

Domenico
SCARLATTI

Complete Keyboard Sonatas Vol. 24

Alon Goldstein, Piano



Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) Complete Sonatas Vol. 24

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 Bárbara 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 18th-century manuscripts, some clearly from the collection of Queen Maria Bárbara, 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 30 *Essercizi per gravicembalo*, issued, seemingly, in London in 1738, and 42 sonatas published in London by Thomas Roscingle

in 1739, including the 30 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 30 *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, if not necessarily of composition.

❶ The *Sonata in C major*, K.159/L.104/P.418, is included in the first Venice volume, dated 1752. The thirds, heard at the outset and suggesting horn calls, are a continuing feature, the first part of the sonata returning finally, after a contrasting minor section.

❷ The *Sonata in C minor*, K.11/L.352/P.67, is one of the *Essercizi per gravicembalo* published in London in 1739 and is without tempo indication. It is a piece of some delicacy.

❸ The *Sonata in G major*, K.424/L.289/P.374 is found in the tenth Venice volume, dated 1755, and is marked *Allegro*, and *Alla breve*. It opens with an ascending major scale, imitated in the lower part and makes use of rhythmic patterns and repetitions familiar in other Scarlatti sonatas.

❹ The *Sonata in D major*, K.299/L.210/P.268, from the sixth Venice volume of 1753, is marked *Allegro* and in

3/8. It is among the more technically demanding of Scarlatti's sonatas.

❺ The *Sonata in G major*, K.210/L.123/P.293, is found in the third Venice volume, dated 1753, marked *Andante* and in 3/8. It is a work of some delicacy, monothematic in structure.

❻ The first sonata in Scarlatti's *Essercizi per gravicembalo*, the *Sonata in D minor*, K.1/L.366/P.57, is placed first in Kirkpatrick's catalogue. The 30 sonatas published in London in 1739 may be presumed to represent the composer's choice, whatever the order and dating of their composition. It offers a lively introduction to the collection.

❼ The *Sonata in B flat major*, K.273/L.398/P.174, from the fifth Venice volume, dated 1753, has an opening section marked *Vivo* and in 3/8, with a contrasting central section in 6/8 and marked *Moderato*.

❽ The *Sonata in G minor*, K.196/L.38/P.244, from the second Venice volume dated 1752, forms a possible pair with K.210, following the ordering of sonatas in the Parma manuscript.

❾ The *Sonata in D minor*, K.120/L.215/P.146, marked *Allegro* and in 12/8, brings hand-crossing and chains of sixths and thirds in a work that makes considerable technical demands. It is included in the fifteenth Venice volume, dated 1749.

❿ The *Sonata in B minor*, K.498/L.350/P.367, is included in the twelfth Venice volume, dated 1756. An *Allegro* in 3/4, it has been paired with K.197.

⓫ Found in the fourth Venice volume, dated 1753, *Sonata in E major*, K.264/L.466/P.308, *Vivo* in 3/8, explores remoter keys in its repeated central section.

⓬ The *Sonata in A minor*, K.383/L.134/P.269, in the eighth Venice volume, dated 1754, marked *Allegro* and in 6/8, offers music of some brilliance.

⓭ Preserved in the second Venice volume of 1752, *Sonata in E minor*, K.198/L.22/P.132, in triple metre and marked *Allegro*, is a toccata, largely in two voices.

⓮ The *Sonata in G major*, K.324/L.332/P.285, from the sixth Venice volume of 1753, an *Alla breve* marked *Andante*, offers chains of thirds and sixths.

⓯ The *Sonata in A major*, K.279/L.468/P.306, again *Alla breve* and *Andante*, is given in the fifth Venice volume of 1753. Here Scarlatti explores a number of less related keys.

⓰ From the eleventh Venice collection of 1756, the *Sonata in C major*, K.465/L.242/P.406, an *Allegro* in 3/8, offers a display of arpeggios and figuration with answering thirds.

⓱ The *Sonata in F minor*, K.187/L.285/P.145, an *Allegro* in 3/8, is from the second Venice volume. It offers rapid figuration, predominately in the left hand, leading to chordal textures at the close of the repeated first section.

