



Richard Strauss & Dmitri Shostakovich: Sonatas for Violin & Piano

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Gramophone (David Gutman - 01.07.2019)

GRAMOPHONE

Prokofiev concerto couplings are two a penny these days yet Franziska Pietsch caused something of a stir with her recent contender (2/18), following it up with an equally impressive disc of solo violin works by Bartok, Prokofiev and Ysaye (12/18).

Here she is back on familiar turf, having made her recent career as a chamber music specialist with such ensembles as the Trio Testore and Trio Lirico. Her new recital colleague, Josu de Solaun, has already undertaken a survey of the complete Enescu piano music for Naxos. A Spanish-born American resident and a multiple prize-winner in his own right, his playing has strength without steeliness and a distinctive warmth and finesse which may or may not be associated with his Shigeru Kawai instrument. Very much an equal partner, he also contributes the booklet notes. Pietsch seems an edgier kind of artist, with the frank emotionalism and potential resort to wide vibrato you might associate with Russian players.

Immaculately pitched in every sense, their Strauss is worth sampling even for those normally resistant to this kind of Romantic fare. Marginally less sympathetic than the sweet and subtle reading from Kyung Wha Chung and Krystian Zimerman, their music-making lacks nothing in intensity or fine detailing and is captured in very lifelike sound in the famous acoustic of the Jesus-Christus-Kirche of Berlin-Dahlem. Some may detect a lack of intimacy, sonic or otherwise; I'd say the score can take it.

In the more ubiquitous Shostakovich the pair are, at least initially, less stoical than David Oistrakh or Oleg Kagan, both with Sviatoslav Richter, injecting light as well as shade without sounding remotely facile. The extremely virtuoso second movement finds Pietsch positively assaulting her strings. The finale is again heartfelt but never too far over the top.

All in all an intriguing offering, even if the startlingly disparate programme won't file easily on the shelves of those of us still in thrall to physical format.

Shostakovich - R Strauss

Shostakovich Violin Sonata, Op 134
R Strauss Violin Sonata, Op 18
Franziska Pietsch vtr Josu de Solaun c/f
Audite © AUDITE 97 759 (64' • DDD)



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Strauss - selected comparisons:
Chung, Zimerman (2/99) (DG) 457 397-2GG4
Shostakovich - selected comparisons:
Oistrakh, Richter (8/71) (MEL) MELCD100 227030
Kagan, Richter (5/94) (ALTO) ALC1328

Shostakovich • R Strauss

Shostakovich Violin Sonata, Op 134

R Strauss Violin Sonata, Op 18

Franziska Pietsch *vn* Josu de Solaun *pf*

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Chung, Zimerman (2/90) (DG) 457 907-2GGA*

Shostakovich – selected comparisons:

Oistrakh, Richter (8/71) (MELO) MELCD100 227030*

Kagan, Richter (5/96) (ALTO) ALC1328*