FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY (1809 - 1847)

■ Variations Concertantes for Cello and Piano, op.17 10:07
Sonata No.1 for Cello and Piano in B flat major, op.45
2 I. Allegro vivace
3 II. Andante5:36
4 III. Allegro assai
Sonata No.2 for Cello and Piano in D major, op.58
5 I. Allegro assai vivace8:58
6 II. Allegretto scherzando
☐ III. Adagio
8 IV. Molto allegro e vivace
${\color{red} {\tt 9}}$ Lied ohne Worte - for Cello and Piano in D major, op.109 $5{:}02$
Total Time: 68:58
Simca Heled - violoncello
Simone Dinnerstein - piano



FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY

WORKS FOR CELLO & PIANO SIMCA HELED, SIMONE DINNERSTEIN



Variations concertantes for cello and piano, op.17 (1829)

Mendelssohn completed this first work for cello on the 29th of January, 1829 - four days before his twentieth birthday - during the period when he organised the first performance of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" since the composer's death. As the title suggests it is a rather virtuoso developed work, light and amicable in tone, and building on a popular-sounding theme, almost song-like in character. This rather short work is extremely varied and illustrates the theme from all conceivable angles, as well as being extremely flattering to the cellist. The variations were published for the first time in Vienna in 1830.

Sonata No.1 for cello and piano in B flat major, op.45 (1838) Allegro vivace - Andante - Allegro assai

The first of Mendelssohn's two sonatas for cello and piano was finished on the 13th of October, 1838 and published the following year. Here we meet the mature Mendelssohn in a brilliantly developed work, which displays perfect balance between the two instruments - true chamber music. The first movement, written in the classical sonata form, is the longest, taking nearly fourteen minutes. It is elegant and virtuoso, thematically tuneful and with the swiftness that is so characteristic of Mendelssohn's quick movements. The second movement is tranquil and melodic, a "song without words", and the finale is marked by the "noble passion" that typifies this Romanticist, who is never tempted into exaggeration, but always keeps the romantic and personal expression within the frames of the classical structure.

Sonata No.2 for cello and piano in D major, op.58 (1843) Allegro assai vivace - Allegretto scherzando - Adagio - Molto allegro e vivace

The second - and most often performed - of Mendelssohn's two cello sonatas was written at the height of his career, at the same time as such works as the A minor symphony, the "Scottish", and the violin concerto in E minor. The king of Prussia had appointed Mendelssohn general director of music in Berlin but Mendelssohn continued to live in Leipzig, where he led the conservatory and was conductor of the famous Gewandhaus concerts. The first movement of the D major sonata is kept in the classic sonata form, short and barely developed. A scherzo in moderate tempo follows as the second movement. The key is B minor, but the mood is light and gay with elegance taking precedence. As always, Mendelssohn's particular mastery of the scherzo form is also apparent here. The third movement is the longest of the sonata, a short, singable cantilena, where the cello - the tenor voice of the strings - is allowed to sing out. The finale is almost more scherzo-like

than the second movement, a jubilant, ecstatically virtuoso and elegantly flowing movement, where sixteenth figures in the plano and staccato in the cello point in the direction of the seventeen year old's fairy romanticism in the overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

Lied ohne Worte - for cello and piano in D major, op.109

Mendelssohn's last work for cello probably dates from 1845, two years before his premature death. The designation "Lied ohne Worte" - song without words - was essentially created by Mendelssohn and was used in the many short piano pieces he published in a series of volumes in the years from 1829 to 1845.

A short remark: The order of the pieces on this CD is the order in which they were written - starting with the earlier 'Variations Concertantes op. 17' and ending with the 'Song Without Words op. 109'. Those who might have heard my recording of this repertoire from 'younger years' (1977) might notice that some movements are slightly slower now. I feel that Mendelssohn's world of luxurious beauty, lyricism and wit is better served in these tempi and that the feeling of virtuosity does not come necessarily as a result of a fast pace, but is rather in the details and clarity of the material and its execution. (Simca Heled)

Simca Heled - conductor & cello

An Israeli American - Simca Heled is a graduate of the Tel-Aviv Academy of Music. At the age of 24 he was appointed by Zubin Metha as principal cellist of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. He has appeared as a soloist with distinguished conductors like Blomstedt, Comissiona, Dorati, Inbal, Maazel and Metha among others. Simca Heled has won further praise since his emergence as an active and talented conductor. In 1994 Heled was nominated to the position of chief conductor of the Pomeranian Philharmonic in Poland, and later on established, for a brief period, the Polish National Chamber Orchestra, which was made up of the best talent in Poland.

Simone Dinnerstein - piano

The American pianist Simone Dinnerstein has been described as being "remarkably musical" by Emanuel Ax, "a real artist" by Peter Serkin and "one of the brightest pianistic talents" by Joel Smirnoff, first violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet.