

Tango Seasons (Capella Gabetta)

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Piazzolla on Baroque period instruments? I was somewhat sceptical before slipping the CD into the player, but my doubts were quickly swept away by these swaggering, gritty accounts of the tanguero's *Four Seasons in Buenos Aires*. Indeed, the strings' bite and slightly edgy tone sounds stylistically apposite. I also find Roberto Molinelli's well-wrought and respectful arrangements preferable to the interventionist recompositions of Leonid Desyatnikov recorded by Kremer (Nonesuch, 5/00) and others. Molinelli adds subtle polyphonic detail to bolster rhythmic momentum, and even the few neo-Baroque touches – like the brief harpsichord solo he interpolates near the beginning of 'Winter' – give off a faint whiff of psychedelia that's not out of place in these works from the late '60s.

Mario Stefano Pietrodarchi's bandoneón serves as an anchor for the ensemble and his solos are arrestingly expressive – listen, say, to how he makes his instrument weep at 1'17" in 'Autumn'. But the spotlight is firmly trained on Andrés Gabetta, and the Argentinian violinist really digs in, playing with a fearlessness that was a hallmark of Piazzolla's own interpretative style. His Vivaldi is equally incendiary; and while we're fairly inundated with high-octane, period-instrument recordings of these Op 8 concertos, Gabetta's still feels vital. He favours very fast tempos in the outer movements, but as they have the feeling of one-to-a-bar, they don't feel at all rushed. He can also be extremely free with the tempo, often going to extremes in order to bring the music's imagery to life, as he does in the drunken celebration of the opening *Allegro* of 'Autumn'. What's most remarkable, perhaps, is how fresh and spontaneous everything sounds: these may be studio recordings but they convey the frisson of a live performance. Mention must be made, too, of the excellence of the Cappella Gabetta, who follow their leader every step of the way, as well as of the marvellous physicality of the recorded sound.

Estate Reloaded, Molinelli's rewrite of the final movement of Vivaldi's 'Summer' in the *tango nuevo* style (with a snippet or two of Piazzolla snuck in), is a clever and satisfying encore.

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(12) Concerti for Violin and Strings, '(Il) cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione'

(Las) Cuatro Estaciones porteñas, 'The Four Seasons'

Estate Reloaded

Gramophone Print



Print Edition