



Violoncelle français

aud 97.698



American Record Guide February 2017 (David W Moore - 2017.02.01)

source: <http://www.americanrecordguide.com/subsc...>



The first program is excellently played by both musicians. It consists of Brahms's E minor Sonata and Debussy's in D minor and the Cesar Franck Violin Sonata transcribed for cello and piano with the composer's approval. The emotional impression of these readings is very positive for the Brahms and the Franck, a bit less so for the Debussy. The playing is grand and tender by turns, with effective contrasts and lyricism. The Debussy is more virtuosic and slithery in technique than I like in this music. It tends to go so fast that the subtlety of the music goes by the board, particularly in the Finale. But the rest of the program is very satisfying, and these players deserve to be heard. The sound and balances are excellent.

In the second program we start off with the Debussy Sonata. At first I thought this was going to be a more sensitive reading, but it turned out to be as silly as the other one and less subtle. The three lovely Fauré pieces that follow are beautifully played, and so is the massive Franck Sonata and the contrasting Saint-Saens Allegro Appassionato and 'The Swan'. It's a well-arranged and nicely contrasted program of French masterpieces, and only the Debussy is less than satisfying.

CBC Radio November 20, 2016 (- 2016.11.20)



BROADCAST Disc of the week

Sendebegle siehe PDF!

Classical Radio Boston - WCRB 99,5 30.01.2017 (- 2017.01.30)

source: <http://classicalwcrb.org>



CD of the Week: Cheng Squared Duo: Violoncelle Francais

The sibling duo performs cello and piano pieces by four of the great minds of French Romanticism and Impressionism.

As the aesthetics and ideologies of classical music have evolved in the passing centuries, the cello sonata has boasted an enduring allure, captivating listeners and composers alike. In this album, siblings Bryan and Silvie Cheng perform cello sonatas by French composers of the Romantic and Impressionist eras, plus orchestral pieces arranged for cello and piano duo.

Classical Radio Boston - WCRB 99,5 Dec 15, 2017 (Kendall Todd / Colin Brumley - 2017.12.15)

source: <http://classicalwcrb.org/post/2017s-cds-...>



2017's CDs of the Week... of the Year!

2017's CDs of the Week... of the Year!

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

ClicMag 11/2016 (Bertrand Abraham - 2016.11.01)

source: <http://www.clicmusique.com/violoncelle-f...>



La sonate de Debussy est la pièce maîtresse de ce disque. Les deux prodiges en donnent une interprétation très claire, très construite, très poétique.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Das Orchester 01/2017 (- 2017.01.01)

source: http://www.dasorchester.de/de_DE/journal...



Hier [...] hören wir ein fein abgewogenes kammermusikalisches Teamwork, das gleichwohl in punkto Dynamik und Expression keine Extreme scheut.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Der Reinbeker 6. Juni 2019 (Peter Steder - 2019.06.06)

DER
REIN-
BEKER

Musik aus aller Welt

Sonaten von Debussy (mit mosaikartiger Vielgestaltigkeit) und C. Franck [...] sowie Charakterstücke von Fauré mit weit geschwungener Melodik und Saint-Saëns bieten ein Panorama der französischen Kammermusik zwischen den 1860er und 1910er Jahren.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Fono Forum März 2017 (Ole Pflüger - 2017.03.01)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Das Label Audite traut sich was. Der Cellist Bryan Cheng (18) und die Pianistin Silvie Cheng (25) sind die jüngsten Musiker, die es je unter Vertrag genommen hat. So jung, dass es über keinen von beiden einen Lexikoneintrag in der Wikipedia gibt. Aber die Geschwister aus Kanada zahlen das Vertrauen mit einer stets soliden, manchmal hervorragenden Debüt-CD zurück.

