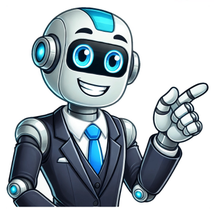
I'm not a bot



Tomaso Albinoni I am not 100% sure but I think the first time I heard Albinoni’s Adagio in G Minor was in the late 70’s or early 80’s when I was a child watching TV commercials. Back then it was especially popular to use classical music as backdrop for TV ads, at least here in Austria. Vivaldi’s Four Seasons for a coffee brand, some local insurance company (ab)used Mozart for their life insurance package – what the Adagio was supposed to peddle, I don’t remember. I do remember though, that this haunting piece somehow grabbed me and I couldn’t get it out of my head and would constantly whistle and hum the melody anytime I had seen the TV spot. Over time, after the ad got canceled I forgot about the piece, until… A few years later – enter Yngwie Malmsteen. Both hailed as a guitar god and condemned as an egomanical, repetitive shredder – the swedish guitar virtuoso is a controversial figure. In his “Icarus Dream Suite Op. 4” I experienced a flashback when I heard the beloved TV commercial melody again. (00:53 minutes into the video clip) Thanks to the liner notes, I learned that the melody was a quote and came from the Adagio in G Minor by Italian Baroque composer Tomaso Albinoni. Tomaso Albinoni? Who’s that? How come I had never heard of Albinoni before? Why are other Baroque composers like Bach, Vivaldi and Händel known and famous and Albinoni, the creator of such a great melody, (relatively) unknown and obscure? It seemed unfair to me, but I found solace in the thought that at the least this great melody had survived and got played. And isn’t the music what matters, anyways? Initially, this article was supposed to end here. My original intention was to feature the Adagio and maybe muse about why a certain piece just speaks to you for a paragraph or two. Imagine my surprise when I came across this during my research: The Adagio in G minor for violin, strings and organ continuo, is a neo-Baroque composition popularly attributed to the 18th-century Venetian master Tomaso Albinoni, but composed by the 20th-century musicologist and Albinoni biographer Remo Giazotto and based on the purported discovery of a manuscript fragment from Albinoni. Source: Wikipedia Not by Albinoni? How can Albinoni’s Adagio NOT be by Albinoni?What’s going on here? The ascription to Albinoni rests upon Giazotto’s purported discovery of a tiny manuscript fragment (consisting of a few opening measures of the melody line and basso continuo portion) from a slow second movement of an otherwise unknown Albinoni trio sonata. According to Giazotto, he obtained the document shortly after the end of World War II from the Saxon State Library in Dresden, which − though its buildings were destroyed in the bombing raids of February and March 1945 by the British and American Air Forces − had evacuated and preserved most of its collection. Source: Wikipedia To me this adds a whole new layer to the piece. Now there’s all those additional questions like: Why didn’t Giazotto claim the composition from the start? Why was he originally only listed as the arranger? What was going through Giazotto’s mind when people referred to his composition as Albinoni’s? What about the mysterious Saxon State Library second-movement fragment? Why is it only a fragment? What happened to the rest? How long will the piece live on as Albinoni’s Adagio before it becomes Giazotto’s Adagio? Irrelevant questions? Maybe… You don’t need to know the answers to enjoy the Adagio and in case you don’t like the Adagio to start with, you definitely couldn’t care less about those questions. And that’s ok, too. However, I’d like to propose that you take one of YOUR favorite pieces and ask some background questions about it. Questions like: What sparked the composer’s creativity? Any unusual background stories behind the piece? How was the initial public reaction? Did the public reaction change over time? If yes, why? Imagine that you are a detective hunting for some information, only that it’s NOT about some crime but for your own enjoyment. When you learn something about the composer, the time period, the place and culture of the piece – you are creating a web of related and inter-connected facts and ideas that will create a richer, more colorful listening experience for you. Also, ask yourself why a piece grabs you? Is it the harmonies? A particular chord change? Maybe a tone color combination in the orchestration?In a more “modern” context this could very well be a certain sound, eg: a semi-distorted guitar lead sound with a touch of delay and phaser. Or some playing techniques and phrasing ideas like bendings or fluid legato articulations… Who knows, not only will you learn a thing (or two) about music history, theory, arranging, etc… you actually might learn something about yourself and what pushes your musical buttons. And that’s a good thing. P.S.: If you are a guitarist, make sure to check out Per-Olov Kindgren’s version. His transcription is very accesible and quite easy to learn. FacebookXRedditEmailWhatsApp Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. In his recent review