



CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 16298

Cello Waltzes

vol.1

Chopin

Waltzes | Preludes | Mazurkas

Pieter
Wispelwey
cello

Dejan Lazić piano

Chopin

Cello Waltzes, vol.1

Pieter Wispelwey cello

Dejan Lazic piano

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | Grande Valse Brillante in D Major op. 18 / Vivo (trans. Carl Davidov, 1838-1889) | 4:38 |
| 2 | Prelude no. 2 in a Minor op. 28 / Lento (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 2:08 |
| 3 | Mazurka in a Minor op. 67 no. 4 / Allegretto (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 2:44 |
| 4 | Valse in A Major op. 42 (trans. Carl Davidov) | 3:40 |
| 5 | Prelude no. 6 in b Minor op. 28 / Lento assai (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 1:44 |
| 6 | Mazurka in C Major op. 67 no. 3 / Allegretto (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 1:22 |
| 7 | Polonaise Brillante in C Major op. 3 / Lento - Alla Polacca: Allegro con spirito | 9:08 |
| 8 | Prelude no. 4 in e Minor op. 28 / Largo (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 2:10 |
| 9 | Mazurka in a Minor op. 68 no. 2 / Lento (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 2:13 |
| 10 | Scherzo (2nd movement from Sonata for cello and piano op. 65) | 4:32 |
| 11 | Mazurka in B Flat Major (op. posth.) (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 1:24 |
| 12 | Valse Brillante in a Minor op. 34 no. 2 / Lento (trans. Carl Davidov) | 5:29 |
| 13 | Prelude no. 7 in A Major op. 28 / Andantino (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 0:38 |
| 14 | Etude in e Minor op. 25 no. 7 / Lento a piacere (trans. Alexander Glazanov, 1865-1936) | 4:45 |
| 15 | Prelude no. 3 in G Major / Vivace (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 1:01 |
| 16 | Mazurka in g Minor op. 67 no. 2 / Cantabile (trans. Wispelwey-Lazic) | 1:35 |
| 17 | Nocturne in c sharp Minor, (op. posth.) / Lento (trans. Gregor Piatigorsky, 1903-1976) | 3:40 |
| 18 | Valse Brillante in A Major op. 34 no. 1 / Vivace (trans. Carl Davidov) | 4:55 |

Total time 58.43

19 **Encore**



CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 16298

© & © 2000

Production & Distribution

CHANNEL CLASSICS

RECORDS BV

Waalwijk 76

4171 CG Herwijnen

The Netherlands

Phone (+31.418) 58 18 00

Fax (+31.418) 58 17 82

E-mail

clubchannel@channel.nl

P.O. Box 5642

Englewood New Jersey

07631 U.S.A.

Phone (+1.201) 568 1544

Fax (+1.201) 568 6146

More information about
our releases can be found
on the WWW:

<http://www.channel.nl>

Made in Germany



photo: Camilla van Zuylen

Pieter Wispelwey received his early training from Dicky Boeke and Anner Bylsma in Amsterdam followed by studies with Paul Katz in the USA and William Pleeth in Great Britain. He won the Elisabeth Everts Prize (1985), which is a biennial award endowed upon the most promising musician in the Netherlands.

Wispelwey is one of the first of a generation of general specialists, performing exquisitely on either an authentic or modern cello. His expert stylistic knowledge, original and profound musical thinking, augmented by a phenomenal technique enable him to render individual, yet remarkable interpretations of the cello repertoire from J.S.Bach to Elliot Carter. For years now, he has won the hearts of critics and public alike with his unique performances of the Bach and Britten unaccompanied cello suites, and with his recitals of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas either on authentic or modern instruments.

Wispelwey is in keen demand as soloist. A tour through the Australian capital cities with the Australian Chamber Orchestra was a triumph. A typical review in Melbourne's 'The Age', ushered in a cellist for the 21st century when it reported: 'To say Pieter Wispelwey's music-making is ravishing is to utter an understatement of huge proportions...the concert did everything to confirm him as one of the world's greatest cellists. As a soloist, he played like a man possessed; his face, his whole body seemed consumed by a musical spirit whose familiar is the cello'.

His recordings by the Dutch quality label Channel Classics have all been highly acclaimed by the international press, and no less than six have won international awards.