Sie begegnen den Sonaten von Cesar Franck mit Feinsinn und Gespür für elegischen Ton. Silvie Chengs Hände gleiten von Taste zu Taste, sie webt einen Klangteppich voll filigraner Muster und breitet ihn unter dem Spiel ihres Bruders aus. Mit gedämpftem, fast heiserem Klang schleicht er im Zwielflicht durch die leiseren Passagen der Sonaten, ein faszinierendes Spiel mit der Dunkelheit. Für die großen Wehklagen und Wutausbrüche fehlt Bryan Cheng dagegen manchmal die Wucht. Der aufgepeitschte Mittelteil von Gabriel Faures Elegie wirkt erstaunlich zurückhaltend, so als wollten beide Musiker dem jeweils anderen brav den Vortritt lassen. Höflichkeit unter Geschwistern? Ist das die Kehrseite des perfekt abgestimmten Zusammenspiels? Seit fünfzehn Jahren machen die Cheng-Geschwister gemeinsam Musik. Bryan Cheng war damals drei Jahre alt. Sie geben einander Raum, und stets bleibt zu hören, was welche Hand auf welchem Instrument gerade treibt.

Ein Höhepunkt der CD ist ihre Interpretation von Camille Saint-Saens' Allegro appassionato. Bryan Cheng stürmt trittsicher die Tonleitern hinauf und tänzelt dann triumphierend auf dem Gipfel. Im tänzerischsten, schlankesten und bestgelaunten Stück dieser CD legt er seinen Glanzauftritt hin. Sie blitzt zwar nur kurz auf; aber es ist diese Facette an Bryan Chengs Spiel, die besonders neugierig macht, auch auf seinen Umgang mit anderen Klassikern des Cello-Repertoires: Wie er sich durch Haydns Konzerte und Beethovens Sonaten schwingen wird... Man ahnt, dass es ein großes Fest werden kann mit den beiden.

<http://largestagelive.blogspot.de> Friday, 21 October 2016 (Ken Stephen - 2016.10.21)
source: <http://largestagelive.blogspot.de/2016/1...>

An Impressive Debut Recording

Okay, let's go right up front here: I'm breaking my own rules. This is supposed to be a blog that reviews live arts performances, as the title clearly states. And this review is not of a live performance, but of a recording. But hey, if a fellow can't break his own rules, whose rules can he break?

My justification is that this recording features a Canadian ensemble, the Cheng²Duo, which I have reviewed four times in live performance, and in two cases playing music which is now included on this debut recording. That may be a thin rationale to some of my readers, but what truly intrigued me was the growth and development of the music over time and in the recording studio.

First, here are the links to the previous blog posts which reviewed the music involved in the CD, and included some comments about the development of the Duo's performance:

Travelling With Music
Germany, Russia and France with the Cheng²Duo

And so to the recording. This impressive CD debut, entitled *Violoncelle français*, presents a recital of music from France bridging across the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth century. The composers represented are Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Franck, and Debussy. The music is an intriguing mixture of small character pieces, which might be termed "salon music," one theatre piece, and two larger chamber works.

With such a blend of styles comes the need for varied styles of performance as well. The shorter character works, such as the *Faure Sicilienne* and *Elegie*, or the *Swan* of Saint-Saëns, receive performances in lush, rich sound that yet doesn't overpower the simpler character of the music.

Debussy's *Sonata* is given an interpretation of dramatic contrasts, as the music demands.

At the heart of the recording is the *Franck Sonata in A Minor*, and here was where I really noticed a difference from the two occasions when I heard the Cheng²Duo perform the work live. What a totally involving account of this wonderful score! The difference is a matter of quality which is not easy to define: an increase in intensity, a deeper digging into the essence of the music, a stronger sense of the drama of the music expressed in restraint rather than excess.

I'd be intrigued to know whether this comes from the closer observation of the microphones, or from the process of the work in studio with multiple takes interspersed with listening to playbacks and discussing the results before continuing.

What was quite clear, after multiple listenings, was that this is an interpretation of the *Franck Sonata* to live with, and to return to frequently. This one work alone would make the recording a worthwhile acquisition, and then there are such riches in the rest of the programme as well.

