



Violonchelo del fuego

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Crescendo Magazine Le 18 juillet 2018 (Pierre Fontenelle - 2018.07.18)

source: <http://www.crescendo-magazine.be/voyage-...>



Voyage au cœur des fantaisies, passions, et danses espagnoles

On est impressionné par l'aisance et la propreté des interprétations des œuvres du compositeur-interprète Gaspar Cassadó, sommets de cette parution discographique. Synthèse formidable entre les avancées harmoniques impressionnistes, la technique avancée du violoncelle et le mouvement de Nationalisme Ibérique, sa formidable Suite est sans doute un des plus beaux fleurons du répertoire pour violoncelle seul.

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



Musik aus aller Welt

[...] ein Streifzug durch Spanien zu führenden Komponisten des 20. Jhdts.: Albeniz (aus »España«), Granados (aus »Goyescas« und »Danzas Españolas«), de Falla (aus »La vida breve« u. »El amor brujo«) und Turina (aus »Danzas fantásticas«), ferner Cassadós Suite f. Violoncello (3 Tanzsätze) und de Sarasates »Zigeunerweisen«, die als Eckpfeiler der virtuosen Violinliteratur gelten.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Facebook 28. Juni um 22:46 (Hans Ackermann - 2018.06.28)

source: <https://www.facebook.com/100005484814369...>



Spanische Komponisten, sehr schön bearbeitet für Cello und Klavier vom Cheng² Duo, mit Silvie und Bryan Cheng, hervorragend aufgenommen von Ludger Böckenhoff für sein Label audite, vorgestellt im kulturradio vom rbb.

<http://largestagelive.blogspot.de> Friday, 1 June 2018 (Ken Stephen - 2018.06.01)
source: <http://largestagelive.blogspot.com/2018/...>

Fire and Passion

Once again, I am breaking my own self-appointed mandate of live performance reviews to review a new recording. There's no justification, other than to say that I've been following the career of the musicians involved – the Cheng²Duo – for some years now with considerable interest.

Violonchelo del fuego ("Cello of Fire") is the eye-catching title of this new release from the German label Audite. The cover photos underline the Spanish pedigree of the music we'll be hearing.

Unlike the Duo's initial recording, this one contains only one work originally written for the ensemble of cello and piano. It matters not, for the music is all performed with as much fire and passion as if it were specifically composed with these instruments in mind. This new release also includes works for solo piano and solo cello, another innovation on record for these fine Canadian artists.

This Spanish recital constitutes a whirlwind tour through the great Spanish/Catalan music renaissance during the first half of the last century. It might be called a "Greatest Spanish Hits" compilation, but only in part since some of the works definitely live at the rarely-heard edges of the repertoire. As well, there is one work – the final one on the CD – which is something of an odd number since it is only Spanish by virtue of the nationality of its composer, certainly not in any stylistic way.

Traditional images of the music of Spain often evoke such comparisons as the strumming and plucking of guitars, the stamping of flamenco dancers' feet, and the clacking of castanets. To capture this feeling on instruments such as cello and piano requires the most precise pedalling and playing of staccato (on piano) and pizzicato (on cello), combined with rapid articulation, plenty of freedom of rhythm, and sudden, sharp dynamic contrasts. But these composers also included many pages of melting lyrical beauty, where the needs shift to sustained legato and careful shaping of phrases.

In all these respects and others, Silvie Cheng (piano) and Bryan Cheng (cello) have entirely captured the voices of these composers, and they've done so with energy, verve, and spirit.

From the very first notes of the opening number, the Intermezzo from the opera Goyescas by Enrique Granados, it's plain that we're in a very different musical world from the one which the Cheng²Duo's previous recording explored. Later in the recording, we encounter Granados again in an arrangement of perhaps his best-known composition, the Andaluza, fifth movement of his twelve Spanish Dances for piano. This is one work where I noted especially the difference in colour of the whole as the melody was taken by the cello in a position in the centre of the harmony, where it originally appeared on the top. This gave the entire dance a more autumnal feeling.

