeathed to the great Italian castrato Farinelli, who was employed at the Spanish court, and now in Venice. Various sets of sonatas were published during the composer's lifetime, including a set of thirty issued, seemingly, in London in 1738, and 42 published in London by Thomas Roseingrave in 1739, including the thirty

already available from the earlier publication. In more recent times the sonatas were edited by Alessandro Longo, who provided the numerical listing under L., and in 1953 the American harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick offered a new listing, distinguished by the letter K. Stylistic grounds have suggested a further changed listing by Giorgio Pestelli, under the letter P., and proposing a new chronology, while Emilia Fadini, in a complete edition for Ricordi, offers a further re-ordering, based in part on the Venice volumes.

Kirkpatrick's listing of the sonatas, based on the chronological order of the available sources, starts with the thirty *Essercizi per gravicembalo* offered for sale in early 1739 by Adamo Scola, 'Musick Master in Vine Street, near Swallow Street, Piccadilly'. The publication included a dedication in Italian to the King of Portugal and a prefatory note for the purchaser, denying serious intention and modestly suggesting rather '*lo scherzo ingegnoso dell'Arte*'. The listing continues primarily with the Venice volumes, in chronological order of compilation.

❶ The *Sonata in D minor*, K.552/L.421/P.556, is included in the fifteenth and last volume of the sonatas preserved in Parma, in a manuscript of Spanish origin and, as Kirkpatrick tells us, in the same hand as the first thirteen Venice volumes apparently bequeathed to Farinelli by Queen Maria Barbara. Marked *Allegretto*, it starts with a figure in the left hand, immediately imitated in the right, but continuing with a recurrent figure that is heard also in the D major second and final sections of the work. It is sometimes paired with the *Sonata in D minor*, K. 553.

❷ The *Sonata in C major*, K326/L.201/P.336, marked *Allegro*, makes use of descending and ascending scales and moves, in its second section, into the relative minor key. It is included in the seventh Venice volume of 1754.

❸ The *Sonata in A minor*, K.265/LSupp.32/P.168, marked *Allegro*, is a rondo, its opening theme, which frames intervening episodes in 3/8, is in 4/4. The sonata is included in the 1754 fourth Venice volume.

[4] The *Sonata in G major*, K.455/L.209/P.354, is included in the eleventh Venice collection, dated to 1756, and is marked *Allegro*. Much use is made of rapidly repeated notes.

[5] The primary source for the *Sonata in E minor*, K.233/L.467/P.497, is the third of the Venice volumes, dated 1753. It is marked *Allegro* and opens, as so often, with partial canonic imitation. The second voice enters with its repeated notes, and the sonata continues with answering scale passages.

[6] The *Sonata in D major*, K.177/L.364/P.184, is found in the second Venice volume, dated 1752. It is marked *Andante moderato* and it starts with a horn call, immediately echoed. After the repetition of the first section there is a brief excursion into the minor, before the original key is restored.

[7] The *Sonata in B minor*, K.293/L. Supp.44/P.157, appears in the fifth Venice volume, dated 1753. Marked *Allegro*, it is a toccata, with interesting polyphonic effects.

[8] The *Sonata in A major*, K.220/L.342/P.309, marked *Allegro*, is included in the third Venice volume. It includes brilliant triplet figuration and a variety of modulations and moves into the key of A minor to start the second section, with further shifts of key before returning to the original A major.

[9] The *Sonata in F sharp minor*, K.448/L.485/P.261, an *Allegro* in 3/8, is preserved in the tenth Venice volume, dated 1755. It explores various keys in its rapid progress, a characteristic *moto perpetuo*.

[10] The *Sonata in E major*, K.216/L.273/P.320, marked *Allegro*, is found in the third Venice volume. It has an air of tranquillity in its use of arpeggios and scales, repetitions and modulations

[11] The *Sonata in D minor*, K.553/L.425/P.557, is marked *Allegro* and included in the fifteenth and final Parma volume, dated 1757. It is in the form of a toccata, with rapid figuration.

[12] From the fourteenth Venice volume, dated 1742 and containing 61 sonatas, comes the *Sonata in C major*, K.72/L.401/P.1, marked *Allegro*. From Giorgio Pestelli's numbering it will be seen that he regards this sonata as a very early work, dating from Scarlatti's period in Venice or

in Rome. The piece starts with a repeated note figure and continues with a rapid deployment of arpeggios and sequential patterns in the form of a toccata.

[13] The *Sonata in F minor*, K.365/L.480/P.112, is found in the eighth Venice volume of thirty sonatas, dated 1754. Gentle in mood, it is propelled forward by its repeated figuration.

[14] The primary source of the *Sonata in E flat major*, K.253/L.320/P.239 is the fourth Venice volume of 1753. Marked *Allegro* and in 12/8, it explores remoter keys and makes much use of trills, particularly on a repeated note

[15] The *Sonata in C minor*, K.230/L.354/P.47, marked *Allegro*, is included in the third Venice volume. Continued use is made of repeated notes, in a contrapuntal texture, and of passages of rapidly alternating notes between the two hands.

