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To Aeneas. Compositions by Tartini, Clementi and Mishory; Gilead Mishory (2016); Neos

Three composers, three centuries, three styles, but only one theme: This spectacular CD features three works which are all conceptionally based on the story of Dido and Aeneas. Both Tartini's Sonata for Violin and Basso Continuo (1731) and Clementi's Piano Sonata, (composed about 90 years later) are both entitled "Didone abbandonata" and written in G minor. They take us on an excursion into the emotional landscapes of the abandoned Dido. In contrast, the newest composition – the five part cycle "To Aeneas" completed by Gilead Mishory in 2015 – focuses on the Trojan hero, his complex feelings and inner conflict between divine mission and his private love for the Carthaginian queen.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the myth of Dido was often set to music, the most well-known being the opera by Henry Purcell. The composer and pianist Mishory, born 1960 in Israel, arranges Tartini's Violin-Sonate for piano solo, and bases his own 30-minute piano piece on this drama, developing it so to say from the male perspective. As with the earlier compositions of Tartini and Clementi, Mishory's work can also be described as program music.

Mishory's very densely composed piece seems to be a sonorous psychogram of the hero, requires the utmost concentration from the listener, compelling one to delve into the drama and experience the conflict first hand. This density rubs off on the two older pieces. Mishory not only fills his own work with an oppressive atmosphere but also masterfully makes the Baroque rhetoric of Tartini and the expressive stylistic language of Clementi come to life on the piano.

It is an artistic examination of a very human theme that remains current today: the drama of two lovers separating told from the viewpoint of the one abandoned and the one who left.

Frank Siebert