

Luca Delle Donne

Luca Delle Donne began piano studies at the age of six. He obtained his Diploma at the Giuseppe Tartini State Conservatory of Trieste with full marks, honours and a special mention under the guidance of Lorenzo Baldini, and his Master's degree in piano interpretation with Gabriele Vianello. He has also participated in masterclasses with acclaimed artists such as Philippe Entremont, Claudius Tanski, Franco Scala and the legendary Trio di Trieste. Delle Donne has performed throughout Europe and America, and has undertaken several tours across China and Japan. He has given solo recitals, worked with chamber ensembles alongside renowned musicians, and with orchestras. Alongside his work teaching and giving masterclasses in Italy he has been invited to sit on the juries of numerous international competitions, and is the co-founder of Festival Internazionale 'Primavera Beethoveniana'.

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Emmanuele Baldini

Emmanuele Baldini was born in Trieste, Italy. After studies in his hometown, he furthered his violin training in Geneva, Salzburg and Berlin, studying conducting with Isaac Karabtschovsky and Frank Shipway. From an early age, Baldini garnered prizes from countless international competitions, and has performed as a soloist or recitalist across the globe. He has performed in all the major European concert halls, in addition to those in Latin America and especially in Brazil, where he has lived since 2005. Following a highly successful career as a violinist, Baldini has embarked on new musical ventures as a conductor. He founded the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo (OSESP) Quartet, and has collaborated with internationally renowned artists such as Maria João Pires, Jean-Philippe Collard and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet. Baldini has been concertmaster of the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, the Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala di Milano and the Orchestra del Teatro 'Giuseppe Verdi' di Trieste, and since 2005 has been concertmaster of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. As of 2017, he is the musical director of the Orquesta de Cámara de Valdivia in Chile.

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Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari DREAMS AND DRAMA

VIOLIN SONATAS NOS. 1-3

Emmanuele Baldini, Violin
Luca Delle Donne, Piano



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Ermanno
WOLF-FERRARI
(1876–1948)

Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor, Op. 1 (1895) **25:59**

- ❶ I. Sostenuto – Allegro appassionato quasi presto 10:02
- ❷ II. Lento senza tempo – A tempo di Adagio 7:29
- ❸ III. Sostenuto – Allegro ma non troppo e con spirito 8:28

Violin Sonata No. 2 in A minor, Op. 10 (1901) **18:32**

- ❹ I. Appassionato 9:39
- ❺ II. Recitativo: Adagio – Sostenuto con amore, semplicemente 8:53

Violin Sonata No. 3 in E major, Op. 27 (1943) **26:16**

- ❻ I. Allegro moderato 6:27
- ❼ II. Andantino con innocenza 4:04
- ❽ III. Agitato con passione 7:29
- ❾ IV. Allegro molto con fuoco più allegro del primo tempo 8:16

Emmanuele Baldini, Violin
Luca Delle Donne, Piano

Ermanno WOLF-FERRARI (1876–1948)
Violin Sonatas Nos. 1–3

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari was the son of a German painter, August Wolf, and a Venetian mother, Emilia Ferrari, and was born in in Venice in 1876. In his early years he intended to be a painter rather than a musician, and in order to do so studied not only in Venice but in Rome, at the Accademia di Belle Arti, and Munich, where he

began studying music with Josef Rheinberger. He continued his musical education in 1892 at the Munich Akademie der Tonkunst, but returned to Venice in 1895.

During this period he came under the wing of Arrigo Boito, and met Verdi. His first performed opera was *Cenerentola*, but it was

a failure, and Wolf-Ferrari decided to return to Munich. The work was given successfully in 1902 in Bremen, and this set a pattern: for a long time his music was much better received in Germany than in Italy. Nevertheless, the success of his cantata *La Vita nuova* not only brought him considerable fame in Italy and abroad, being performed more than 500 times, but won him a post at the Liceo Musicale in Venice, which he occupied from 1903 to 1909. He was subsequently able to live almost entirely from composition, and while he continued to live in Munich, returned frequently to his native city. During this period he concerned himself with writing operas on plays by Goldoni, and they brought him substantial international recognition. The First World War changed things, however, and because of the composer's mixed heritage, he had to seek refuge in Zurich. His compositional output diminished enormously (though he did finish *Gli amanti sposi* in 1916), and he only really resumed his work in the 1920s, when a new, darker edge became apparent (for example in the opera *Sly*, from 1927). From 1939 he took up the position of professor of composition at the Salzburg Mozarteum, and then in 1946 moved once again to Zurich, before returning for the last time to his native city of Venice, where he died in 1948.