[16] The *Sonata in B flat major*, K.439/L.47/P.473, is found in the tenth Venice volume, dated 1755, and is marked *Moderato*. The melodic lines are generally descending and a place is found for polyphonic writing and rhythmic variety.

[17] The *Sonata in G minor*, K.43/L.40/P.133, found in the fourteenth of the Venice volumes, is there marked *Allegro assai*, and is in 12/8. With the marking *Allegro* it is included as the first sonata of the first volume of the projected complete Ricordi edition by Emilia Fadini. The piece involves some melodic doubling, rapid scale passages and antiphonal writing, as one voice replies to another.

[18] Found in the sixth Venice volume, dated 1753, the *Sonata in F major*, K.296/L.198/P.305 has the tempo indication *Andante*. Remoter keys are explored in a sonata of great variety and interest, with the richness and lyricism of a slow movement.

[19] The present recording ends with the *Sonata in D minor*, K.92/L.362/P.44, which is included in the fourteenth Venice volume, where it is without tempo indication. It is dominated by continuing dotted rhythm in a polyphonic texture, providing a relatively sombre ending to the present release.

Keith Anderson

Artist's Note

I tried to put together a group of sonatas that worked as a whole programme, and also as a sort of narrative journey. I organized them emotionally and musically, (not chronologically, or in pairs as is often the custom). D minor marks the beginning of the journey, a sign post along the way, and then finally the return home. Playing these magical pieces is like stepping through a musical portal to a different time and place. The music transports the ear to the Spanish Palace – summer days with light and dancing, cold and still winter nights. Every sonata is a new flight of Scarlatti's limitless imagination, a single moment of his inspiration. We hear the strumming of guitars, the ringing of bells, spring time in Madrid; we hear fairy tales, brilliant etudes, joyfulness, dusk! They are musical time machines, connecting us to his world and his genius with the utmost immediacy.

Orion Weiss

Pianist Orion Weiss is one of the most sought-after soloists in his generation of American musicians. His impressive list of awards includes the Classical Recording Foundation's Young Artist of the Year Award, the Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Gina Bachauer Scholarship at The Juilliard School and the Mieczysław Munz Scholarship. He has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and in summer concerts with the New York Philharmonic. As a recitalist and chamber musician, he has appeared across the United States at venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Ravinia Festival, the Bard Music Festival, and Spivey Hall. A native of Lyndhurst, OH, Orion Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Paul Schenly. He graduated from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax. For more information, please visit: www.orionweiss.com



Photo: Scott Meivogel

Whilst Alessandro Scarlatti was largely responsible for the early development of Neapolitan opera, his son Domenico is most famous for his extensive series of keyboard sonatas, of which some 555 survive. His employment at the Spanish court in Madrid led to a series of works largely designed for the Infanta, Maria Barbara, later to become Queen. These sonatas are amongst the most significant of all 18th-century keyboard works.

**Domenico
SCARLATTI**
(1685–1757)

Complete Keyboard Sonatas Vol. 15

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|----|--------------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Sonata in D minor, K.552/L.421/P.556 | 4:33 |
| 2 | Sonata in C major, K.326/L.201/P.336 | 2:44 |
| 3 | Sonata in A minor, K.265/L.Supp.32/P.168 | 2:51 |
| 4 | Sonata in G major, K.455/L.209/P.354 | 3:23 |
| 5 | Sonata in E minor, K.233/L.467/P.497 | 5:16 |
| 6 | Sonata in D major, K.177/L.364/P.184 | 3:44 |
| 7 | Sonata in B minor, K.293/L.Supp.44/P.157 | 4:43 |
| 8 | Sonata in A major, K.220/L.342/P.309 | 4:25 |
| 9 | Sonata in F sharp minor, K.448/L.485/P.261 | 3:00 |
| 10 | Sonata in E major, K.216/L.273/P.320 | 5:51 |
| 11 | Sonata in D minor, K.553/L.425/P.557 | 3:30 |
| 12 | Sonata in C major, K.72/L.401/P.1 | 2:24 |
| 13 | Sonata in F minor, K.365/L.480/P.112 | 4:39 |
| 14 | Sonata in E flat major, K.253/L.320/P.239 | 3:10 |
| 15 | Sonata in C minor, K.230/L.354/P.47 | 3:41 |
| 16 | Sonata in B flat major, K.439/L.47/P.473 | 6:25 |
| 17 | Sonata in G minor, K.43/L.40/P.133 | 3:15 |
| 18 | Sonata in F major, K.296/L.198/P.305 | 4:44 |
| 19 | Sonata in D minor, K.92/L.362/P.44 | 6:21 |



Orion Weiss, Piano

Recorded at Glenn Gould Studio, CBC, Toronto, Canada, 15–17 July 2013

Producers: Bonnie Silver & Norbert Kraft • Engineer: Norbert Kraft • Editor: Bonnie Silver

Booklet notes: Keith Anderson • Cover image: Royal Palace, Madrid (Dennis Dolkens / Dreamstime.com)



8.573222

DDD

Playing Time
79:20



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