



**Robert Schumann & Johannes Brahms:
Cello Concerto, Op. 129 & Piano
Concerto, Op. 15**

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Gramophone (Rob Cowan - 2013.10.01)

GRAMOPHONE

Contrasting virtuosos in their youthful prime

On the same day that The Beatles recorded 'From me to you' and the country singer Patsy Cline died in a plane crash (aged 30), two fine young virtuosos shared equal billing for a Berlin broadcast with the Radio Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the gifted 27-year-old Gerd Albrecht. We already have EMI recordings of both performers playing their chosen repertoire and in each case what you experience on this wonderful CD is quite different to what you'll hear on the commercial alternatives. With the 18-year-old Jacqueline du Pré in Schumann's Cello Concerto, in addition to an extra shot of adrenalin there's an extensive last-movement cadenza not included on the EMI version. The performance is characteristic in its combination of fiery attack, sometimes with a lacerating edge, and an inward, musing quality that employs a veiled tone and a tremulous but never overbearing vibrato. Above all, du Pré stresses the boldness and brave resolve of this late but moving score and Albrecht offers her strong and unaffected support. In the case of Brahms's First Piano Concerto, Bruno Leonardo Gelber's EMI recording of three years later is swifter than the current broadcast by nearly three minutes. Gelber, who was at the time just a few days short of his 22nd birthday, lets us in gently, varying his touch and never resorting to percussive excess. As the performance progresses, he assumes ever-mounting levels of grandeur, producing a rich welter of tone with fabulous doubleoctave work and impressive dexterity. His account of the Adagio is broad and beautifully sustained, and the closing Rondo is played with enormous panache, a fair match for even Serkin and Fleisher. Albrecht again directs a strong, rigorously argued account of the orchestral score and the mono sound is vivid and well balanced.