

PRISTINE  
AUDIO

|                                       |       |      |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------|
| 1: Sonata in G major                  | KK124 | 2:09 |
| 2: Sonata in G minor (Pastoral)       | KK8   | 1:58 |
| 3: Sonata in C major                  | KK159 | 1:21 |
| 4: Sonata in F minor                  | KK462 | 3:39 |
| 5: Sonata in A major (Barcarolle)     | KK129 | 4:01 |
| 6: Sonata in F major                  | KK17  | 2:48 |
| 7: Sonata in F minor                  | KK519 | 1:33 |
| 8: Sonata in B minor                  | KK377 | 1:34 |
| 9: Sonata in D major (Tempo di Ballo) | KK430 | 2:29 |
| 10: Sonata in F sharp minor           | KK447 | 1:21 |
| 11: Sonata in D major                 | KK397 | 3:02 |
| 12: Sonata in E minor (The Farewells) | KK206 | 4:14 |
| 13: Sonata in C sharp minor           | KK247 | 3:45 |
| 14: Sonata in E major                 | KK20  | 1:25 |
| 15: Sonata in G major (The Bells)     | KK328 | 3:25 |
| 16: Sonata in G minor                 | KK450 | 1:54 |
| 17: Sonata in E flat major            | KK193 | 2:28 |
| 18: Sonata in E major (Procession)    | KK380 | 4:33 |
| 19: Sonata in F major                 | KK107 | 2:09 |
| 20: Sonata in F major                 | KK6   | 1:30 |

Originally released in 1934 as 6 HMV 78s : DB4960 - DB4965 in a limited edition of 500 albums.

Transfer and digital remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, August 2005.

Titles shown are as given in the programme notes written by Wanda Landowska.  
Matrix numbers: 2L.A5-III, 2L.A12-II, 2L.A6-I, 2L.A11-III, 2L.A10-I, 2L.A8-II,  
2L.A13-II, 2L.A15-I, 2L.A16-II, 2L.A14-II, 2L.A7-II, 2L.A9-III

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# D. SCARLATTI

PRISTINE  
AUDIO

## THE SCARLATTI SOCIETY RECORDINGS 20 HARPSICHORD SONATAS WANDA LANDOWSKA (HMV, 1934)



# WANDA LANDOWSKA

## THE SCARLATTI SOCIETY RECORDINGS

To say that Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1754) was prolific in his compositions for harpsichord is perhaps an understatement. We know of 555 sonatas for the instrument, most of them written in pairs to contrast and compliment each other. In this recording, however, Wanda Landowska chose freely from the entire canon to select the twenty sonatas presented here, writing in her notes:

*From among the sonatas which seem to me the most beautiful I have chosen those, which grouped according to relationship and following my fancy, form a sequence and complete narrative of love and mad adventure.*

*It has been hard to decide which sonatas to take and which to omit from this world of wonders. I console myself with the thought that those which I have omitted will soon have their revenge. And as there are nearly 600 sonatas I shall be able to vary almost infinitely the magical chain of Domenico Scarlatti's enchantments.*

Wanda Landowska Wanda Landowska was born in Poland in 1879, lived for many years in France before fleeing the Nazis in 1940, and eventually settled in the USA until her death in 1959. At a time when the harpsichord was an almost forgotten relic of the past and playing styles were very much late-romantic, she almost single-handedly resurrected the instrument, and the precise playing style required by this music.

These recordings, originally released as a limited edition of just 500 sets, are perhaps the highlight of her European recording career. Clearly Landowska had a huge input in the recording - she was, after all, one of the foremost experts in the field - and contributed not just performances, but (as we have read) made her own personal selection of pieces, and wrote the delightful sleeve notes.

Of the Sonata in E minor (The Farewells), she writes:

*This is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful and significant sonatas. At first it appears to lack balance because Scarlatti introduces a love theme and then interrupts it suddenly with a theme of energetic decision. But these mystifying interruptions and the opposition of the two themes are explained by their arrangement and alternation. They emphasize the accents of the drama which is about to unfold.*

*In fact, it is a little opera that we are witnessing. The first bars create the dry heavily-scented atmosphere of the piece. In the silence a woman's voice is raised, sustained by arpeggios on a guitar. We have scarcely heard this tender entreaty than it fades away. A decided theme springs up: it is a man's footstep resounding on the pavement. This theme is in its turn interrupted. A silence...then once more the woman's voice is raised, entreating and voluptuous. The theme of decision mingles with the more and more passionate accents of the woman. Their dialogue becomes a struggle in which the theme of decision triumphs: Fate ordains that the man shall depart. Again the footsteps are heard, near at first then fading away - an effect of perspective of which Scarlatti was particularly fond. The woman remains alone. The last bars, which are a pathetic summary of this tragedy, express the poignant farewells of the deserted woman.*

Fanciful stuff? Perhaps - but clearly she has a strong involvement with the music! Of the selection offered below she is brief and to the point:

*The rapid and fiery sonata in F minor passes like a flash of lightning.*

Landowska's individuality shines out through all of these recordings - a review of an earlier transfer of her Scarlatti recordings states that her "playing has more character than most other harpsichord players put together". Hear it for yourself in these wonderful new transfers.

NOTES BY ANDREW ROSE - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)