The recording from the German label Audite is impressive, with clear, present sound set in a believable acoustic so the instruments are neither too close nor too distant. The CD album comes with an impressive booklet of generously detailed programme notes.

I'll close with two footnotes. One was that I also pulled out my recording of the original violin version of the *Sonata* for comparison. Sad to say, it's been eclipsed. I now have to go shopping for another and better recording with violin.

The other footnote is that the next recording from the Cheng²Duo is going to be a recital of music from Spain. I have a real "thing" for Spanish music – maybe I was Spanish in a previous life – so it's going to be a long year to wait for that one to be issued!

<http://musique.fnac.com> 01.11.2016 (Bertrand Abraham - 2016.11.01)
source: <http://musique.fnac.com/a10179233/Claude...>



La sonate de Debussy est la pièce maîtresse de ce disque. Les deux prodiges en donnent une interprétation très claire, très construite, très poétique.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

[Le Babill Art - Guide culturel](http://lebabillart.com) Dezember 2016 (Serge - 2016.12.01)
source: <http://lebabillart.com/modules/news/inde...>



Le vaste répertoire du duo les amenés à présenter des récitals de hautes performances sur trois continents et dans plusieurs festivals. Parmi les faits marquants qu'ils ont vécus en 2016, figurent la série Pro Musica et une tournée de 13 villes à travers la Chine continentale. Voici leur premier album qu'ils ont intitulé Violoncelle français avec des œuvres de Debussy, Fauré, César Franck, Jules Delsart et Camille Saint-Saëns.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

[Radio Canada international](http://www.rcinet.ca) 25 novembre, 2016 (- 2016.11.25)
source: <http://www.rcinet.ca/zh/2016/11/25/66168...>



BROADCAST

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[Radio Canada international](http://www.rcinet.ca/fr/2016/12/03/cheng...) samedi 3 décembre, 2016 (Raymond Desmarteau - 2016.12.03)

source: <http://www.rcinet.ca/fr/2016/12/03/cheng...>



BROADCAST

Cheng2 Duo nous présente son premier disque « Violoncelle français »

Le duo formé de Silvie et de Bryan Cheng nous propose son tout premier disque où l'on retrouve des œuvres majeures du répertoire français écrites entre 1860 et 1916.

Violoncelle français, sur étiquette Audite est un florilège de jeunesse et de passion, de pur bonheur de faire de la grande musique.

« J'ai commencé à jouer le piano par pur hasard. En voyage dans les Maritimes avec nos parents. J'avais 4 ans et demi. Parmi les jouets et les jeux qu'il y avait dans l'auto, il y avait un petit clavier bleu en plastique J'y revenais tout le temps. Et, à la fin du voyage, je voulais commencer à prendre des leçons de piano. »

Silvie Cheng

« De mon côté, les parents avaient acheté un grand piano pour qu'on joue tous les deux. Je voulais quelque chose à moi tout seul. À 3 ans, ma mère m'a amené à l'école Suzuki à Ottawa. Je trouvais le son du violon trop aigu. C'est quand j'ai entendu le son du violoncelle que je suis tombé en amour avec cet instrument, et je le suis toujours. »

Bryan Cheng

En anglais, ce duo sœur-frère s'appelle « Cheng Square », ce qui se traduit par Cheng au carré. Eux l'écrivent tout simplement Cheng2 Duo.

Le choix est judicieux en ce sens qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une simple addition de talents mais d'une multiplication. Le disque Violoncelle français nous propose des œuvres de Debussy, de Fauré, de César Franck et de Camille Saint-Saëns. Des œuvres puissantes et tendres, magiques et envoûtantes où les complicités, piano-violoncelle et Silvie-Bryan sont tout simplement savoureuses.

« Nos parents travaillent tous les deux dans le monde des sciences. D'avoir des enfants artistes, ils nous appellent des mutations génétiques. »

Silvie Cheng

Silvie et Bryan Cheng parlent de leur parcours musical et de leur disque intitulé Violoncelle français au micro de Raymond Desmarteau.

