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Recordings

WA9534

Contrasts in Concerts

FALLA
FAURÉ
KODÁLY
DVOŘÁK

ROGER
DRINKALL

DIAN
BAKER

Contrasts in Concert

Falla / Fauré / Kodály / Dvořák

WA-9534

Roger Drinkall, *Cello*

Dian Baker, *Piano*

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Suite Populaire Espagnole

I. El Paño moruno (2:26)

II. Nana (3:07)

III. Canción (1:34)

IV. Polo (1:30)

V. Asturiana (3:03)

VI. Jota (3:12)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Elegie in C Minor, Op. 24 (7:29)

Zoltan Kodály (1882-1967)

Cello Sonata, Op. 4

I. Fantasia. Adagio di molto (7:00)

II. Allegro con spirito (9:24)

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Polonaise for cello & piano in A Major, B. 94 (8:23)

PROGRAM NOTES

The concert literature for every instrument is dominated by the concertos written for them. These massive works are the most iconic challenges every player faces. The cello is no exception. Its repertoire is rich with concertos, some of them among the finest works of the composers who wrote them. One might make a case for the Dvořák cello concerto being as fine a work as any Dvořák wrote. If this and a few others are the foundation of the cello literature, then perhaps the many cello sonatas are the next tier which rest on the foundations of the concerto masterpieces. Above the tier of sonatas, further up the structure, come the small works that fill out recital programs, salon performances, and encores. Cello recitals are replete with smaller works that add variety and showcase the instrument in unique ways, and many of these smaller works become some of the most well known and beloved pieces in the canon. A good example of this is the Fauré *Elégie* heard on this CD, enjoying at least as much familiarity as any of the big concertos. The other works on this CD are all fine examples of this body of small works for cello. Each one is unique and endearing, and each one is lovingly performed by the Drinkall/Baker Duo.

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Three Spanish composers stand above the rest: Manuel de Falla, Enrique Granados, and Joachin Rodrigo, with apologies to Albéniz, Turino, and Sarasate. This Spanish big three created the most repertoire and established the sounds of Spain in the most lasting ways. Certainly, Manuel de Falla can be considered among the greatest nationalistic composers and came by his influence naturally. With parents from two different regions of the country, he was exposed to a great variety of song and dance that enriched the daily lives of his countrymen. In 1914 he published a suite of songs titled *Siete canciones populares españolas*. The songs themselves literally take the listener on a tour of the country, sampling the sounds of the distinctive cultural regions that exist in Spain. The composer begins in Murcia in the Moorish south and moves upwards through Aragon, Catalonia, finally arriving in the northern Andalusia. The songs we hear are a smorgasbord of ethnic song and dance unmatched by any other Spanish composer. No wonder this song cycle spoke so directly to the people of Spain. But they are so colorful and flavorful that they are ideal candidates for transcription versions, and there have been many. With the composer's assistance, Paul Kochanski, the noted violinist, transcribed six of the seven songs for violin and piano and renamed the work *Suite Populaire Espagnole*. Manuel de Falla was so taken with the result that he even dedicated the published version to Kochanski's wife. Maurice Maréchal transcribed Kochanski's version into the suite for cello and piano which we hear in this recording. These movements are individually quite short and are often rearranged by the performers in various orders.

The first song, *El Paño Moruno*, from the south of Spain, is an energetic dance with swirling rhythms, whose words warned young women to be wary of men. *Nana* is an Andalusian lullaby of exquisite tenderness and said to be one which de Falla's mother often sang to him while a child. *Canción* is a spirited and innocent song well known across Spain whose words speak of being love-sick. The fourth song, *Polo*, exhibits the virtuosity of flamenco and gypsy influences. This is the most flamboyant of the songs, and the piano accompaniment flashes with brilliance in this showy, thrilling dance. *Asturiana* is another lullaby, this one from northern

Spain, and is full of sadness and melancholy. The lively and joyous *Jota* closes the suite with vigor and good humor. One can hear the castanets flailing, and the Spanish love of life is on vibrant display.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Easily one of the most familiar and beloved of cello melodies is the *Elégie* by Gabriel Fauré. This haunting melody has become a staple of the cello repertoire. Like many of the works featured on this disk, it has connections to the chamber music of the composer. It was intended to be the slow movement of a cello sonata, but somehow, after its completion, Fauré lost the creative steam to write outer movements. It is a very unfinished cello sonata but a very complete stand-alone work of elegiac beauty.

The piece begins with simple repeated throbbing chords in the piano soon allowing the entrance of the cello who sings a most soulful song. There is much melancholy and resignation in the simple tune, and we are to ponder where this sadness is taking us. But a more optimistic and fresh middle section interrupts and brightens up the mood. This time the piano leads the way with light arabesques and the cello imitates. But soon enough the clouds return, and, in a passionate upward sweep, the cello soars again to an even more emotional version of the beginning melody. It is clear there is a story line here, but Fauré does not disclose it. The listener knows though, at the end, that we have been on a short but poignant journey, one every cellist the world over loves to take again and again.

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)

Zoltán Kodály and good friend and fellow Hungarian composer Bela Bartok hold a rather unique place in the history of Hungarian music and ethnomusicology as well. They shared a passion for the preservation of their own culture and recognized that growing globalization would eventually crowd out the most distinctive, unique ethnic differences in world culture. Determined to capture all they could before it was gone, they traveled across eastern Europe recording and filming the music and dance of people living in villages and towns all across Hungary and its neighbors. This treasure trove of ethnic history was a prescient archive of a world that soon was to disappear in the wake of two world wars. Naturally, the music they discovered and documented also found its way into their own compositions, both in literal quotations as well as in their own folk-like imitations of folk melody and dance.