of Manchester by the Sea, New Yorker critic Anthony Lane posits the following about the film's musical centrepiece: "Should Albinoni's Adagio in G Minor not be banned onscreen?" he asks. "Any piece of music that has been used for Rollerball, Gallipoli, and Flashdance has, by definition, been squeezed dry."That the simple, baroque movement purportedly written in the 18th century by an otherwise little-known Venetian composer lives on as one of the most popular, adaptable and recognizable pieces of classical music — a go-to for emotionally wrought film scores, covered by everyone from the Doors to Yngwie Malmsteen and Lara Fabian — is impressive enough. But the story of Albinoni's Adagio is much more complicated than that. It is, in fact, arguably the biggest fraud in music history.The eldest son of a wealthy paper merchant, Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni was born in Venice in 1671. Showing an early proficiency as a singer and violist, the young Tomaso eventually turned his talents to composition, producing both his first opera and instrumental music collection in 1694. Upon his father's passing in 1709, Albinoni — who referred to himself as a "Dilettante Veneto" — was able to become a full-time musician and composer, conceiving both opera and instrumental compositions until his death in 1751. As his operas were never published, Albinoni was mostly revered for his 99 sonatas, 59 concertos and 9 sinfonias, which were, at the time, compared favourably to contemporaries Corelli and Vivaldi.Following his passing, much of Albinoni's unpublished music made its way to Saxon State Library in Dresden, where it was preserved before being all but completely destroyed in the Allied bombing raids of winter 1945.That same year, the Milanese musicologist Remo Giazotto set out to write a biography of Albinoni and catalogue his remaining works, mining what was left in the Dresden archives. Giazotto published his book, Musico di Violino Dilettante Veneto, soon after and, for all intents and purposes, that would likely have been the last most outside classical circles heard of both subject and biographer.However, four years later Giazotto re-emerged, claiming he had recovered a peice of unpublished Albinoni music from the Saxon State Library: a fragment of a manuscript, likely from the slow movement of a trio sonata or sonata da chiesa in G minor, possibly as part of his Op. 4 set (1708), which consisted of only the basso continuo and six bars of melody.Giazotto asserted he had completed Albinoni's single movement in tribute, copywriting and publishing it in 1958 under his own name with the mellifluous title Adagio in G Minor for Strings and Organ on Two Thematic Ideas and on a Figured Bass by Tomaso Albinoni.Distinct for its descending baseline and earworm-inducing melody, Albinoni's Adagio, as it came to be known, was quick to gain favour with baroque-inclined pop musicians and film music supervisors, who were attracted to the simple topline and minor key gravitas. First appearing as the main theme for Alain Resnais's 1961 film L'année dernière à Marienbad, Adagio became a mainstay in popular culture. Popping up, as Lane points out, in a variety of popular and varied films, commercials and television programs.Notably, unlike other ubiquitous classical pieces, Adagio in G Minor still maintains its copyright, despite Giazotto's original claim of shared authorship. Later on in life, perhaps mindful of the financial implications, Giazotto retracted his story, taking sole credit for the piece. (He died in 1998, meaning Adagio in G Minor will not enter the public domain until 2048, or 2068 in Europe). To this day, Albinoni's fragment has not been produced and no official record of its presence has been found in the collection of the Saxon State Library.With this in mind, perhaps it's best to augment Anthony Lane's plea to the piece's title. Should Albinoni's Adagio in G Minor not be reconceived as simply Adagio in G Minor? Any piece of music that has been used for Rollerball, Gallipoli, and Manchester by the Sea should, by definition, be properly attributed. Tomaso Albinoni is known today for the absolutely gorgeous Adagio in g minor, one of the most popular works from the Italian baroque period. Ironically, though, the adagio was actually composed by Remo Giazotto, in 1945. Giazotto, a musicologist, discovered a fragment of a sonata, which he attributed to Albinoni. Using the theme from that fragment, Giazotto composed the single movement adagio in g minor, scored for organ and strings. This confusion over composer and date does not diminish the quality of the music, though, as this piece remains very popular and often played and recorded.Arranged for Cello and Piano. Published by G Schirmer.Difficulty: A3/4 (Apprentice Rating) Sheet Music Return Policy If you are not satisfied with this item for any reason you may return it for a full refund within 30 days of purchase Unless the music received is defective or has been shipped in error all returned music will be subject to a restocking fee of $2.00 per titleIf you have any questions about this product's warranty or to make a return please contact our Customer Service Department at 8007934334 or email us at Sharserv@Sharmusiccom Italian composer (1671–1751) Tomaso AlbinoniBorn(1671-06-08)June 8, 1671Venice, ItalyDiedJanuary 17, 1751(1751-01-17) (aged 79)Venice, ItalyWorksList of compositions by Tomaso Albinoni Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni (8 June 1671 – 17 January 1751) was an Italian composer of the Baroque era. His output includes operas, concertos, sonatas for one to six instruments, sinfonias, and solo cantatas.