MONITOR COLLECTORS SERIES

DAVID SOYER and HARRIET WINGRENN
Play MENDELSSOHN
Sonatas for Cello and Piano

The Violoncello Sonata in B-flat (Op. 45) — written for Paul Mendelssohn — was composed at Leipzig in 1838, the same year in which both Bizet and Bruch were born. As is the case with the sonata Op. 58, this earlier work is mature, interesting to both players, and demonstrates Mendelssohn's mastery of the cello-piano medium. Noteworthy is the composer's ability to write music characteristic of each individual instrument, and then to combine them in a texture of startling lucidity. Although this is not music of extreme technical difficulty, it is music which is hard to play well.

The andante movement of Op. 45 is unusual (at least for Mendelssohn) in that it is held together by a simple rhythmic motif which can be heard throughout. The first and last movements are somewhat alike, the former being the more strongly knit despite the broad, attractive main theme and the lovely quiet coda of the finale.

Op. 58 is in four movements, the first sonorous and impressive; the second a highly-polished scherando which contrasts delicacy in tone and register with tempestuous octaves; the third (among Mendelssohn's most original movements) presenting a dignified chorale-melody in the piano to be answered by an impassioned cello recitative (certainly this foreshadows Franck's treatment of a chorale-like theme!); and the fourth molto allegro vivace being a facile and brilliant display in which the composer follows his oft-repeated practice of avoiding the tonic chord for as long as possible. Like its predecessor, this is among the most effective works in the cello-piano repertoire.

Notes by Leonard Altman

David Soyer

David Soyer, eminent American cellist, is a native of Philadelphia. He made his debut as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy and has played recitals in New York’s Carnegie and Town Halls. He has been heard in concert throughout the U.S.A. and Canada, and is well-known for both chamber music and solo playing. “There are not many cellists today who share Soyer’s tone, technical facility, and musicianship.” (Washington Times Herald).

Harriet Wingreen

Miss Wingreen, a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, has concertized and recorded extensively in this country and abroad. As a member of the New York Chamber Soloists and the Musical Art Quartet, she has participated in many performances of classical and contemporary chamber music. With Gerald and Wilfred Beal, violinists, she has recorded for Monitor works by Telemann, Handel and Milhaud (Monitor MC 2008).

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