Isaac Albeniz, the most redoubtable of all Spanish composers for the piano, appears for only one work here, but it's a delight: the Malaguena from his suite Espana. This work calls for a lighter texture and colour, and the Duo deliver, finding a real sense of fantasy in this beautiful number.

The music of Manuel de Falla is generously represented. The first Spanish Dance from his opera La vida breve opens with an energetic presentation of the main theme. The central slower section brings the most forceful bass notes on piano, again with matching powerhouse pizzicato playing on the cello. The return of the main theme is decorated in this arrangement with additional virtuosic flourishes, all played with great flair and verve.

Equally powerful, if anything even more vivid and dramatic, is the famous Ritual Fire Dance from de Falla's ballet El amor brujo. Especially impressive here is the very wide dynamic range of the playing as the music

leaps instantly from the very quiet throbbing rhythm to a full-throated fortissimo.

For a microcosm of the entire musical world of this record, turn to de Falla's Seven Popular Spanish Songs. From the fleet-footed Seguidilla murciana and Jota to the languorous Asturiana and the serene beauty of Nana, the Cheng²Duo capture all the diverse moods of this masterly cycle. In such a performance, one scarcely misses the words. The passionate Polo, with its stabbing chords on the piano and leaping cello line is a highlight of the entire album.

Silvie Cheng plays Turina's Exaltacion with distinction, the dream-like opening giving place to a vigorous treatment of the main theme and a lighter, more fantastic tone for the central section. It's a pity that room wasn't found to include the other two Fantastic Dances, as these pieces are not heard on record nearly often enough.

Bryan Cheng presents a rare and significant Suite for solo cello by cellist/composer Gaspar Cassadó, a work which not only deserves but demands wider currency. Three movements, each inspired by different traditional dance forms, call for the widest range of tone colours and moods, and this thoughtful performance truly captures that diversity.

Another Cassadó rarity follows, Requeibros ("Flirtations" or "Compliments") for cello and piano – another dance, this time somewhat more popular in character, and played by the Duo with panache. For a more detailed look at this music by Cassadó, go to my rare music blog: Cello Beauties From Spain.

The final selection is the odd number, the famous Zigeunerweisen by Pablo de Sarasate, one of the staples of the violin repertoire. The central-European gypsy atmosphere of this piece contrasts oddly with the authentic voices of Spain heard in the rest of the album. What's most striking here is the absolute clarity and precision of Bryan Cheng's virtuoso fireworks on the cello, since the notes are much farther apart than on a violin and the cellist's hand has to race back and forth twice as quickly along the fingerboard!

Taken as a whole, this new recording presents a distinguished survey of that proud and magnificent Spanish musical renaissance of the early twentieth century. Silvie and Bryan Cheng fill every selection with the fire and passion which are so essential to this music.

Audite's recording team has captured all the precision and energy of the playing with great clarity, set against a nicely resonant backdrop. A word of warning though: turn your volume down before you play this recording – it has been transferred at a very high level. The album includes detailed and informative programme notes in German, English, and French.

RBB Kulturradio Do 28.06.2018 | 13:10 (Hans Ackermann - 2018.06.28)

source: <https://www.kulturradio.de/rezensionen/c...>



Cheng² Duo: "Violonchelo del fuego"

Das kanadische Geschwister-Duo Bryan und Silvie Cheng hat Musik verschiedener spanischer Komponisten für Cello und Klavier aufgenommen

Neben Einzelsätzen aus bekannten Suiten wie "España" von Isaac Albeniz oder den "Danzas Españolas" von Enrique Granados haben die Cheng-Geschwister auch eine vollständige Suite aufgenommen: "Siete Canciones populares españolas" von Manuel de Falla.