RBB Kulturradio 12.01.2017, 20:04 Uhr (- 2017.01.12)
source: <http://www.kulturradio.de/programm/schem...>



BROADCAST Talente und Karrieren

Tiefe Saiten: Das Duo Cheng² und der Kontrabassist Wies de Boevé

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

Record Geijutsu Dec.2016 (- 2016.12.01)



Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

Rondo Nr. 962 // 15. - 21.10.2016 (- 2016.10.15)
source: http://www.rondomagazin.de/cd_zum_sonnta...



CD zum Sonntag

Sie zeichnen ein Panorama der Klangwelten zwischen 1860 und 1910, das bei allen Cello-Freunden die Herzen höher schlagen lassen dürfte: Saint-Saëns, Franck, Fauré, dazu die wunderbar impressionistische Sonate von Debussy. Und auch wenn die Zusammenstellung ein wenig Kitschgefahr bereit hält: Die ausgewählten Mélodies und Sonaten sind stilsicher und empfindsam musiziert von einem Duo, das sich hörbar gut aufeinander eingestellt hat.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

thewholenote.com 30 October 2018 (Michael Schulman - 2018.10.30)
source: <https://www.thewholenote.com/index.php/b...>



Bryan combines a dark, robust tone with jaw-dropping bravura, while Silvie creates an extraordinarily varied palette of keyboard colours that enhance her imaginative, nuanced phrasing. Together, they offer remarkably fresh approaches to familiar music, making their first two CDs so very special.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.bandcamp.com 01.11.2016 (- 2016.11.01)

source: <https://cheng2duo.bandcamp.com/album/vio...>



"Violoncelle Français" is the DEBUT album of German recording label audite's YOUNGEST artists to date, and this release marks the beginning of an audite recording series with the Cheng² Duo. The album has received excellent reviews internationally within a short time of its recent release – listeners have been raving about "the feelings it stirs", "the human voice the cello represents", "the perfect company for long road trips", "music that one wants to go back to frequently", and "a CD worth purchasing in many ways".

Named one of CBC Music's 2015 "30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30", the Cheng² Duo (pronounced Cheng Squared Duo) now presents its debut album with German classical label audite. The brother-and-sister duo's playing is steeped in a rare balance of unfiltered youthful joy and enthusiasm in their playing on one hand, and mature, historically informed, and profound interpretations on the other, commanding attention from the very first note.

This first disc makes the panorama of French chamber music for the cello and piano written between the 1860s and the 1910s come alive in all its diversity: from beloved sonatas whose composers mainly drew on the tradition of romantic composers, to modern impressionist works, to character pieces which formed part of the repertoire performed in sophisticated salons. Treasured compositions by Claude Debussy, César Franck, Gabriel Fauré, and Camille Saint-Saëns, and two additional bonus tracks (excerpts of French Baroque composer Louis Francœur's Sonata in E Major in arrangements by Jean-Delphin Alard and Arnold Trowell) are featured.

A second recording of Spanish works for cello and piano is already being planned for August 2017.

www.citeboomers.com 1 décembre 2016 (André Maccabée - 2016.12.01)

source: <http://www.citeboomers.com/cheng-duo-vio...>

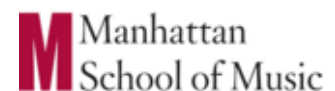


Le jeu du duo frère-soeur exprime un rare équilibre de joie et d'enthousiasme juvénile d'une part et d'une interprétation mature, profonde et historiquement juste d'autre part, stimulant l'attention dès la première note.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.msmnyc.edu January 2017 (- 2017.01.01)

source: <http://www.msmnyc.edu/offices/alumni/alu...>



Welcome to our Alumni News Highlights page

Check out the recent activities and accomplishments of our alumni

Silvie Cheng (BM '13, MM '15), alongside her cellist brother, Bryan Cheng, is the pianist of Cheng² Duo, which released its debut album, Violoncelle français, in October 2016, on the German classical label Audite, to international acclaim. Named by CBC Music as one of 2015's "30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30," the duo has performed throughout North America, Europe, and Asia, and has been featured on CBC Radio Two and Vermont Public Radio. Highlights of 2016 included a 13-city tour

throughout China and a 10-city tour across Canada as Debut Atlantic artists. Currently based in New York, Silvie is also the pianist of sTem trio, as well as a teaching artist of Manhattan School of Music's Distance Learning Program and the Bridge Arts Ensemble.