Pianist, clarinetist and composer **Dejan Lazic**, was born in Zagreb in 1977. He began his piano studies at the age of 7, at 9 he was already playing the clarinet, and a year later he wrote his first compositions. His career started with a successful debut in Zagreb. He participated in various competitions and won first prizes for both instruments. His meeting with Hungarian pianist Imre Rohmann at the Bartók Festival in Szombathely (Hungary) added a new dimension to his artistic development. Motivated by this positive collaboration, Dejan and his family decided to move to Salzburg, where he continued his studies at the Mozarteum. Dejan Lazic made recordings for radio and television at home and abroad (RTL, WDR, RAI, RTBF, ORF), and played with various symphony orchestras in the former

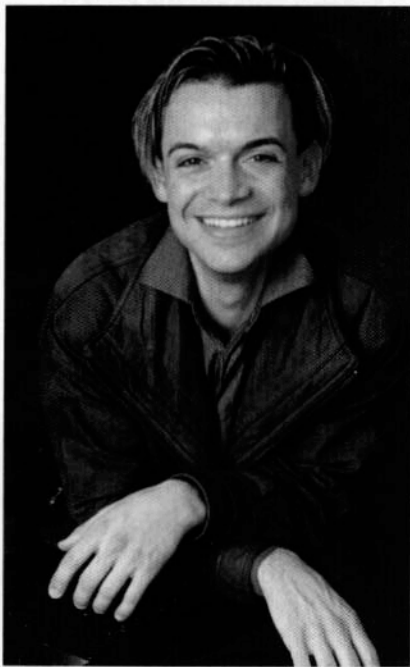


photo: Camilla van Zuylen

Yugoslavia as well as with the St Petersburg Hermitage Orchestra, The Rhine Philharmonic, the Zilina Chamber Orchestra, the Walloon Chamber Orchestra, and the Camerata Academica Salzburg. He concertized in many of Europe's greatest halls, including the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and took part in a number of international festivals in Italy, Spain, Holland, Belgium, Rumania, Slovakia, Germany, and Austria. He made his first CD with the world famous Solisti di Zagreb in 1991 (Mozart, Clarinet Concerto KV 622 and Piano Concerto KV 449). His double gift as an instrumental virtuoso is augmented by his remarkable composing talent. His works have already been performed in several concerts and festivals in Europe (e.g. Brussels and Salzburg).

Essays on fate and grace

Let's for the fun of it pretend I need to defend the transcribers cause, in this case Davidov's Chopin adaptations. Or shall I start with thanking him for precisely that, for choosing Chopin's piano waltzes for transcription, because what might seem an unlikely choice turns out to be such a completely blissful one?

Maybe I'll begin with a bit of playful, defensive manoeuvring. First of all we can safely say that the cello was very dear to Chopin. Three out of his five chamber music works are for cello and piano: the expansive sonata, the delightful Grand Duo Concertante, written together with his friend the cellist Auguste Franchomme and the Polonaise Brillante. Also, in his piano works he often seems to try to evoke a cello sound, which explains nicknames for piano pieces such as 'cello prelude' or 'cello etude' that circulate among pianists.

Secondly, apart from being a stupendous innovator of piano technique and a revolutionary as far as style and harmony are concerned, Chopin should be considered as one of the melodic geniuses of the 19th century. Sometimes one wonders whether the power of his music doesn't lie more in its lyricism than in the drama of its outbursts, the vulcanism, the storms of virtuosity or its refined pianism. Whatever his temperament comes up with, this enormous array of moods, from the fatalistic to the ecstatic, from the destructive to the all-embracing, he seems to be able to find melodic expression for everything. His lyrical vocabulary seems endlessly resourceful, producing passionate, vulnerable and elegant melodies, full of emotion and sometimes just simply ravishing.

Now for the best defense: Attack! If we took one of those melodies, say a left hand theme from a piano piece, a theme pianists would call a cello melody, then a pianist would try to play the melody 'cellistically', imagining the sound of a cello. If a cellist were to play that same tune, he would in his effort to imitate a singer, have a baritone's voice in his mind. What would happen though if we would give that melody (plus a text) to a singer? Wouldn't he also, with some sort of neo-platonic intentions, try to transport his listeners beyond his

instrument, his voice (and even the text)? At his place in the chain that would mean straight into spiritual realms.

