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JAMIE WALTON
DANIEL GRIMWOOD
SONATAS

BRAHMS
STRAUSS
THUILLE

JCU RECORDS

WALTON GRIMWOOD SONATAS

BRAHMS
STRAUSS
THUILLE

SONATA IN F MAJOR OP. 6
RICHARD STRAUSS

1	ALLEGRO CON BRIO	9:14
2	ANDANTE, MA NON TROPPO	6:20
3	ALLEGRO VIVO	8:48

SONATA IN E MINOR OP. 38
JOHANNES BRAHMS

4	ALLEGRO NON TROPPO	13:21
5	ALLEGRO QUASI MENUETTO	5:14
6	ALLEGRO	6:36

SONATA IN D MINOR OP. 22
LUDWIG THUILLE

7	ALLEGRO ENERGICO, MA NON TROPPO PRESTO	9:37
8	ADAGIO	12:19
9	FINALE - ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO	7:02

TOTAL LENGTH 78:54

'ROMANTIC 'CELLO SONATAS PERFORMED WITH LUMINOUS VIRTUOSITY BY ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED YOUNG MUSICAL PARTNERSHIPS.'

STRAUSS

PROGRAMME NOTES BY DANIEL GRIMWOOD

The F major 'cello/piano Strauss sonata belongs to his youth and, together with the Eb violin sonata of a few years later, is a manifestation of adolescent high spirits. (For this reason it was high time we committed this to disc sooner rather than later.) His father Franz was a horn player in the Munich Opera Orchestra and his mother was an heiress of a famous brewing family so it was through his father he grew up steeped in the prevailing musical atmosphere. Franz Strauss was a musical conservative and this, perhaps, is why his son's early works adhere so strongly to classical compositional procedure. Despite the obvious influences of Mendelssohn, and especially Brahms, there is nonetheless an individual voice from the outset characterized by a fleetness of touch and sense of the theatrical which pre-echo his astonishing achievements in the field of Opera.

The two opening F major chords of the 'cello sonata create a prophetic blaze of glory, marking the start of one of the most brilliant musical careers of the era. Indeed, until the Nazis came to power he experienced few professional difficulties despite his son marrying into a Jewish family and one of his librettists, Stefan Zweig being forced into exile. It seems that the authorities tolerated Strauss as he was simply too famous to be reprimanded. This Sonata is dedicated to Hans Wihan, the 'cellist with whose wife Strauss fell in love before his own marriage to Pauline de Ahna, and who performed the rapturously received premiere.

It is composed on an ambitious scale, the first Allegro con brio in conventional sonata form incorporating a highly skillful *Fugato*; the following movement a 'Mendelssohnian' Chorale; and the Finale a canonic Allegro which in terms of sheer wit anticipates 'Till Eulenspiegel'. It is a rarely performed sonata and perhaps the fiendish piano and awkward 'cello writing explains this statistic – but the freshness of musical inspiration more than compensates for this discomfort and it is undoubtedly the musical representation of a burgeoning Strauss developing into an astonishingly gifted artist.

BRAHMS

Nineteenth century Germany increasingly defined musical progress in terms of the Symphony, and although Brahms' essays in the genre have become such mighty cornerstones of the orchestral repertoire, scarcely any other composer of his generation (apart from Schumann) did more to revive the congenial domestic art of chamber music, and in this sphere we find his most refined and polished compositions.

The first piano/'cello Sonata (Brahms was very particular about this order - the two instruments being equal partners) was Brahms' first work for solo instrument and piano, and the first major sonata for this combination to have been composed since Beethoven. His influence on Brahms can be felt in the highly concentrated compositional procedure. One may even go so far as to describe it as monothematic; the first two bars containing just about all the musical material for the three movements .

It subsequently became one of the most popular sonatas for 'cellists partly due to its highly atmospheric and lyrical writing which suits the brooding and melancholic nature of the instrument – indeed the canny simplicity of it which presents few technical (although plenty of musical) challenges perhaps contributes to explaining the success of the Sonata in general. However, it could be argued that this ubiquitous (although beautiful) work is far less interesting compared alongside many neglected compositions that have fallen by the wayside (Thuille being one of them – Vierne another). Although he commenced work in 1862, problems with the Finale delayed the completion till 1865. He set himself quite a task; the Finale is a tripartite *Fugue* subject which is taken from The Art of Fugue by Bach, the holiest prophet of the musical community. This was intended as a tribute to Bach and it is understandable that the confidence required to pull this off would have taxed him to the limits.

THUILLE

The Austrian composer Ludwig Thuille was the son of a timber merchant and a keen amateur musician who gave his own son his first music lessons. Thuille was a child prodigy and developed astonishingly rapidly. On the death of his father he was inducted as a chorister at the Benedictine Abbey School at Kremsmunster where he received excellent tutelage in Church music and elementary education. At the age of fifteen he returned home and became a student of Joseph Pembaur, a solid musician who offered a sure grounding in piano and theory. Three years later he moved to Munich to enter the school of music where his piano teacher was Karl Barman (a Liszt pupil) and his counterpoint and composition teacher was Rheinberger. A few years later he would himself become professor there.

