

## R Schumann

**Stücke im Volkston, Op. 102; Adagio and Allegro in A flat, Op. 70; Fantasiestücke; Cello Concerto**

Sol Gabetta (cello), Bertrand Chamayou (piano); Basel Chamber Orchestra/Giovanni Antonini

Sony 88985352272 58:11 mins



Beware first impressions. Listening to Sol Gabetta's lean, volatile, often sharply featured

Schumann you might assume that her purpose is polemical. Let's forget all that Romantic dreaminess, pale lilies dripping with tears, and welcome back Mephistopheles, the wickedly ingenious, sometimes grotesque prankster who so troubled Clara Schumann. The opening of the *Adagio und Allegro*, almost vibrato-less and more edgily plaintive than sweetly caressing, seems to seal the deal.

But keep listening and Gabetta's powers of persuasion do begin to work a transformation. Gone is the

notion of Schumann as a kind of German Romantic Fotherington-Thomas – and perhaps that's no bad thing. Have we focused too much on the vulnerability, the exquisitely pained tenderness, and lost the demonic element in Schumann? Certainly she makes a remarkable case for her re-viewing of the Cello Concerto, which emerges as nervous, mercurial, more brilliantly lateral in its thinking than in any other recording I can remember. Even the orchestration seems more incisive, more in keeping with the cello's thought-processes under Giovanni Antonini's sympathetic direction, and with the less plush, more wiry and transparent sound of the period instruments. The finale holds the attention particularly well – the dreamlike logic goes on almost to the end, and what a fascinating, unsettling dream it is. Going back to Steven Isserlis though, I feel he manages to convey a lot of this too, though with much more tenderness. His devil has a heart too. Gabetta feels a shade more – ruthless? But her fascinatingly fresh approach needs to be experienced.

Your conception of Schumann may never be quite the same again.

Stephen Johnson

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Telemann the Chameleon

**Telemann:** Kleine Cammer-Musik – Partitas Nos 1 & 4; Fantasia for Solo Violin No. 7 in E flat, etc; plus works by **JD Braun** and **JF Fasch**

Bergen Barokk

Lawo LWC1158 76:40 mins



Bergen Barokk is best known in the UK for its ongoing series of Telemann's sacred cantatas,

*Harmonische Gottesdienst*. Here, though, the ensemble – consisting of recorders, bassoon and harpsichord – presents a selection of pieces from Telemann's vast repository of chamber music.

Many of the items have been either arranged or adjusted to suit this particular instrumental combination. Additionally, two pieces by a contemporaneous

Frenchman, Jean-Daniel Braun have been inserted into one of Telemann's Fantasias for solo flute or, in this instance, recorder. Further interrupting the Telemann flow, so to speak, is a melodically appealing Sonata for bassoon by his gifted contemporary from Zerbst, Johann Friedrich Fasch.

The menu is an attractive one, though, dare I say it, perhaps more rewarding in the hands of a performer than in the ears of a listener. Indeed, the author of the booklet essay deals succinctly with the matter: 'If the angels in heaven had to play music for God, then they'd play Bach. However, if it were to be for each other, I'm sure they would play Telemann.' Having sounded a note of caution to the reader, I can fully commend the accomplished playing of Bergen Barokk. Its playing is sympathetic and stylish, and the music is enlivened by thoughtfully-articulated phrases and evident affection for the music.

Nicholas Anderson

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## kings place

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