But then, text, voice and instruments, are they not all mere ladders to that higher goal? Isn't all music making essentially an act of sublimation, of symbolism, of bringing the unattainable into reach? On the other hand, there is no sublimation without seduction, no elation without the physical pleasure of music making. Most of the time one simply can't tell from which element the ecstasy of a great musical experience stems, from the subliminal or the playful and sensual.

If we agree we hereby have isolated the two essential musical elements, pure play and pure spirit, seemingly at the two ends of music's spectrum, but both inseparably at work when good music comes to life, surely we can then also identify them as the two major green lights for the transcriber.

Or marching in from a different angle: of course Chopin's music is full of idiomatic piano writing, specially in the passages that more or less rely on virtuosity. In the more cantabile passages there is this fabulous finesse and sophistication to make the listener forget we are dealing with a percussive instrument. In a militant mood one could argue that in a cello transcription it's the other way around. What we might feel are the essential bits, the cantabile passages, sounds completely natural on a cello and it's the elegant rendering of weightless virtuosity and the launching of instrumental fireworks where the challenge lies. And by the way, what a welcome challenge it is to transfigure our slightly awkward, oversized vertical violin into an effortlessly manageable mini double bass.

I realise I'm pushing it a bit by almost declaring the waltzes better off played on a cello. After all, when I think of unsurpassably superior performances by pianists like Ignaz Friedman or Dinu Lipatti, I more feel like forgetting about the cello as a musical instrument all together. But in stead of starting to shoot my own soldiers, I'd better call this operation off now.

On to serious matters: interpretation. What fun and fulfillment there is in interpreting Chopin! In the recording venue we played some preludes and mazurkas through for the first time, sight reading from the piano score and it was no less than shocking how powerful and original some were. I remember for example the shock of the first confrontation with the 2nd prelude (and shortly thereafter the excitement of recording it, trying to preserve that initial emotion). How two minutes of music can become an essay on fate! Like the 7th prelude is one on grace.

All those short pieces have such strong and explicit characters, but perhaps even better, at the same time they seem to elude us. Maybe because they are so real to life in the sense that in the course of playing them, the portrayals end statements keep evolving, changing and developing, nuances being added, as if we are dealing with round characters in a story. A piece like the 4th prelude is never static or one sidedly definable. It's more like a fluidum, making the listener feel as if he is witnessing the creation of thought or the search for a lost memory.

It follows that the biggest challenge in interpreting these short stories, maximen and poems or whatever they are, lies in shaping the subtleties that are at the core of each of them, the details that ultimately carry the message. A challenge as welcome as the above mentioned one, because both are relatively rarely put to us cellists. In our main repertoire, if there is virtuosity asked for it's too often just square figuration and the short compositional form is almost completely missing. Singers and pianists can devote their lives to an abundance of Lieder and short pieces, while we are suffering in deprivation.

Well, not total deprivation. We shouldn't forget about our six preludes and thirty dances from Bach's cello suites. Specially the skills we've developed in those dance movements. How fortunate we are that we now have 19th century waltzes, mazurkas and polonaises to apply those to. Yet another reason to thank Davidov for putting us on this track.

Pieter Wispelwey

Chopin was a man of many faces, and so he was a kaleidoscopic composer, even though he composed almost exclusively for the piano. He was a man who, as a genuine artist, contained diversity within himself, and who nevertheless remained himself amidst all the diversity of his compositions. Let us examine this more closely.

There is the Chopin who, as a Polish exile in Paris, recalls his fatherland in music which is as personal as it is filled with tenderness. This is manifest in his mazurkas (originally rapid Polish dances, which sometimes were danced with vigorous foot-stamping). The mazurka's influence seeps through his entire oeuvre; on this cd we have one written when he was 17 (op. 68/2) and another, op. 67/4 which was the last composition which he was able to finish, shortly before his death: "I must call mazurkas from this heart," he said. It kept him alive, so to speak. It is noteworthy as well, perhaps, that when he needs to breathe freely for a moment in the middle of the painful confession implied by the Preludes op. 28, he chooses a light-hearted mazurka (seventh prelude). [Moreover: however deeply rooted in Polish culture he might be, Chopin surely felt no need to be a purely folkloristic composer. On the contrary, he had a poor opinion of ethnomusicology: "Better not a trace of all that stuff, for all those attempts merely distract genius from its goal: one day it will discover the essence of truth all on its own. Until then, all of this beautiful material is overwhelmed with false noses, made-up faces, wooden legs or stilts".