It is difficult to write about a composer about whom so little is known and who is all but forgotten. On the basis of the music he wrote and is available - the wonderful Sextet for Piano being a prime example - it is perhaps a pity that we hear so little of him and surely the time is ripe for an enterprising Opera company to resurrect his three Operas.

Coincidentally, he enjoyed a close friendship with Strauss and they must have had some influence over one another professionally; both composers employ similar techniques in their works and both seem to share the same artistic *weltanschauung*.

Of the three works on the disc this sonata is the most ambitious and perhaps in some respects the most successful. The three movements - the titanic opening Allegro with its perpetually shifting harmonies and impassioned climaxes; the Adagio, surely the spiritual heart of the work; and the piquant Finale – balance extremely well. The colossal writing for both instruments is virtuosic but highly idiomatic. Our hope through making this recording is that the Thuille Sonata will become a step closer to joining the standard repertoire and begin to enjoy the success it deserves.

JAMIE WALTON

CELLO

Becoming renowned for his purity of tone and uncompromising musical nature, Jamie Walton is now being compared by critics to some of the great cellists of the past. He has appeared throughout Europe, USA, and Australasia in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls and festivals.

Jamie studied at Wells Cathedral School and the RNCM with Margaret Moncrieff then taking private tuition with William Pleeth who wrote of Jamie: 'He is a cellist of outstanding performance ability, a musician of great integrity whose performance gives great pleasure.'

He and pianist Daniel Grimwood have performed and recorded regularly since their debut recital at Birmingham Symphony Hall sharing the evening with Krystian Zimerman. This led to a personal invitation from Lorin Maazel to perform at the Chateauville Foundation, Virginia.

Jamie's recordings regularly receive high critical acclaim in the British and International press. His concerto recordings with the Philharmonia continue following the Saint-Saëns' concertos No. 1 and No. 2 and the Anglo-Russian trilogy coupling Elgar/Myaskovsky, Shostakovich No.2/Britten's Cello Symphony and Shostakovich No.1/Walton, including the world premiere of William Walton's revised ending. Plans for 2011 include the Dvo ák and Schumann concertos.

This CD of Brahms, Strauss and Thuille continues as part of the Romantic sonata series with Signum Classics following the success of the Rachmaninov and Grieg sonatas which was nominated Chamber Choice CD of the Month in BBC Music Magazine. Further sonata releases include Chopin and Saint-Saëns (No.2), a French disc of Vierne, Debussy and Poulenc and Britten, Shostakovich and Prokofiev, all of which will follow in 2011.

Passionate about chamber music and the landscape of North Yorkshire, Jamie launched the first North York Moors Chamber Music Festival in August 2009 to sell out audiences and is now an annual event. For more information please visit: www.nymchambermusicfestival.org and www.jamiewalton.com

DANIEL GRIMWOOD

PIANO

With a repertoire which ranges from Elizabethan Virginal music to composers of the modern day, Grimwood is carving out a reputation as one of the most varied and insightful musicians of his generation. Although primarily a pianist, he is frequently to be found performing on harpsichord, organ, viola or composing at his desk. Felix Aprahamian once wrote of him: 'Probably the finest all-round musician I have ever known.'

He is a passionate champion of the early piano, and recently performed Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage* at the Wigmore Hall on an 1851 Erard to rapturous critical acclaim. His recording of this work was CD of the Week in the *Telegraph*, Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* and has been unanimously praised in the press.

On being offered a scholarship to the Purcell School in 1987, Grimwood studied piano with Graham Fitch, violin/viola with Elspeth Illif and Sybil Copland and composition/counterpoint with Tim Stevenson. He later finished his pianistic training under the tutelage of Vladimir Ovchinnikov and Peter Feuchtwanger. He has subsequently enjoyed a solo career, which has taken him across the globe, performing in many of the world's most prestigious venues and festivals. Although he has been the recipient of several awards, there is no glamorous list of competition wins, as Grimwood has always considered them harmful to the musical community.

A passionate Chamber musician, his work has been closely associated with 'cellist Jamie Walton with whom he has made a number of significant and critically acclaimed recordings. High points of their combined work have been a recital of Chopin at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, where they shared the evening with Krystian Zimerman and an appearance at the Chateauville Foundation in Virginia, USA at the personal invitation of Maestro Lorin Maazel.

Further recordings include the complete piano sonatas of Algernon Ashton on Toccata Classics, Mozart chamber music on period instruments, the complete violin/fortepiano works of Schubert with Madeleine Easton, Rachmaninov and Blumenfeld Sonatas and a series of Chopin discs on an Erard piano for SFZ.

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