

C.P.E. Bach & Devienne: Flute Concertos

DEVIENNE, F.: Flute Concertos, Vol. 1 - Nos. 1-4 (P. Gallois, Swedish Chamber Orchestra) 8.573230

BACH, C.P.E.: Flute Concertos. Wq. 22 and 166 / DEVIENNE, F.: Flute Concerto No. 2 (Renggli, Chamber Academy Basel) GEN15338

Francois Devienne (1759–1803) was among the most eminent French composers of his time. He also played the flute and bassoon professionally and taught at the Paris Conservatory from about 1790 until he died. Devienne's opera *The Visitation* was performed in Paris from 1792 to 1835 and also staged from St Petersburg to Madrid. His flute concertos were performed in the United States as early as 1802 and his clarinet concertos as early as 1803 by the St Cecilia Society of Charleston. American flutist William Montgomery did his doctoral thesis on Devienne in the mid-1970s and probably knows his life and works better than anyone else.

In the years just after Mozart was commissioned to write some "easy" flute concertos, Devienne was producing these hard ones. His first four were written in 1782, 1783, 1784, and some time in the late 1780s. Patrick Gallois plays these works on a modern instrument with a very stylish sound plus a large measure of gusto applied to all the difficulties. The Swedish Chamber Orchestra has 38 members and the sound here creates the spacious effect of a full orchestra. Devienne thins and thickens his scoring so that there is a great variety of texture, making these finely-wrought display pieces well worth hearing. Concerto 4 is among the best in Devienne's large output.

CPE Bach's stormy flute concertos in D minor (1747) and A minor (1750) are joined by Devienne's second in a program from some fine Swiss players. Felix Renggli's approach is less inflected and he plays with a slightly more luscious sound than Gallois. He also includes three cadenzas written by Heinz Holliger. The orchestra is smaller and the ensemble sound is slightly closer and more vivid. Both programs make a fine choice if you wish to hear important 18th Century flute works from two representative composers. © 2015 American Record Guide

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