Chopin's most "Polish" music also includes the polonaises, which are more stately court dances. The Polonaise brillante was written before he left Poland. It was intended for Prince Radziwill, a competent cellist, and his daughter (who was apparently frightened off by the piano part). This is the more aristocratic Chopin, the Chopin who later set himself up in luxurious surroundings in Paris and became a popular presence in the cultural salons, who also composed the waltzes. They are very different from Johann Strauß's waltzes, which Chopin had encountered in Vienna. He had immediately seen that he had no talent for that sort of music, and developed his own version, as graceful as it was sensitive. "If this waltz must be danced," said Schumann about the waltz, opus 42, "then half of the dancers should be countesses." But even countesses would probably be hard put to dance to the waltz in a minor. The only suitable response to this waltz, Chopin's own favorite, which descends into the depths of a melancholy temperament in its three minutes, is a deep bow. If we had not encountered it before: the 24 Préludes op. 28 set before us Chopin's innermost being. Is there a sort of psychoanalysis hidden behind the modest title? Ruins, Schumann called them, "there is also much that is feverish, sick, repellent...[he has the

boldest and proudest poet's soul of this age]. The majority were written during one of the wretchedest periods of Chopin's life, the winter that he lived in Majorca. An old abandoned monastery, a hostile native population, much illness, rain....The second prelude was composed earlier; its dark mood disturbed listeners as late as the 20th century. Chopin wrote it at 20, when, touring abroad, he heard of the fall of Warsaw: "The bells of Stuttgart have just tolled midnight. How many deaths did this moment bring? Good people and bad -- all related now that they are dead--from this it is apparent that death is humanity's best deed." With this somber, almost cynical comment, Chopin, the man and the music, has given us a self-portrait nearly complete.

Stephan Westra, translation: David Shapero

colophon

Production
Producer
Recording engineer, editing
Photo cover
Cover design
Liner notes
Piano technician

Channel Classics Records by
C. Jared Sacks, Pieter Wispelwey
C. Jared Sacks
Ruud Balk
David Louf, Utrecht
Pieter Wispelwey, Stephan Westra
Erik van der Heide

Technical information

Microphones
Digital converter
Recording location
Recording dates
Instruments

Bruel & Kjaer 4003, Schoeps
24 Bit Prism / Genex Recorder
Doopegezinde Kerk, Deventer
May 2000
cello: Anonymous, French (1860), piano: Steinway

discography Pieter Wispelwey

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| CCS 3592 | Beethoven: Complete Sonatas for Pianoforte and Cello (double cd) |
| CCS 5493 | Brahms: Sonata e minor, op.38 - Sonata F Major, opus 99 |
| CCS 6294 | Vivaldi: 6 Cello Sonatas |
| CCS 6494 | Beethoven: Variations for violoncello and pianoforte |
| CCS 6794 | Franz Schubert: String Quintet in C Major Opus 163 |
| CCS 7395 | J. Haydn: Cello Concertos in C & D; Symphony nr. 104, D Major |
| CCS 7495 | Hindemith, Sessions, Ligeti |
| CCS 8695 | Dvorák: Concerto in B minor / Tchaikovsky, Dvorák, Davidov, Arensky |
| CCS 9596 | Max Reger: Three Suites for Cello Solo |
| CCS 9696 | Schubert: Arpeggione, 3 Sonatines opus 137 |
| CCS 10097 | Vivaldi: Concerti |
| CCS 10797 | Chopin, Fauré, Poulenc |
| CCS 11097 | Schumann Cello Concerto (& ACO) /Hindemith, Schumann |
| CCS 12898 | One of a kind, Music by Brett Dean |
| CCS 12298 | Bach Suites for violoncello solo (double cd) |
| CCS 12998 | Elgar, Lutoslawski: Cello Concertos |
| CCS 14198 | Gamba Sonatas |
| CCS 15398 | Shostakovich/Kodály |

Dejan Lazic:

- CCS 13398 Mozart 'Retrospection'
CCS 15998 Chopin, pianoworks, vol.1