www.musicweb-international.com July 2017 (Des Hutchinson - 2017.07.01)
source: <http://www.musicweb-international.com/cl...>



It should come as no surprise that siblings Bryan and Silvie Cheng, performing as the Cheng2 Duo, have chosen a French-themed recital for their debut album, as they hail from Canada, and according to their bios spend a lot of their musical life on the eastern side. Bryan is the cellist and Silvie the pianist, and at ages 25 and 18 when this disc was recorded, they are, on the evidence here, already consummate musicians. While their recital has an emphatically youthful feel to it, and other shadings and insights may inform their readings over time, these are by any measure masterly performances – passionate, invigorating and wonderfully life-affirming.

The opening Debussy sonata establishes the considerable, if slightly nasal, tone of Bryan Cheng's 1754 Bartolomeo Tassini cello. This amplitude seems entirely natural, allowing both players full dynamic expression without compromising balance. Together with the highly realistic recording, close but not overbearing, it makes for very involving listening. If the Debussy sonata seems not as whimsical and enigmatic as, say, the classic Rostropovich/Britten (review) or more recent Queyras/Tharaud accounts, it instead brings a sense of fresh discovery and re-invention of a timeless masterpiece.

The three Fauré interludes that follow are beautifully projected, with the *Élégie* more urgent than the usual introspective wallow. The recital's centre of gravity, though, is the cello arrangement (by Jules Delsart) of the Franck violin sonata. In this form it is less flighty and extrovert than the original, but the mellowing influence of the cello does not compromise its structure. Indeed, the thematic material is all the more memorable, and the musical dialogue even more intense and muscular. Only in the *Recitativo – Fantasia* third movement does the transition become occasionally earth-bound, not that any blame could be laid at the feet of the Cheng2 Duo. Compared with the venerable du Pré/Barenboim recording (review), Bryan Cheng does at least as well, in richer and more refulgent tone, to float the cello line. The performance as a whole is tremendously ardent and virtuosic, and if the thrilling tension generated by the Cheng2 Duo has a touch of sibling rivalry to it, there's no harm in that. If there is a downside, the two Saint-Saëns makeweights then seem a little anti-climactic, if not redundant.

It's curious that given the theme of this recital there is no French translation of the booklet notes. Otherwise, the notes are excellent, and indicate the confidence Audite has in the Cheng2 Duo, as the narrative interweaves detail about them with the musicological argument. On the strength of this debut disc, that confidence is well founded.

www.pizzicato.lu 02/11/2016 (Remy Franck - 2016.11.02)
source: <http://www.pizzicato.lu/und-noch-ein-her...>



Und noch ein herausragender junger Cellist...

Der 18-jährige kanadisch-chinesische Cellist Bryan Cheng und seine sechs Jahre ältere Schwester Silvie spielen seit 13 Jahren zusammen und tun es seit 2011 unter dem Namen 'Cheng2Duo' (Cheng Squared Duo). Ihre Audite-CD 'Violoncelle Français' beginnen sie mit einer streckenweise sehr introvertierten und poetischen, aufs Ganze gesehen sehr fantasievollen und persönlichen Interpretation der Cellosonate von Claude Debussy. So verwegen haben nicht viele Interpreten mit Debussys Gefühlen gespielt, nicht oft kommt das Experimentelle der Sonate so gut zum Ausdruck, in der Debussy seiner Wut über die Deutschen ebenso Ausdruck verlieh wie der über seinen vom Krebs geschwächten Körper. Dabei klingen die oft überraschenden Tempiwechsel und die harschen Einschüsse immer klangschön und nicht ruppig. Das eminent Französische, das Debussy im Sinn hatte (er notierte, dass er dieses Werk als eine Affirmation französischer Kultur sah und als Beweis dafür, dass nicht einmal 30 Millionen 'Boches' den französischen Geist zerstören könnten), ist sehr präsent.

