



Richard Strauss & Dmitri Shostakovich: Sonatas for Violin & Piano

aud 97.759

EAN: 4022143977595



American Record Guide (Joseph Magil - 01.09.2019)

Born and trained in Trieste, Franco Gulli (1926-2001) was one of Italy's leading violinists in the 20th Century. In 1972 he became a professor at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, where he remained until he died. The first record by a violinist that I owned was one of baroque music that he recorded in the 1950s.

Gulli is accompanied here by his wife Enrica Cavalli in excerpts from recitals they gave in Milan in 1981 and 1990. The Violin Sonata of Richard Strauss and the FAE Sonata were recorded in 1990, and Bartok's Violin Sonata 2 was recorded in 1981. From what I can hear, the Gullis were outstanding musicians, and their interpretations leave nothing to be desired. I wish I had had the opportunity to hear him in concert. A friend of mine who did found him remarkable.

I regret to report that the recorded sound from both recitals is not acceptable. They sound like they were both recorded from the audience on amateur equipment. Once or twice, I can hear a man coughing whose mouth sounds like it is mere inches from the microphone. Gulli is not well represented in recordings, and these are the best performance of his that I have heard.

I was greatly impressed by Franziska Pietsch's Prokofiev violin sonatas (N/D 2016), so I was excited when this came for review. I am happy to report that my expectations were exceeded. Pietsch plays this music like she is improvising. A native of East Berlin, she didn't learn this score, she lived it. Until now, my top recommendation for this work was the wonderful recording by the Khachaturyan siblings, Sergey and Lusine (J/A 2008). They characterize moments with remarkable vividness. Pietsch and Josu de Solaun play in a different manner. They are not as quicksilver in coloring their sound, but Pietsch especially brings a feeling of great familiarity with the music and its motivation that has the stamp of authority. She has her own way of tone painting that many violinists would never think of. At 5:42 of the first movement, she very briefly lowers the pitch of the note she is playing, producing an effect I had never heard before that I would describe as sickly yet absolutely appropriate. I am sure this is not a technical lapse but a wise choice. She eschews brilliance and polish and plays straight from the heart, and the effect is cathartic. This is at least on a par with the Khachaturyans. The recording is warmer and much more present too, so the pianissimo passages aren't as quiet as they are on the Armenians' disc; but the enveloping sound, especially in the piano, enhances the music's emotional effect. This recording is an essential acquisition for people who value this work, the second great Soviet violin sonata after Prokofiev's Sonata 1.

The Strauss Sonata almost feels like a makeweight, and it was wisely placed before the Shostakovich. I say almost, because Pietsch once again shows what a superb

STRAUSS: Violin Sonata
with DIETRICH, BRAHMS, SCHUMANN: FAE
Sonata BARTOK: Sonata 2
Franco Gulli, Enrica Cavalli, p.
Da Vinci 158--73 minutes
with SHOSTAKOVICH: Violin Sonata
Franziska Pietsch, v. Josu de Solaun, p.
Audite 97.759--64 minutes

Born and trained in Trieste, Franco Gulli (1926-2001) was one of Italy's leading violinists in the 20th Century. In 1972 he became a professor at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, where he remained until he died. The first record by a violinist that I owned was one of baroque music that he recorded in the 1950s.

Gulli is accompanied here by his wife Enrica Cavalli in excerpts from recitals they gave in Milan in 1981 and 1990. The Violin Sonata of Richard Strauss and the FAE Sonata were recorded in 1990, and Bartok's Violin Sonata 2 was recorded in 1981. From what I can hear, the Gullis were outstanding musicians, and their interpretations leave nothing to be desired. I wish I had had the opportunity to hear him in concert. A friend of mine who did found him remarkable.

I regret to report that the recorded sound from both recitals is not acceptable. They sound like they were both recorded from the audience on amateur equipment. Once or twice, I can hear a man coughing whose mouth sounds like it is mere inches from the microphone. Gulli is not well represented in recordings, and these are the best performance of his that I have heard.

I was greatly impressed by Franziska Pietsch's Prokofiev violin sonatas (N/D 2016), so I was excited when this came for review. I am happy to report that my expectations were exceeded. Pietsch plays this music like she is improvising. A native of East Berlin, she didn't learn this score, she lived it. Until now, my top recommendation for this work was the wonderful recording by the Khachaturyan siblings, Sergey and Lusine (J/A 2008). They characterize moments with remarkable vividness. Pietsch and Josu de Solaun play in a different manner. They are not as quicksilver in coloring their sound, but Pietsch especially brings a feeling of great familiarity with the music and its motivation that has the stamp of authority. She has her own way of tone painting that many violinists would never think of. At 5:42 of the first movement, she very briefly lowers the pitch of the note she is playing, producing an effect I had never heard before that I would describe as sickly yet absolutely appropriate. I am sure this is not a technical lapse but a wise choice. She eschews brilliance and polish and plays straight from the heart, and the effect is cathartic. This is at least on a par with the Khachaturyans. The recording is warmer and much more present too, so the pianissimo passages aren't as quiet as they are on the Armenians' disc; but the enveloping sound, especially in the piano, enhances the music's emotional effect. This recording is an essential acquisition for people who value this work, the second great Soviet violin sonata after Prokofiev's Sonata 1.

