**Igor Stravinsky & Dmitri Shostakovich: Works for Violin and Piano**

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BBC Radio 3 (Helen Wallace and Andrew McGregor - 11.02.2012)

**BROADCAST CD review**

Our next recital, Shostakovich and Stravinsky with Judith Ingolfsson and Vladimir Stoupel, is an unusual combination. It is a brave thing to put the two works together, but it is really illuminating. I think the ambiguity of both works comes through by putting them next to each other. What I love about Judith Ingolfsson is that she has this really sensual penetrating tone, and it brings out the Tchaikovsky behind the Stravinsky in the Divertimento, which is based on the ballet “Le baiser de la fée”. She brings Tchaikovsky back to life with this very sensual approach and it works fantastically. So many people treat Stravinsky performances rather cool and dry, but she goes the opposite way and it really pays dividends…

[Stravinsky Divertimento, Sinfonia excerpt]

They found the right combination – it is light and witty, but there is still that darkness and weight to it as well. There is a very strong sense of powerful personalities coming through. They play the very witty and sparkly “pas de deux” with aplomb, but there is a real edge to their playing. That edge comes out in the Shostakovich – I really feel that they have these reserves to draw on which you need with Shostakovich. The dark undertones in this piece are not hidden at all. It is brooding, and it has got anguish. It is a great big structure as well. They go down into the depths of this piece and they get that great spiral structure very beautifully worked out in the last movement. We are going to hear from that slow final movement an excerpt where the violin starts with that very veiled vulnerable sound and then moves up a gear into something very intense.

[Shostakovich Sonata, excerpt from the 3rd movement]

This really is a “take no prisoners” approach – the way they build to that climax. They have a very real, dark, Russian feel to this piece and there is a compelling sense of an unfolding narrative. I was very convinced by this – the unity of the structure they really achieved – that, they realized that beautifully. It is incredibly impressive and it is a great combination with the Stravinsky.



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