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Eberl, Anton: Keyboard Sonatas w/ Luca Quintavalle on a Paul McNulty fortepiano

Brilliant Classics Website: <https://www.brilliantclassics.com/articles/e/eberl-complete-piano-sonatas/>

A Viennese contemporary of Mozart and Beethoven, praised by Haydn and Gluck, and forerunner of Chopin and Liszt: the unique voice of Anton Eberl in new, historically informed studio recordings.

Born in 1765, the same year as Mozart, Anton Eberl also displayed great musical talent from an early age. Only his father's bankruptcy saved him from a legal career, however, and he threw himself into the world of music with such success that even during their own lifetimes pieces of Eberl appeared under Mozart's name. The earliest of these (published at least 14 times as Mozart's, never as Eberl's) was a set of variations on Ignaz Umlauf's *Zu Steffen sprach im Traume*, one of Mozart's favourite teaching pieces.

After Mozart's death Eberl made concert tours with his widow Constanze and her sister Aloysia Lange, accomplished sopranos both, and became director of music at the court of the Russian royal family in St Petersburg. Having returned to Vienna, he had a Symphony in E flat performed at the same concert as the premiere of Beethoven's 'Eroica' – and contemporary audiences preferred Eberl's work! Yet his name rather died with him, in 1807, and so it has been left to modern performers such as Luca Quintavalle to revive Eberl for a new generation of listeners.

He was highly regarded in his time as a composer for theatre, but most of his operas are now lost, and his largest surviving body of work is written for keyboard. These seven piano sonatas by themselves should restore his name to a senior rank of Viennese composers around the turn of the 18th century. Eberl made uncommonly ambitious use of minor-key tonalities for his time; there are two G minor sonatas of which the second, Op.39, probably counts as his masterpiece, for its fiery inspiration and breadth of expression.

Luca Quintavalle's second appearance on Brilliant Classics, after a well-received collection of harpsichord suites and sonatas by Barriere and de Bury (BC95428), reviewed by MusicWeb International: 'This repertoire is served very well by Luca Quintavalle who delivers energetic and stylish performances... Considering the

importance of the repertoire and the quality of music and interpretation this production deserves the label of Recording of the Month.'

Anton Eberl was born in Vienna June 13, 1765 and was one of the most renowned piano virtuosos and composers of his time, standing comparison with Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Eberl was even "one of Beethoven's most dangerous rivals" (as Anton Schindler wrote) and in April 1805 Eberl's Symphony Op.33 was played at the concert in which Beethoven's "Eroica" was heard for the first time and public and critics preferred Eberl's one.

Eberl's seven Piano Sonatas differ strongly from Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven and show a more romantic idiom. His compositions have some common stylistic elements coming from the Mannheim School, the note-repetitions of the melody and his trade-mark crossing of hands.

The instrument heard on this new recording is a copy of a Walter piano of 1805, build by Paul McNulty. Pianist and harpsichordist Luca Quintavalle made already a highly successful recording for Brilliant Classics with keyboard music by De Bury and Barrière: "Recording of the Month" (Musicweb), 5-star review in Early Music, "This is the most impressive harpsichord recording I've heard in years" (Klassik.com).