

CLASSICAL GUITAR
FEBRUARY 2013

DOMENICO SCARLATTI - 13 SONATAS

SCARLATTI: Sonatas K.175, K.490, K.225, K.384,
K.391, K.198, K.478, K.322, K.380, K.208, K.209,
K.213, K.27

Marcos Diaz

Opera Tres CD 1046-ope

My long-standing inability to think of Scarlatti sonatas under anything other than their obsolete Longo numbers has the pleasing side-effect of ensuring that the contents of recordings such as this 2012 offering from Marcos Diaz come as a complete surprise. Had it been otherwise, I'd have known before Diaz struck the first note that he was treading a path mostly well-known to guitarists past and present, to the extent that three of his choices also appear in the set of nine Scarlatti arrangements published in two volumes by Carlos Barbosa-Lima back in 1971. Not that there's anything wrong with this. Although by no means first on the scene, Barbosa-Lima comes from a time when the most guitar-friendly fruits of the Scarlatti legacy were still ripe for the picking. Nowadays, were down to those few remaining items that can just about be crammed onto the fretboard and, given that they work at all, are the exclusive province of the prodigiously able.

But let it also be emphasized that Diaz is in no sense giving himself an easy ride. Unless there are exceptions I've overlooked, the very act of transferring Scarlatti's writing from its keyboard origins nudges the technical requirement up by several notches. It thus follows that a performance of Scarlatti on guitar that manages to sound sprightly, poignant and intricate without ever becoming exhausting is the product of a player fully on top of his brief. And it should also go on record that, although clearly a skilled practitioner of ornamentation both single-string and cross-string, Diaz resists the ever-present temptation to lay it on too thick in the less dense passages. It all makes for a thoroughly agreeable 56'11", Gerardo Acuña's ten-page treatise on Scarlatti sonatas and related issues emerging as a worthy addendum. And for the benefit of fellow sufferers from Kirkpatrick-blindness, the sonatas also present in Barbosa-Lima are L.79, L.483 and L.23.

Paul Fowles

Classical Guitar – England