Song of the Weekend

By Lee Jackson

From the Lee Jackson Audio Community Discussion Group
(https://www.facebook.com/groups/ljackaudiodiscgroup)

Entry: 20191207 – Adagio in G Minor

_____

This week's "Song of the Weekend" is the Adagio for Strings and Organ in G Minor, from the Apogee Software cult classic, "Rise of the Triad."

The song, better known by its filename, RADAGIO.MID, or just the first part of it (RADAGIO - short for ROTT Adagio), is not a fully original composition of mine. Rather, it is an arrangement of something which has rather dubious origins. Allow me to explain.

I first encountered the song under the guise of a MIDI file of a composition by Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni (1671-1751), a Venetian composer best known for his instrumental works according to the Encyclopædia Britannica. However, the Encyclopædia has the following to say about the Adagio, and I quote:

"Actually, this famed work is not by Albinoni at all. It is a mid-20th century creation by Italian musicologist Remo Giazotto, who claimed to have found a fragment of an Albinoni composition in the archives of a German library. According to Giazotto, the fragment contained only the low-pitched supporting continuo part and a few phrases of the melody itself."

However, despite the Adagio's publication by an Italian publishing house in 1958, the Encyclopædia does go on to state that "even Giazotto's origin story for the Adagio may be a fiction, as no one other than he ever saw this supposed Albinoni fragment whence the few phrases originated."

I am hesitant to do my usual analysis of the finished work this time around, since it would likely take several screens to do so. Instead, let me just hit upon a few high points of what I did.

RADAGIO begins with a bass drum beating out quarter notes while a synth bass pulses away on sixteenth notes at an *allegro* tempo. A string section enters and swirls upward for two bars, leading into a pounding piano solo section slightly reminiscent (I've been told) of Elton John's "Funeral For a Friend." A synth finally introduces the melody, with the piano continuing to play the accompanying parts beneath it in the same frantic mode as before. Another synth announces the transition to the next part of the melody, with the strings taking over for the piano in a more legato mode. The piano finally joins back in at the transition to the final part, trading places back and forth with the strings as the synths continue to finish out the melody toward the loop.

(con't)

And there you have it - RADAGIO, or the Adagio for Strings and Organ in G Minor, call it what you will. A song with an unusual past, and with who knows what kind of future. And now, allow me to give you a link to a recording of my arrangement of the song. I hope you'll enjoy it. Thank you for voting for your "Song of the Weekend!"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Tt13_XvLkI