[1] While famous in his day as an opera composer, he is known today for his instrumental music, especially his concertos.[2] He is best remembered today for a work called "Adagio in G minor", attributed to him but largely written by Remo Giazotto, a 20th century musicologist and composer, who was a cataloger of the works of Albinoni.[3] Born in Venice, to Antonio Albinoni, a wealthy paper merchant, he studied violin and singing. Relatively little is known about his life, which is surprising, considering his contemporary stature as a composer and the comparatively well-documented period in which he lived. In 1694 he dedicated his Opus 1 to the fellow-Venetian, Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (grand-nephew of Pope Alexander VIII). His first opera, Zenobia, regina de Palmireni, was produced in Venice in 1694. Albinoni was possibly employed in 1700 as a violinist to Charles IV, Duke of Mantua, to whom he dedicated his Opus 2 collection of instrumental pieces. In 1701 he wrote his hugely popular suites Opus 3, and dedicated that collection to Ferdinando de' Medici, Grand Prince of Tuscany.[2] In 1705, he married Margherita Rimondi; Antonino Biffi, the maestro di cappella of San Marco was a witness, and evidently was a friend of Albinoni. Albinoni seems to have no other connection with that primary musical establishment in Venice, however, and achieved his early fame as an opera composer in many cities in Italy, including Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Mantua, Udine, Piacenza, and Naples. During this time, he was also composing instrumental music in abundance: prior to 1705, he mostly wrote trio sonatas and violin concertos, but between then and 1719 he wrote solo sonatas and concertos for oboe.[2] Unlike most contemporary composers, he appears never to have sought a post at either a church or noble court, but then he had independent means and could afford to compose music independently. In 1722, Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, to whom Albinoni had dedicated a set of twelve concertos, invited him to direct two of his operas in Munich. Part of Albinoni's work was lost in World War II with the destruction of the Dresden State Library. As a result, little is known of his life and music after the mid-1720s. Around 1740, a collection of Albinoni's violin sonatas was published in France as a posthumous work, and scholars long presumed that meant that Albinoni had died by that time. However, it appears he lived on in Venice in obscurity; a record from the parish of San Barnaba indicates Tomaso Albinoni died in Venice in 1751, of diabetes mellitus.[4] He was 79 years old. Further information: List of compositions by Tomaso Albinoni Engraving of Italian composers Tomaso Albinoni, Domenico Gizzi (Egizio) and Giuseppe Colla by Pietro Bettelini, after a drawing by Luigi Scotti Most of his operatic works have been lost - either because they never got published or because they were destroyed. However, nine collections of instrumental works were published. These met with considerable success and consequent reprints. He is therefore known more as a composer of instrumental music (99 sonatas, 59 concerti and 9 sinfonie) today. In his lifetime these works were compared favourably with those of Arcangelo Corelli and Antonio Vivaldi. His nine collections published in Italy, Amsterdam, and London were either dedicated to or sponsored by an impressive list of southern European nobility. Albinoni wrote at least fifty operas, of which twenty-eight were produced in Venice between 1723 and 1740. Albinoni himself claimed 81 operas (naming his second-to-last opera, in the libretto, as his 80th).[5][6] In spite of his enormous operatic output, today he is most noted for his instrumental music, especially his oboe concerti (from 12 Concerti a cinque op. 7 and, most famously, 12 Concerti a cinque op. 9). He is the first Italian known to employ the oboe as a solo instrument in concerti (c. 1715, in his op. 7) and publish such works,[7] although earlier concerti featuring solo oboe were probably written by German composers such as Telemann or Händel.