

Changing Colors

The playing is by two winners of the 2010 Deutscher Musikwettbewerb. As you may guess, fingers and timing are flawless. They play the Brahms so fast that most possibilities of Brahmsian rubato go by the board. It is a matter-of-fact interpretation lasting 26 minutes—everyone else takes upwards of 28. In Brahms this is the difference between metronomic and expressive playing.

On the other side of the coin their Beethoven Variations are a gas—light and full of warmth and the expected virtuosity. Then we have the Schumann ‘Arabesque’, played expressively—a lovely performance. This is followed by a really imaginative Debussy sonata, very 21st Century and bringing out a number of points in an effective way. This is an outstanding interpretation, a bit more mod in places than the composer might have expected but full of feeling and virtuosity. Then Anger gets his solo innings with a first recording of a piece by Krzysztof Penderecki that puts the cello through its paces in an exciting and highly pleasant manner, not the dissonant Penderecki we learned to fear years ago.

The gang gets back together for the transcription of Schumann’s horn piece, played with alternating whisper and shout. Finally comes the high point of the program—a feisty, virtuoso interpretation of Astor Piazzolla’s big tango, played with involvement and a freedom that the composer would probably enjoy. Altogether, except for the Brahms, this is a fine release.

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