

Works by Bartók, Beethoven, Waxman & Ysaÿe

Tobias Feldmann, born in Fulda in 1991, has been a prizewinner in several competitions and won the Grand Prize in the 2012 German Music Competition. This disc is one of the benefits of that. The other is the use of a Stradivarius from 1703 that belongs to the German government, which he plays here.

Feldmann is a very good, very nimble violinist; and this recital was obviously programmed to show the breadth of his technique and his comfort in music of different periods, cultures, and genres. Eugene Ysaÿe's Sonata 2 for Solo Violin is the work of a Walloon for a Romanian colleague, George Enesco; Bela Bartok's Solo Violin Sonata is the work of a Hungarian written for an American Jew, Yehudi Menuhin; Beethoven's Violin Sonata 7 is the only work by one of Feldmann's countrymen; and Franz Waxman's Carmen Fantasy is an arrangement made for a Jewish-Russian emigré (Jascha Heifetz) by a Silesian Jew of music by a Frenchman (Bizet) dealing with the story of a Gypsy.

One thing I want to say is that I'm glad that Feldmann plays the quarter-tones in the finale of the Bartok. I have to add, however, that Feldmann only sounds really engaged in the Waxman. This is one of the best performances of this piece that I have heard, and it is because Feldmann obviously relishes every phrase. He shows here that he is a master of the virtuoso repertoire, where temperament and individual style count for everything, and he lavishes this piece with those. Feldmann is an excellent violinist, and he is still young, so he has plenty of time to mature as a musician. Perhaps 10 or 15 years hence, he will have something interesting to say in the other three works in this program. © 2014 American Record Guide

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