The Strauss Sonata almost feels like a makeweight, and it was wisely placed before the Shostakovich. I say almost, because Pietsch once again shows what a superb artist she is. She is especially effective in the passages at lower dynamics, as she so often is. She and Solaun don't quite storm the heavens the way Frank Almond and Wolfgang Wolfram do (M/J 2007), but this is one of the best readings of the work that I've heard, and Strauss's bold optimism comes through powerfully.

Gulli played two Stradivarius violins, the "Marchal Berthier, Veasey" of 1716 and the "Come Fontana" dated 1702 in its label but probably from around 1690. Pietsch plays a violin made by Carlo Antonio Testore of Milan in 1751.

MAGIL

artist she is. She is especially effective in the passages at lower dynamics, as she so often is. She and Solaun don't quite storm the heavens the way Frank Almond and Wolfgang Wolfram do (M/J 2007), but this is one of the best readings of the work that I've heard, and Strauss's bold optimism comes through powerfully.

Gulli played two Stradivarius violins, the "Marechal Berthier, Vecsey" of 1716 and the "Conte Fontana" dated 1702 on its label but probably from around 1690. Pietsch plays a violin made by Carlo Antonio Testore of Milan in 1751.

STRAUSS: Violin Sonata
with **DIETRICH, BRAHMS, SCHUMANN: FAE**
Sonata; BARTOK: Sonata 2
Franco Gulli; Enrica Cavallo, p
Da Vinci 158—73 minutes

with **SHOSTAKOVICH: Violin Sonata**
Franziska Pietsch, v; Josu de Solaun, p
Audite 97.759—64 minutes

Born and trained in Trieste, Franco Gulli (1926-2001) was one of Italy's leading violinists in the 20th Century. In 1972 he became a professor at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, where he remained until he died. The first record by a violinist that I owned was one of baroque music that he recorded in the 1950s.

Gulli is accompanied here by his wife Enrica Cavalli in excerpts from recitals they gave in Milan in 1981 and 1990. The Violin Sonata of Richard Strauss and the FAE Sonata were recorded in 1990, and Bartok's Violin Sonata 2 was recorded in 1981. From what I can hear, the Gullis were outstanding musicians, and their interpretations leave nothing to be desired. I wish I had had the opportunity to hear him in concert. A friend of mine who did found him remarkable.

I regret to report that the recorded sound from both recitals is not acceptable. They sound like they were both recorded from the audience on amateur equipment. Once or twice, I can hear a man coughing whose mouth sounds like it is mere inches from the microphone. Gulli is not well represented in recordings, and these are the best performance of his that I have heard.

I was greatly impressed by Franziska Pietsch's Prokofiev violin sonatas (N/D 2016), so I was excited when this came for review. I am happy to report that my expectations were exceeded. Pietsch plays this music like she is improvising. A native of East Berlin, she didn't learn this score, she lived it. Until now, my top recommendation for this work was the wonderful recording by the Khachatryan siblings, Sergey and Lusine (J/A 2008). They characterize moments with remarkable vividness. Pietsch and Josu de Solaun play in a different manner. They are not as quicksilver in coloring their sound, but Pietsch especially brings a feeling of great familiarity with the music and its motivation that has the stamp of authority. She has her own way of tone painting that many violinists would never think of. At 5:42 of the first movement, she very briefly lowers the pitch of the note she is playing, producing an effect I had never heard before that I would describe as sickly yet absolutely appropriate. I am sure this is not a technical lapse but a wise choice. She eschews brilliance and polish and plays straight from the heart, and the effect is cathartic. This is at least on a par with the Khachatryans. The recording is warmer and much more present too, so the pianissimo passages aren't as quiet as they are on the Armenians' disc; but the enveloping sound, especially in the piano, enhances the music's emotional effect. This recording is an essential acquisition for people who value this work, the second great Soviet violin sonata after Prokofiev's Sonata 1.

The Strauss Sonata almost feels like a makeweight, and it was wisely placed before the Shostakovich. I say almost, because Pietsch once again shows what a superb artist she is. She is especially effective in the passages at lower dynamics, as she so often is. She and Solaun don't quite storm the heavens the way Frank Almond and Wolfgang Wolfram do (M/J 2007), but this is one of the best readings of the work that I've heard, and Strauss's bold optimism comes through powerfully.

Gulli played two Stradivarius violins, the "Marechal Berthier, Vecsey" of 1716 and the "Conte Fontana" dated 1702 on its label but probably from around 1690. Pietsch plays a violin made by Carlo Antonio Testore of Milan in 1751.

MAGIL