



Sergei Prokofiev: Violin Concertos

aud 97.733

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Franziska Pietsch, a one-time East German prodigy, has followed a fine, rather dark reading of Prokofiev's two violin sonatas with an equally captivating version of the two concertos. Prokofiev's popular violin concertos have nearly a hundred recordings. Aficionados will have their favorites, but this new recording deserves consideration as a leading choice.

In the first concerto, Pietsch soars lyrically from the outset, although with a touch of mystery. Her scherzo is rudely demonic, and exciting to hear. The final movement contains lots of lush, romantic music, which Pietsch plays with a knowing glance and not a hint of naiveté. Pietsch is a forceful musical personality. She doesn't quite swagger, but plays with wonderful self-assurance. Her performance has more bite than the fine precision of that by Julia Fischer, and is better recorded than that of Arabella Steinbacher.

In the second concerto, Pietsch emphasizes the connections with Prokofiev's contemporary Romeo and Juliet ballet. She captures Prokofiev's unique blend of modernism and romanticism from the beginning. Her finale is sometimes spooky, but in a comic sort of way, again with a knowing wink to the listener. Her playing is wild enough to earn those castanets in this Spanish- inflected music (which received its first performance in Madrid). Among competing versions, Patricia Kopatchinskaja is musically fascinating, if too often unlovely to hear, despite wonderful accompaniment by Vladimir Jurowski. Cho-liang Lin's sound is more beautiful, but Pietsch plays more fiercely, with bolder interpretive choices.

Christian Măcelaru's direction of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin is in easy sympathy with Pietsch, playing with color and precision. Audite engineers turn in an impressive performance of their own, capturing wind voices with clarity, and letting us enjoy softly repeated figures in the violins.

Pietsch is a playful and musical virtuoso, making these concertos sound fresh, although she must have been playing them for much of her life.



Sergei PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, op 19 (1917) [21:56]

Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, op 63 (1935) [28:08]

Franziska Pietsch (violin)

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin/Christian Mäcelaru
rec. 2017, Jesus-Christus-Kirche, Berlin-Dahlem, Germany**AUDITE 97.733** [50:07]

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