

Domenico  
**SCARLATTI**

**Complete Keyboard Sonatas Vol. 27**

**Sergio Gallo, Piano**



## Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) Complete Sonatas Vol. 27

(Guiseppe) Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples, Italy, on 26 October 1685, and died in Madrid, Spain, on 23 July 1757. Bach and Handel were also born in 1685, and all three composers revelled in the new world of sound emerging in the late Baroque period. The gradual rise of German music as a dominant force in Europe is illustrated by the German nationality of both Bach and Handel.

Nevertheless, Italian music, especially opera, was still highly significant throughout Scarlatti's lifetime and his youth was spent continuing his father Alessandro's success in the Neapolitan operatic style. At least 13 operas, written principally in Naples and Rome, are an important part of his earlier output that also included cantatas and much church music written as part of *maestro di cappella* appointments. Handel eventually settled in England, and it is interesting to conjecture how English music might have fared if Scarlatti's possible plans to travel there in 1719 had not been disrupted by the failure of one of his patrons, James Stuart, 'The Old Pretender', to take the English throne.

An appointment to the Royal Chapel in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1719, and as teacher of music to Princess Maria Barbara, heralded major changes in Scarlatti's circumstances as Maria Barbara subsequently married into the Spanish royal family, becoming Queen in 1746. Scarlatti was domiciled in Spain from 1729 until his death in 1757, receiving various royal appointments and honours. Marriage to Maria Caterina in 1728, with whom he had six children, and to Anastasia in 1741, with whom he had another four, ensured he equalled his father's legacy of ten children.

During Scarlatti's Portuguese and Spanish years, he turned to keyboard composition, writing hundreds of harpsichord sonatas with great success. Like Handel, who in later years turned to writing oratorios with equal success, Scarlatti had found his métier.

Scarlatti's permanent employment by Portuguese monarch João V in 1719 included teaching music and harpsichord at court. Subsequently, the number of

Scarlatti's sonatas increased markedly, reaching around 555 at his death, mostly in manuscript only and bound in volumes that challenged later musicologists to establish their exact chronology.

Word of Scarlatti's keyboard works gradually spread throughout Europe following the publication of 30 sonatas (entitled *Essercizi*) in London around 1738. His sonatas were published intermittently in groups during the 19th century, with Ricordi publishing perhaps the first comprehensive edition of most of them from 1906–10 edited by Alessandro Longo. Ralph Kirkpatrick's chronological ordering of the sonatas (K numbers) during the 1950s is still in use today, and Kirkpatrick's scholarly editions, in particular, removed the pianistic editing of previous publications.

Scarlatti's sonatas offer a treasure trove of original musical thinking. His apparent fondness for the old modal system then being replaced by modern major-minor tonality is sometimes seen as a factor in his often discordant and chromatic harmonies. Modal folk music of the Iberian Peninsula where most of his later sonatas were written was also an influence. Research indicates that those sonatas numbered up to around K.100 were composed when he was unsettled and still travelling extensively around Europe. Later Kirkpatrick numbers coincide with his employment in Portugal and Spain.

Performing harpsichord music successfully on today's pianos challenges players to ensure the intricate part-writing and general sonic world of Baroque music is maintained as closely as possible.

### 1 Sonata in G minor, K.12/L.489/P.68

Both this and the *Sonata, K.15* were published amongst Scarlatti's 30 *Essercizi* in London around 1738, enhancing his reputation. *K.12* scurries along in breathless anticipation with motifs involving sixths and octaves, and crushed note ornamentation for percussive effects.

### 2 Sonata in E minor, K.15/L.374/P.71

The gentle, unhurried three-in-a-bar rhythm is coupled

with melodically shaped, elegant part-writing between the hands.

**③ Sonata in A minor, K.36/L.245/P.91**

This also displays three-in-a-bar delicately wrought, translucent part-writing. Long melodically inclined passages contain delicate tracery.

**④ Sonata in B flat major, K.42/L.S36/P.120 (Minuet)**

This highly polished dance movement, with counterpoint between the hands, could possibly have been paired with another more substantial movement.