[6] In Italy, Alessandro Marcello published his well-known oboe concerto in D minor a little later, in 1717. Albinoni also employed the instrument often in his chamber works and operas. His instrumental music attracted great attention from Johann Sebastian Bach, who never visited Italy but had access to Italian music, particularly when working in Weimar for the ducal court. Bach wrote at least two fugues on Albinoni's themes (Fugue in A major on a theme by Tomaso Albinoni, BWV 950, and Fugue in B minor on a theme by Tomaso Albinoni, BWV 951) and frequently used his basses for harmonic exercises for his pupils. The famous Adagio in G minor, the subject of many modern recordings, is thought by some to be a musical hoax composed by Remo Giazotto. However, a discovery by musicologist Muska Mangano, Giazotto's last assistant before his death, has cast some doubt on that belief. Among Giazotto's papers, Mangano discovered a modern but independent manuscript transcription of the figured bass portion, and six fragmentary bars of the first violin, "bearing in the top right-hand corner a stamp stating unequivocally the Dresden provenance of the original from which it was taken". This provides support for Giazotto's account that he did base his composition on an earlier source.[8] Citations ^ Norwich, John Julius (1990). Oxford Illustrated Encyclopedia Of The Arts. USA: Oxford University Press. pp. 11. ISBN 978-0198691372. ^ a b c Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni at the Encyclopædia Britannica ^ "Tomaso Albinoni: Adagio in G minor". ^ Giazotto, Remo (1945) Tomaso Albinoni : musico di violino dilettante veneto : (1671–1750) : con il catalogo tematico delle musiche per strumenti, 197 esempi musicali e 14 tavole fuori testo; Milano : F.lli Bocca. ^ .Michael Talbot, "Tomaso Albinoni", Grove Music On-line. Oxford Music On-line, (accessed 30 December 2011). ^ a b "Baroque Composers and Musicians: Tomaso Albinoni". ^ George J. Buelow, A history of baroque music, Indiana University Press, 2004, p. 467. ^ Nicola Schneider, "La tradizione delle opere di Tomaso Albinoni a Dresda", tesi di laurea specialistica (Cremona: Facoltà di musicologia dell'Università degli studi di Pavia, 2007): pp. 181–86. Bibliography Eleanor Selfridge-Field, Venetian Instrumental Music, from Gabrieli to Vivaldi. New York, Dover Publications, 1994. ISBN 0-486-28151-5 Michael Talbot: "Tomaso Albinoni", Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed June 25, 2005), (subscription access) Archived 2008-05-16 at the Wayback Machine Franco Rossi: Catalogo Tematico delle composizioni di Tomaso Albinoni Tomo I – Le 12 opere strumentali a stampa – edition "I Solisti Veneti", Padova 2002 Franco Rossi: Catalogo Tematico delle composizioni di Tomaso Albinoni Tomo II – Le opere strumentali manoscritte – Le opere vocali – I libretti – edition "I Solisti Veneti", Padova 2003 Wikimedia Commons has media related to Tomaso Albinoni. Free scores by Albinoni at the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP) Retrieved from " Have you ever heard that hauntingly beautiful piece of classical music that seems to tug at your heartstrings? The one that appears in countless films and emotional moments? That’s likely “Adagio in G Minor,” commonly attributed to Baroque composer Tomaso Albinoni. But what if I told you this famous piece holds one of classical music’s most intriguing mysteries? Let’s dive into the real story behind this emotional masterpiece and discover how to truly appreciate it. Many people believe “Adagio in G Minor” was composed by Tomaso Albinoni, a Venetian Baroque composer. However, the truth is far more fascinating. The piece was actually composed by Italian musicologist Remo Giazotto in the 1940s, following World War II. Giazotto claimed he discovered fragments of Albinoni’s work—just a bass line and a few melody measures—in the bombed ruins of the Dresden State Library in Germany. He published the completed piece in 1958 with the title “Adagio in G Minor for Strings and Organ, based on two themes and a figured bass by Tomaso Albinoni.” Here’s where it gets interesting: the original Albinoni fragment that Giazotto supposedly found has never been revealed to the public. No library records confirm its existence. In fact, music historians now widely believe the piece is entirely Giazotto’s creation, with perhaps minimal (if any) connection to Albinoni. There are even reports that Giazotto admitted toward the end of his life that he had composed the piece himself. This neo-Baroque composition, with its melancholic beauty, has become one of music’s most famous “forgeries”—yet its power remains undeniable regardless of its true composer. Want to experience this piece at its fullest? Here are some tips: Find a quiet moment for deep listening. The slow tempo, gradually building structure, and repeating lament bass line deserve your full attention. Try using headphones in a quiet space to fully immerse yourself. Pay attention to your emotional response. The melody evokes various emotions—love, loss, regret, and hope. Different listeners connect with different aspects depending on their own life circumstances. Notice how the music affects your mood as you listen. Use your imagination. While listening, let your mind wander to personal memories or scenes from films. This piece has soundtracked countless emotional moments in movies and memorial services, making it rich with interpretive possibilities. Compare different versions. Beyond the original strings and organ arrangement, you can find interpretations for piano, guitar, full orchestra, and more. Each