While his reputation still rests on his operas, and most of all *Il segreto di Susanna* (first staged in 1909), Wolf-Ferrari was a more than able composer of instrumental music, and his output includes a string sextet, a *Sinfonia da Camera*, two string quartets, two string trios, two piano trios, a piano quintet and a cello sonata, as well as the three violin sonatas

recorded here. The first two of these works date from earlier in his career (1895 and 1901), while the third is a late piece, written in 1943.

The *Sonata No. 1 in G minor, Op. 1* (1895) shows interesting directions in which the composer might have gone had he continued to write primarily instrumental music. In its mercurially rhapsodic first movement, *Sostenuto – Allegro appassionato quasi presto*, one can certainly detect the long shadows of Mendelssohn and Brahms, but Wolf-Ferrari's own style is also very clearly present, with its long-breathed melodies and constant chromatic flow. The double-stopping in the very final bars is a particularly original and striking touch. The second movement, *Lento senza tempo – A tempo di Adagio*, in the dominant key of D major, begins with an evocation of the organ in the piano part, while the muted violin intones a kind of recitative – a haunting opening indeed – before a rather dreamlike section preceding a kind of chorale, following up on the 'organ' prelude, as it were, in which the violin is instructed to sound like a trumpet. Such alternations of mood characterise the rest of the movement, which comes to rest with a reminiscence of the recitative with which it began. The final is marked *Sostenuto – Allegro ma non troppo e con spirito*. While it is dance-like in character, the recurring theme suggests perhaps that it is a reminiscence of the past, alternating as it does with moments of dreamy reflectiveness and considerable drama. It ends with an emphatic coda marked *Presto*.

From six years later comes the *Sonata No. 2 in A minor, Op. 10* (1901). This work, dedicated to the composer's father ('Meinem Vater August Wolf in Venedig gewidmet'), comprises

only two movements, *Appassionato* and *Recitativo: Adagio – Sostenuto con amore, semplicemente*. The opening section of the first is quite remarkable, the violin building up a feeling of almost claustrophobic intensity over a highly agitated piano part, before melting gently into the subsequent section marked *Poco più sostenuto*, which becomes a kind of agitated dance almost suggesting Brahms in Hungarian mode. It mutates into something more genteel and fitting for the salon, and then passes through moments of triumphant exaltation – expressed by means of considerable chromaticism – and then a very brief kind of apotheosis of the dance, snuffed out like a candle. There are deliberate references to Wagner (and in particular *Tristan*) at the febrile beginning of the second movement in the harmony of the piano part, though this does not characterise the rest of the movement, languorous and saturatedly chromatic as it is. It begins, in fact, like a song, but becomes increasingly rhapsodic, alternating between nostalgia and triumphant exaltation.

Sonata No. 3 in E major, Op. 27 was written in 1943, the later period of the composer's life, and it is thus in many senses a very different work. One might expect it to be coloured by the experiences of his life, but in many ways it seems escapist, as though he could no longer quite find his place in the world. It is a substantial composition, in four movements. In the first, *Allegro moderato*,

one sees a fascinating combination of Wolf-Ferrari's habitual rhapsodic development with neo-Bachian figuration, something he was to use in other works of this period. There is no sense of stylistic parody; rather, it is a natural development of his innate sense of counterpoint in combination with a highly Romantic instinct, something evident long beforehand not only in many of the Reger-like passages of the earlier two sonatas, but in the magpie-like borrowings evident in so many of his operas. *Andantino con innocenza* is the marking for the second movement, which in many ways suggests a pastorale, with its skipping figuration interrupted by a serene passage that could be seen either as a brief chorale or an evocation of the hurdy-gurdy.

The third movement, *Agitato con passione*, is a curious, obsessive fantasia, almost suggesting an operatic paraphrase in its changes of mood, as though recollecting the plot of a particularly intense drama. There are, among other things, passages of intense melancholy, a recurring cadenza-like theme and even a passage evoking a carillon. But the final impression is one of fragility, a sense that things cannot go back to being what they once were. The *Sonata* ends with a movement marked *Allegro molto con fuoco più allegro del primo tempo*, an intriguing mixture of neo-Bachian figuration, classical concerto, cadenza included, and, once again, opera. A fascinating and intriguingly enigmatic work, unlike any other in the repertoire.

Ivan Moody