**⑤ Sonata in C minor, K.48/L.157/P.87**

Another very refined triple time work, the arrestingly smooth, stepwise quaver motif alternates between treble and bass with hand crossing in characteristic Scarlatti fashion. Also characteristic are the reiterated phrases, providing added emphasis.

**⑥ Sonata in F major, K.59/L.71/P.22**

Written in binary form, as are most of these sonatas, the thematic material of this brief work remains unapologetically in the right hand throughout.

**⑦ Sonata in G minor, K.76/L.185/P.23**

This short dance-like movement introduces humorous touches at the end of each half, where a helter-skelter flourish might resemble the dancers bowing and curtsying.

**⑧ Sonata in C major, K.86/L.403/P.122**

An expansive, expressively lyrical sonata, the work is densely populated with suspended melodic dissonances that give added harmonic richness to the contrapuntal texture.

**⑨ Sonata in G minor, K.88/L.36/P.8**

This very expressive sectional composition comprises a *Grave* introduction followed by a smooth flowing *Andante* in 3/8 time, a brisk *Allegro* in 2/4 and a gentle *Minuet*. Occasionally the player has to complete some of the harmonies according to the figured bass, a commonplace feature in Scarlatti's day.

**⑩ Sonata in F major, K.106/L.437/P.197**

By 1719 Scarlatti was undertaking duties for the Portuguese and subsequently Spanish royal families. Such a charming, simple work may have been written for teaching purposes at court although its musical excellence still shines through.

**⑪ Sonata in C minor, K.116/L.452/P.111**

This exuberant work is altogether more technically demanding with challenging treble to bass leaps for the left hand and rapid repeated notes, all Scarlatti hallmarks.

**⑫ Sonata in A flat major, K.130/L.190/P.272**

A sprightly quaver movement in 3/8 time is encased in a structure with many consecutive sixths and thirds to be negotiated by the performer with an air of confidence.

**⑬ Sonata in G major, K.144/P.316**

Marked *cantabile*, each half builds from simple melodic eloquence to ornate richness and chromaticism. This is undoubtedly one of Scarlatti's most touching emotional gems.

**⑭ Sonata in G major, K.152/L.179/P.114**

The brilliance of G major helps to engender a bright mood which is further enhanced by the robust rhythms and many rapid repeated notes emphasising the three-in-a-bar lilt.

**⑮ Sonata in C major, K.165/L.52/P.292**

This simple and elegant work could have provided easy instructional material for Scarlatti's teaching at court. Some trademark chromaticisms ensure the musical interest.

**⑯ Sonata in C major, K.157/L.405/P.391**

Full of fun, the sonata bounces along with quirky twists and turns involving seeming wrong notes, odd intervals and syncopations. Humour is paramount.

**⑰ Sonata in B flat major, K.172/L.S40/P.313**

This big, rollicking, rhythmically-driven sonata in 6/8 time has a crystal-clear structure that moves to F major in the first half and returns determinedly to B flat major in the second. Such clarity helps bind this expansive work together.

**⑱ Sonata in B flat major, K.189/L.143/P.257**

Another ebullient piece, the commencing bars exhibit some contrapuntal writing which rapidly gives way to Scarlatti's familiar right-hand intricacies and left-hand accompaniment figuration. Arresting rhythmical effects add momentum.

**⑲ Sonata (Fuga) in D minor**

(MSS FF 232 and KK 96, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna)

Kirkpatrick refers to this and the next work as 'attributed

to Scarlatti'. Although the fugue is by no means as rigorous as those of Bach, Scarlatti's idiomatic keyboard writing still gives listeners a strong impression of counterpoint by means of his creative keyboard colouring.

**[20] Sonata in G minor 'Come ti pare, e piace'**

(MS KK 96, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna)

More strictly contrapuntal than the previous work, Scarlatti cleverly builds momentum towards a rather

splendid *Tierce de Picardie* final cadence in G major.

**[21] Raccolta musicale di sonate per cembalo solo a cura di G.U. Haffner, Vol. 2 – Sonata No. 5 in C major**

There are also some questions about the provenance of Scarlatti's authorship here, but the work shows undoubted musical excellence, bustling with technical challenges and brilliant keyboard writing.