brings out different nuances of the composition. The Mystery Factor: The Adagio is sometimes called “music’s greatest mystery” or “the most famous forgery in classical music.” The lingering questions about its true origin add an intriguing layer to each listening experience. A Symbol of Peace: The piece has become deeply connected with themes of war, loss, remembrance, and peace. Perhaps the most moving example occurred during the Bosnian War in 1992, when cellist Vedran Smailović played this piece for 22 consecutive days at a bombing site in Sarajevo to honor 22 citizens killed while waiting in a bread line. This real-life story of music bringing hope amid despair touched hearts worldwide. Cultural Impact: The Adagio’s emotional power has made it a fixture in film scores, television dramas, Olympic performances, and other cultural touchpoints. It’s become the quintessential piece for expressing both profound sadness and transcendent beauty. Whether composed by Albinoni or Giazotto, this piece transcends questions of authorship. As one listener beautifully expressed: “Regardless of whether I was in a happy-go-lucky state of mind, a somber mood, or even a state of ignorance, the familiar melody would force me to halt whatever I was doing and feel a deep sense of emotional intensity.” The Adagio reminds us that sometimes the greatest art emerges from unexpected places—even from the ashes of war or the creative license of a musicologist. Its ability to move us, regardless of its origin story, speaks to music’s remarkable power to connect with our deepest emotions. Next time you hear those opening notes, remember the fascinating tale behind them and allow yourself to be fully present with one of classical music’s most powerful and mysterious creations. #ClassicalMusic #AlbinoniAdagio #MusicHistory #MusicalMysteries #BaroqueMusic #MusicAppreciation Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. 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I can play I want to learn Add to Favorites Adagio in G Minor by Tomaso Albinoni is an early 18th-century piece for solo piano that has become one of the most popular instrumental compositions in the world. Originally composed for string quartet, Adagio in G Minor quickly became recognized for its sensational effect on contemporary audiences. History and Release The composition is said to have been written by Albinoni for a string quartet sometime during or prior to 1722, although the exact date of composition has been a subject of debate among music historians. The piece became widely known after musicologist Remo Giazotto claimed to have discovered it in the State Library in Berlin in 1945. Giazotto claimed it was written as a memorial to Albinoni who had died in 1751 and combined musical themes of Tomaso's with his own. This discovery helped to establish Giazotto's reputation as a music historian. Adagio in G Minor first achieved widespread popularity when it was arranged for full string orchestra by Remo Giazotto in 1958. This adaptation was released by the Suvini-Zerboni record label, and was soon broadcast on radio. Giazotto's evocative arrangement has since become the definitive version of the composition, and has been performed by renowned orchestras and soloists all over the world. Analysis of the Composition from a Music Theory Perspective From a music theory perspective, Adagio in G Minor is a masterful composition that combines both Baroque and Classical techniques. The composition follows a slow three-part form, with a repeated A section and a contrasting B section. The texture is thin and melodic, but Albinoni incorporates a wide range of musical techniques to create a highly emotional soundscape for solo piano. Albinoni makes use of dissonant harmonies, pedal tones and suspensions to create tension, as well as terraced dynamics and descending basslines to encourage a feeling of aching sadness. Albinoni also masterfully utilizes a range of harmonic and modulatory devices to add a layer of complexity and beauty to the piece. He modulates from the key of G minor to D minor at the climax of the piece and then resolves to the tonic at the end—creating a sense of stability and resolution. Why the Piece is so Popular Adagio in G Minor can evoke strong emotional reactions in its listeners and performers alike. Albinoni's skillful use of dissonance creates a sense of tension and longing that many can identify with. Additionally, the piece can be easily adapted to different instrumentation and genres—from jazz to classical—allowing it to be appreciated by nearly everyone. As the piece gained wider exposure, it has been used in the soundtracks of many movies, TV programs, and advertisements. It is often used to evoke sad or romantic themes, and its use as a soundtrack has helped bring the piece to the attention of a wider audience—one that may not have been aware of the composition before. Adagio in G Minor has become one of the most widely-recognized and beloved solo piano compositions in the world due to its emotional depth, evocative harmonies, and amazing adaptability. It is the perfect example of how music can evoke powerful reactions in audiences and create everlasting memories. New features! I can play I want to learn Add to Favorites Publication date: 19. 