⓲ The third Venice volume, dated 1753, ends with the *Sonata in G major*, K.235/L.154/P.172, a 3/8 *Allegro*. In place of a central development, the sonata offers a gently lilting *siciliano*, dismissed on the return of the opening section.

⓳ The *Sonata in E flat major*, K.508/L.19/P.516, is given in the twelfth Venice volume and is a triple time *Allegro*. It offers arpeggios and extended cadences, marked in strict time, and emphatic passages of octaves in the conclusion of both sections.

Keith Anderson

Alon Goldstein

Alon Goldstein is one of the most original and sensitive pianists of his generation. He has appeared with the Chicago and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Los Angeles, Radio France, London and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras under conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Herbert Blomstedt, Vladimir Jurowski and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Recent highlights include performances of Prokofiev's *Piano Concertos* with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's *Triple Concerto* at Carnegie Hall, and a 17-concert Latin American tour with the Israel Chamber Orchestra under Yoav Talmi. Goldstein's discography includes Mozart's *Piano Concertos* with the Fine Arts Quartet and Dvořák's *Piano Trios* with the Tempest Trio (Naxos) and Mendelssohn's *Piano Concertos* with the Israel Chamber Orchestra (Centaur). A passionate advocate of music education, recent teaching engagements have included the Steans Institute at Ravinia Festival, The Gilmore Keyboard Festival, and Ensemble Connect (formerly Ensemble ACJW) at Carnegie Hall. Goldstein has performed at prestigious venues around the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Moscow Kremlin, Hollywood Bowl and the Southbank Centre. In 2019 he was inducted into the Society of Scholars of his alma mater, the Johns Hopkins University. He currently holds the position of Strandberg/Missouri Endowed Chair and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

www.alongoldstein.com



Photo © Christian Steiner

Domenico Scarlatti is best remembered for the hundreds of single-movement keyboard sonatas he composed for his pupil the Infanta Maria Bárbara, who married the heir to the Spanish throne in 1728, taking her music master with her from Lisbon to Madrid. Scarlatti's panache and inventiveness is always on show in these compact sonatas, their delicacy and refinement hiding some surprising explorations of unexpected keys, and technical demands such as hand-crossing and chains of sixths and thirds that would have posed some interesting challenges to his clearly talented pupil.

**Domenico
SCARLATTI**
(1685–1757)

Complete Keyboard Sonatas Vol. 24

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|----|-------------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Sonata in C major, K.159/L.104/P.418 | 2:21 |
| 2 | Sonata in C minor, K.11/L.352/P.67 | 3:09 |
| 3 | Sonata in G major, K.424/L.289/P.374 | 3:15 |
| 4 | Sonata in D major, K.299/L.210/P.268 | 3:24 |
| 5 | Sonata in G major, K.210/L.123/P.293 | 4:41 |
| 6 | Sonata in D minor, K.1/L.366/P.57 | 2:12 |
| 7 | Sonata in B flat major, K.273/L.398/P.174 | 4:46 |
| 8 | Sonata in G minor, K.196/L.38/P.244 | 3:07 |
| 9 | Sonata in D minor, K.120/L.215/P.146 | 3:29 |
| 10 | Sonata in B minor, K.498/L.350/P.367 | 5:58 |
| 11 | Sonata in E major, K.264/L.466/P.308 | 5:09 |
| 12 | Sonata in A minor, K.383/L.134/P.269 | 2:56 |
| 13 | Sonata in E minor, K.198/L.22/P.132 | 2:50 |
| 14 | Sonata in G major, K.324/L.332/P.285 | 5:23 |
| 15 | Sonata in A major, K.279/L.468/P.306 | 6:08 |
| 16 | Sonata in C major, K.465/L.242/P.406 | 2:48 |
| 17 | Sonata in F minor, K.187/L.285/P.145 | 4:14 |
| 18 | Sonata in G major, K.235/L.154/P.172 | 4:34 |
| 19 | Sonata in E flat major, K.508/L.19/P.516 | 5:19 |

Alon Goldstein, Piano

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Playing Time
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