**Rodney Smith**



*Photo by David Cheshier*

**Sergio Gallo**

A Steinway Artist, Sergio Gallo specialises in the repertoire of the Romantic period. He has also championed the work of composers from Brazil, the nation of his birth. Gallo has recorded several acclaimed albums for the Eroica, Naxos, Grand Piano and Quartz labels, with recent releases critically acclaimed by *BBC Music Magazine*, *Gramophone* and *American Record Guide*. In 2011 he won the Global Music Award of Excellence for his album, *Mostly Villa-Lobos: 20th Century Piano Music from the Americas*. Gallo has performed with orchestras worldwide, and his work has been regularly played on international classical music radio outlets. Gallo is the winner of concerto competitions of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and of the University Symphony in Santa Barbara. He was the recipient of a grant from the Henry Cowell Incentive Funds at the American Music Center in New York to record works by that composer, with the subsequent recording featuring on *The Piano Matters* with David Dubal on WWFM. Gallo twice toured North Dakota with a Challenge America Fast-Track Grant award from the National Endowment for the Arts. He holds the Diplôme d'Excellence from the Conservatoire Européen de Musique de Paris, a Postgraduate Certificate from the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, a Master of Music and Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati, and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Gallo resides in the US where he is professor of piano performance at Georgia State University in Atlanta, and is on the affiliated artist staff of the Rocky Ridge Music Academy in Estes Park, Colorado. Sergio Gallo is represented by Price Rubin & Partners.

**[www.priceattractions.com/sergio-gallo-piano](http://www.priceattractions.com/sergio-gallo-piano)**

Domenico Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas are among the most original of the 18th century, especially in their use of often discordant and chromatic harmonies. From the virtuoso *Essercizi* (K.12 and 15) to the touching cantabile eloquence of the *Sonata in G major, K.144*, most of the repertoire on this album consists of lesser-known works incorporating elements of dance forms from Spain and Portugal. The last three pieces, attributed to Scarlatti, are especially intriguing. They include a world premiere recording of the colourful *Sonata in D minor*, and the *Sonata No. 5 in C major* which ends the programme with a vivid display of musical fireworks.

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<p><b>1</b> Sonata in G minor, K.12/L.489/P.68 3:36</p> <p><b>2</b> Sonata in E minor, K.15/L.374/P.71 3:15</p> <p><b>3</b> Sonata in A minor, K.36/L.245/P.91 2:47</p> <p><b>4</b> Sonata in B flat major, K.42/L.S36/ P.120 1:38</p> <p><b>5</b> Sonata in C minor, K.48/L.157/P.87 3:42</p> <p><b>6</b> Sonata in F major, K.59/L.71/P.22 2:13</p> <p><b>7</b> Sonata in G minor, K.76/L.185/P.23 2:14</p> <p><b>8</b> Sonata in C major, K.86/L.403/P.122 6:32</p> <p><b>9</b> Sonata in G minor, K.88/L.36/P.8 9:08</p> <p><b>10</b> Sonata in F major, K.106/L.437/P.197 4:26</p> <p><b>11</b> Sonata in C minor, K.116/L.452/P.111 3:52</p> <p><b>12</b> Sonata in A flat major, K.130/L.190/ P.272 3:27</p> <p><b>13</b> Sonata in G major, K.144/P.316 5:11</p> <p><b>14</b> Sonata in G major, K.152/L.179/P.114 2:38</p>	<p><b>15</b> Sonata in C major, K.165/L.52/P.292 4:31</p> <p><b>16</b> Sonata in C major, K.157/L.405/P.391 3:32</p> <p><b>17</b> Sonata in B flat major, K.172/L.S40/ P.313 5:30</p> <p><b>18</b> Sonata in B flat major, K.189/L.143/ P.257 4:12</p> <p><b>19</b> Sonata (Fuga) in D minor (MSS FF 232 and KK 96, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna) * 2:33</p> <p><b>20</b> Sonata in G minor 'Come ti pare, e piace' (MS KK 96, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna) 3:50</p> <p><b>21</b> Raccolta musicale di sonate per cembalo solo a cura di G.U. Haffner, Vol. 2 – Sonata No. 5 in C major 4:12</p>
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\* WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

**Sergio Gallo, Piano**

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