02. 2023 Skip to content Not many people know that the ‘perfect forgery’ in painting, The Supper at Emmaus, has a musical counterpart: the so-called ‘Adagio by Albinoni.’ In 1937, master forger Han van Meegeren (1889-1947) painted a canvas in the style of the 17th century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer, which he titled Emmausgangers, with the aim of proving that art critics were unable to distinguish spurious from authentic. When unexpectedly large sums were offered for the ‘Vermeer,’ Van Meegeren changed his tactics and decided to keep the deception a secret. Only after World War II did the truth come to light. What does this have to do with the so-called ‘Adagio by Albinoni’? To understand that, we must first turn the spotlight on Italian composer and musicologist Remo Giazotto (1910-1998).Giazotto is best known for the books he published on Albinoni (1945) and Vivaldi (1965). Both studies contain a lot of valuable material, as well as a number of intriguing quotes from historical documents, which on closer examination seem to have completely vanished off the face of the earth. For this reason, Giazotto’s publications are often read with some caution or even distrust by musicologists today. In 1958, Giazotto published his edition of an Adagio in G minor for strings and organ under Albinoni’s name. According to Giazotto, this was a reconstruction he had made on the basis of a bass part and some melodic fragments of an Adagio by Albinoni, which had supposedly been part of a multi-movement composition formerly kept in Dresden. Giazotto claimed that this composition had almost completely gone up in flames during the bombing of Dresden in February of 1945. However, even the fragments that were said to have survived the war proved completely untraceable to other researchers. For this reason, and because of the fact that the extremely sombre Adagio is stylistically very different from Albinoni’s demonstrably authentic works, the British musicologist Michael Talbot—the greatest authority on the Venetian composer’s life and work—concluded in 1990 that the Adagio in any case gives a totally distorted picture of Albinoni and his music. And it is not the first time in music history, by the way, that a composer’s fame rests mainly on a work that is not actually his: in the 19th century, almost the only piece of music known by Alessandro Stradella was the aria ‘Pietà, Signore,’ an aria that was actually composed in 1837 by the Swiss composer Louis Abraham de Niedermeyer.But every disadvantage has its advantage, as goes Johan Cruijff’s famous saying. The worldwide popularity of the Adagio made more and more music lovers curious about the composer and his authentic works. In particular, the beautifully lilting oboe concertos from Albinoni’s Op. 7 (1715) and Op. 9 (1722) have rightly been performed frequently since the 1960s. But given that not even the ‘real’ Albinoni stands among my favourite Italian composers, for more information I refer to Michael Talbot’s book, Tomaso Albinoni: The Venetian Composer and His World (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). And the Adagio? Well, that piece will certainly remain extremely popular as funeral music, whether it is indeed partly by Albinoni or—which is more likely—not at all.The number of recordings of the Adagio is uncountable. The slowest and most solemn recording I know was made by the Berliner Philharmoniker conducted by Herbert von Karajan. While most performances last about seven minutes, Karajan manages to spread it to almost twelve minutes (DGG). A guilty pleasure indeed! Albinoni was a Baroque composer who had a financially rather well-cushioned life, thanks to the shares he inherited in his father’s stationery firm, which manufactured playing cards, among other things. In 1945, the Italian academic Remo Giazotto published a book on Albinoni entitled The Violin Music of the Venetian Dilettante. Albinoni was just one area of expertise for Giazotto. Others included the composers Vivaldi and Busoni, as well as the music of the Baroque and Classical periods in Giazotto’s native Genoa.The academic’s expertise on the life and music of the stationer’s son led him to complete an Albinoni fragment, which he said he had discovered in the Saxon State Library in Dresden, while he was trying to salvage manuscripts after it was bombed in the second World War. This produced what is known as the ‘Albinoni Adagio’, but should surely, at the very least, be called the ‘Albinoni–Giazotto Adagio’. Late on in life, Giazotto changed his story, denying that the piece was based on a fragment of Albinoni’s original composition at all. Instead, he wanted the world to know that he, Giazotto, had written the whole thing himself and Albinoni hadn’t played any part in it. Nevertheless – and whatever the truth – the name ‘Albinoni’s Adagio’ sticks. Recommended RecordingI Solisti Veneti; Claudio Scimone (conductor). Erato: 2292-45557-2. Illustration: Mark Millington