



After the richly detailed beauty of the Sibelius comes scampering originality from Gordon Crosse, and finally the brittle romancing of Alwyn's early Sonatina. Throughout, the recorded sound combines warmth and immediacy with all the intimacy of a live performance, revealing Humphreys and Eimer at their stellar best.

CATHERINE NELSON

ASCENT

BOWEN Phantasy op. 54 **ASSAD**

Metamorfose **SCHUMANN**

Märchenbilder op.113 **KNOX** Fuga

libre for solo viola **SHOSTAKOVICH**

Impromptu **WAXMAN** Carmen Fantasy

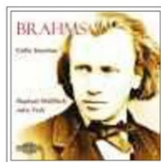
Matthew Lipman (viola)

Henry Kramer (piano)

CEDILLE CDR 90000 184

It's up, up and away for this programme of viola music

From the first unaccompanied phrases of York Bowen's *Phantasy*, Matthew Lipman commands attention with his authoritative phrasing and attractive sound on a 1700 Matteo Goffriller viola. The *Phantasy*'s various sections are nicely characterised, both players – Henry Kramer a most empathetic collaborator – displaying a light touch in the scherzando sections before they let rip in the Rachmaninoff-like climax. Clarice Assad's composition follows on logically, her sound world having grown from essentially the same roots while transcending them through unorthodox instrumental techniques; the composer's Brazilian background shines through in the final, buoyant *Dance of the Butterflies*. This is a first recording, and another one is at hand with Shostakovich's recently



rediscovered Impromptu, a two-minute morsel that Lipman dispatches in an appropriately heart-on-sleeve manner.

Schumann's *Märchenbilder* are a much more crowded field – within the past few months I have been profoundly moved by the deep-delving, emotionally overwhelming interpretations of Tabea Zimmermann and Jürg Dähler – but Lipman makes an excellent showing with his dark-hued reading, complete with baying 'horns' and menacing spiccato, and capped by a flowing cradle song. Garth Knox's *Fuga libre* becomes a kaleidoscope of variegated timbres, crystal-clear harmonics and a wealth of ponticello sounds. While not a 'first recording on viola' as pitched, Waxman's *Carmen Fantasy* makes for a rousing conclusion to this most impressive, well recorded and lovingly presented recital.

CARLOS MARÍA SOLARE

BRAHMS Cello Sonatas: no.1 in

E minor op.38, no.2 in F major op.99;

Sonatensatz (Scherzo) op. posth.

Raphael Wallfisch (cello)

John York (piano)

NIMBUS NI 5972

A duo of nearly four decades' standing celebrates with Brahms

Wallfisch and York mark 37 years of playing together with this two-disc Brahms project (the second CD, which will be released in July 2019, will comprise transcriptions of his clarinet and violin sonatas). And although Wallfisch has recorded the cello sonatas with his father Peter, this is the first time he and York have committed them to disc.

The result is a coherent set with an intimate, conversational feel.



The recording is warm and burnished, closely picking up the timbres of the instruments, though the cello is occasionally smothered when the piano has a busier part. I liked the gentle, understated repeat of the E minor's first movement theme, and its even more wistful recapitulation, but I found the fugal finale rather leaden – only at the più Presto was any excitement conveyed.

The F major Sonata's first movement, too, loses its urgency through a conservative tempo, particularly in the semiquaver figure at the end of the exposition. The recording really brings out the rich, fruity sounds of Wallfisch's C string in the Adagio and there is some vigorous, punchy playing in the Scherzo, with a powerful sense of desperation in its repeat. We also get a persuasive taste of the transcriptions to come, with the Scherzo Brahms wrote for Joachim's birthday sonata, engagingly and excitingly performed.

JANET BANKS

JACQUET DE LA GUERRE Chamber

Music from the Brossard Collection

Bach Players

COVIELLO CLASSICS COV91815

Elegant and thoughtful trio sonatas from the era of Louis XIV

This disc is the first of a projected series devoted to French composers of the time of Louis XIV. Featuring works by Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre (1665–1729), its main course comprises four Italianate trio sonatas and two violin/continuo sonatas copied out and preserved by the composer's contemporary, Sébastien de Brossard. The Bach Players are persuasive advocates for the trio sonatas, shaping each work's



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