Drei kantable Fauré-Stücke führen zu César Francks Sonate, die ja eine vom Komponisten autorisierte Bearbeitung der Violinsonate durch den Cellisten Jules Delsart ist. Auf seinem hell timbrierten Cello, das dem lyrischen Grundverständnis des jungen 'Cellosängers' sicher entgegen kommt, scheint Bryan Cheng mehr am Kantablen interessiert zu sein als an der Leidenschaftlichkeit der Musik. So kommt denn eine eher abgeklärte Version dieser Sonate zustande.

Mit zwei Lollipops, dem Allegro Appassionato und dem unvermeidlichen 'Schwan' von Camille Saint-Saëns geht diese durchaus interessante CD zu Ende, auf der Schwester Silvie dem jungen Bruder Bryan immer gerne den Vortritt überlässt, denn am Ende hat man vor allem den Eindruck, einen ganz außergewöhnlichen Cellisten gehört zu haben. Unsere Zeit ist wirklich, wie Bryans Kollege Pablo Ferrandez sagt, ein Goldenes Zeitalter für Cellisten.

English Translation:

"And another outstanding young cellist..."

The 18-year-old Chinese-Canadian cellist Bryan Cheng and his sister Silvie, six years his elder, have been playing together for 13 years and have been known as the Cheng² Duo (Cheng Squared Duo) since 2011. Their Audite CD 'Violoncelle Français' begins with an often very introverted and poetic, but in general extremely imaginative and personal interpretation of the cello sonata by Claude Debussy. Most interpreters don't play Debussy's feeling with such audacity as this duo does, and not so often does one truly hear the expression of this sonata's experimentality, in which Debussy expressed his rage toward Germans as well as his body which was weakened by cancer. At the same time, the often surprising tempo changes and the jarring entries always sound beautiful and refined. The exceptional French quality which Debussy had in mind (he noted that he saw this work as an affirmation of French culture and as evidence that not even 30 million 'Boches' could destroy the French spirit) is very present.

Three cantabile Fauré pieces lead to César Franck's sonata, which is an arrangement authorized by the composer of the violin sonata by the cellist Jules Delsart. On his brightly-timbred cello, which certainly matches the lyrical fundamental understanding of the young 'cello singer', Bryan Cheng focuses more on the cantabile than on the passion of the music. Thus a more serene version of this sonata comes into being.

With two lollipops, the Allegro Appassionato and the unavoidable 'Swan' of Camille Saint-Saëns, this

thoroughly interesting CD comes to an end, on which sister Silvie always gladly gives her young brother Bryan precedence, as ultimately one has the foremost impression that one has heard a very extraordinary cellist. Our time is really, as Bryan's colleague Pablo Ferrandez says, a golden age for cellists.

Highly eloquent performances of a French program with two sonatas and some lollipops. Besides a very serene version of the Franck Sonata, it is especially a striking account of Debussy's Sonata that shows the talent of the Canadian Cheng² Duo. With long heartfully rendered singing lines Bryan Cheng gives us proof of the often-heard assertion that the cello sounds more like the human voice than any other instrument.

www.vpro.nl 19 Oktober 2016 (AvN - 2016.10.19)

source: <http://www.vpro.nl/vrije-geluiden/lees/t...>



Michael Finnisy, Cheng Squared Duo, Einzelgänger, Goat, Stick Men, Khmer Rouge Survivors

opmerkelijke nieuwe releases

All of the pieces are very happy classical hits, but performed with such feeling and enthusiasm and dedication.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

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