Der 1876 in Cadiz geborene Komponist hat hier sieben spanische Volkslieder und Tänze in die Konzertmusik des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts überführt – flirrende Mittelmeerklänge, die das kanadische Duo

mit Temperament und Hingabe spielt.

Flirrend

Gaspar Cassadós "Suite per Violoncello" trägt Bryan Cheng dann allein und äußerst virtuos mit seinem Cello vor. Das 1926 komponierte Werk bezieht sowohl die barocke Sarabande als auch volkstümliche katalanische Tänze mit ein. Flexibel im Ton, bringt Bryan Cheng beide musikalischen Welten in den insgesamt drei Sätzen des anspruchsvollen Werkes zusammen.

Flamenco

Neben den beiden komplett aufgenommenen Werken finden sich verschiedene Zugabenstücke, wie das Intermezzo aus den "Goyescas" von Granados, eine Malagueña – als Flamenco-Reverenz von Isaac Albéniz – und abschließend Pablo de Sarasates "Airs bohémiennes". Eigentlich ein Bravourstück für die Violine, das der gerade erst 20 Jahre alt gewordene Bryan Cheng aber nicht minder virtuos auf seinem Cello spielt – als Abschluss eines gelungenen musikalischen Ausflugs auf die iberische Halbinsel.

Europäisch

Aufgenommen wurde das Album in hervorragender Qualität in der Berliner Jesus Christus Kirche. Der transparente, luftige Klang passt hervorragend zum sommerlichen Repertoire, das die Geschwister Cheng hier wieder sehr stilsicher interpretieren – wie schon beim Debütalbum "Violoncelle français", bei dem vor zwei Jahren ausschließlich französische Komponisten aufgenommen wurden.

Egal, welches Land sich die beiden kanadischen Musiker für ihre nächste Europareise aussuchen werden – man kann sich jetzt schon darauf freuen.

Süddeutsche Zeitung 20. August 2018 (Harald Eggebrecht - 2018.08.20)

source: <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/klass...>



Ironisch virtuos

Beethoven geht immer, das Casals-Quartett hat mit dessen 16 Streichquartetten einen Anfang gemacht. Aber was ist mit Boris Blacher?

Vibrato dient hier in unterschiedlichster Schwingung als Farbeffekt, nicht als Passpartout. Die Plötzlichkeit im Wechsel von Hell und Dunkel, absolut konstituierend in der Musik dieser Komponisten, gelingt blitzschnell und überraschend. Das Elegische singt Cheng ohne Schmalz aus, das Bittere trifft er genau. So werden de Fallas "Siete canciones" zu messerscharf umrissenen Charakterstücken und Cassadós Solosuite zum Ereignis herber, strenger, doch auch träumerischer Schönheit.

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.pizzicato.lu 27/05/2018 (Remy Franck - 2018.05.27)

source: <https://www.pizzicato.lu/category/cd-rev...>



Notizbuch eines Rezensenten – CD-Kurzrezensionen von Remy Franck (Folge 198)

Spanisches Programm

Das 'Cheng2 Duo' (Bryan und Silvie Cheng) spielt bei Audite ein spanisches Programm mit Bearbeitungen für Cello und Klavier. Die Geschwister bedienen es beide mit phänomenaler Virtuosität, gleichzeitig aber auch sehr stimmungsvoll, wobei Bryan Cheng auf seinem Tassini-Cello mit stupender Dynamik kräftig konturierte Basstöne und feinste, zarteste Höhen erreicht, die immer kantabel, immer schön und immer perfekt intoniert, absolut berückend klingen.

www.qobuz.com June 2018 (- 2018.06.01)

source: <https://www.qobuz.com/ie-en/album/violon...>



What an incredible energy these two bring to the table! [...] The Spain of Cheng² is packed with fire and flames [...] Here is a strong and beautiful album, presenting – with perfect conviction – well-known works but in new formats, thus shining a new musical light onto them.

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