A cellist himself, Kodály wrote several works for cello, albeit all smaller works. This sonata, written in 1909, was his first cello sonata. The second sonata, coming in 1915, was for unaccompanied cello and is truly one of the most formidable cello works of the twentieth century. The unaccompanied sonata stretches the vocabulary of the instrument in unique ways, but, in contrast, the sonata for cello and piano, heard here, is a more conventional sound vocabulary, which makes sense when you know that Kodály wrote this when he was just 28.

Again, like the Fauré *Elégie*, this work was meant to be a three-movement work. Fauré completed only one movement, and Kodály completed two. But by the time Kodály got around to trying to add a third movement, he realized his own style had evolved too much to match the early style of the existing movements, so two movements it would remain.

The first movement is rhapsodic and improvisational, exactly as the *Fantasia* title would suggest. This somewhat free-wheeling music maintains its contemplative sonority throughout and ends in quiet reflection. The second movement immediately begins with the Hungarian sound we have been expecting. Dance rhythms interplay with lyrical song passages and demonstrate Kodály's marvelous grasp of his musical origins. The end of the second movement unusually returns to the themes of the opening *Fantasia* and thereby gives this two-movement sonata a formal cohesiveness that is fulfilling and satisfying.

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Dvořák's works for solo cello are few. Aside from the concerto, which is truly one of the greatest concertos ever written for any instrument, there are relatively few other works. Though he was a string player himself, a violist, it appears Dvořák did not really care to write for the cello. No sonatas, for instance, which is a bit unusual given his admiration for the work of Brahms, who wrote two. Dvořák arranged some of his Slavonic Dances for cello and piano, and there a couple of obscure small pieces, and then there is the *Polonaise* heard on this recording. Perhaps the second most important cello work of Dvořák after the concerto, the *Polonaise* held high enough regard for Dvořák that he reused in a later work. With a little different twist than the Faure *Elégie*, instead of being part of a larger work that never got finished, Dvořák intended this to be a stand-alone gem and liked it so much that he reused some of its themes in the third movement of his *String Quartet No. 11 in C Major, Op. 61*.

Soon after the premier of the *Polonaise*, in 1879 the manuscript was lost, but in 1936 it was rediscovered and published and has subsequently entered the standard cello repertoire. The polonaise is a dance of Polish origin, with a distinctive dotted trademark rhythm. Many composers have written polonaises: Chopin, of course, Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Rimski Korsakov. Dvořák wrote many himself, which is only natural living next door to its country of origin.

This *Polonaise* begins with an introduction in the cello alone which gives no real clues as to its destination, but with a flourish it gathers the piano together and launches into the rhythm that it shares with all other polonaises. A lyrical middle section departs from dancing to enter a world of lyricism and singing but with a virtuoso flourish returns to the spiky rhythms which are its namesake and ends with energetic back and forth interchanges with the piano as it comes to a brilliant finish.



ROGER DRINKALL & DIAN BAKER DUO

Roger Drinkall and Dian Baker emerged as one of America's leading cello and piano duos and rose to a plane where technical mastery and a perfect melding of mind and spirit made each performance pure magic. They received critical acclaim and an international reputation, playing more than 650 concerts in over 25 countries. The pair's approach was unique. They regarded themselves not as a soloist and accompanist but as two soloists and a partnership of two equals. This philosophy brought to their playing a striking unity of thought and execution. In addition, the duo's extensive repertoire - ranging from Bach, Beethoven and Chopin to Ginastera, Kodály and Weill- is entirely memorized, giving them an intimacy with the music and a freedom from the page that is clearly reflected in their playing. The combination of these qualities means that Drinkall and Baker never merely play it safe. They embrace each piece completely, playing with a sure elegance and verve that opens new vistas.

Reviewers often commented on the musicality and passion of the duo's performances:

"At times, both piano and cello seemed to merge to become a single entity," wrote the *New Straight Times* of Malaysia. "They played with an intensity and passion that one rarely sees in classical musicians."

"A profound sense of taste richly nuanced and emotionally packed with astounding musicality and technique," said *La Stampa* of Italy.

"A delightful experience, and I can't remember when I last saw performers return for five encores . . . uncommon vigor and commitment . . . truly a delight," said *Dawn* of Pakistan.

Roger Drinkall made his cello sing on stages all over the world for nearly three decades in more than thirty countries. He graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied with Leonard Rose. Drinkall's cello is itself a classic: an 1830 Pressenda, which the *New Straight Times* says he plays "like he was born with it, and made it sing with a tone that was dulcet even on the high notes."

Dian Baker was already well on the way to establishing herself as a virtuoso performer on two instruments at a young age. By age 15, she won the Bank of America award in both violin and piano and played her orchestral solo debuts on both instruments. Her virtuosity on violin gives her unique insights into playing with stringed instruments. "Baker brought... liquid clarity... beyond technical security to match (Drinkall's) intrepid music making," said the *Deseret News*.

The duo presented international concerts as artistic ambassadors for the U.S. State Department for many years and was the recipient of major grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. They recorded extensively over the facilities of European and Asian networks, including Pakistani television, Colombian television, and NHK of Japan, and recorded numerous compact discs for Pyramid, Klavier, and Wilson Audiophile.

"I have held sweet memories of the duet formed by cellist Roger Drinkall and pianist Dian Baker since their performance in the Eugene O'Neill Theater in 1989. The excellent recital given by them last night [August 23, 1995] in the O'Neill Theater not only reaffirmed that impression, but increased it; for, with the passing of time, they have achieved a superior level of interpretive understanding rarely communicated in concert halls."

Roger Drinkall (1937-1997) was professor of cello at Brigham Young University.

Dian Baker (b. 1960) was head of the accompanying area at Brigham Young University.

-Kory Katseanes

TECHNICAL / LISTENING NOTES

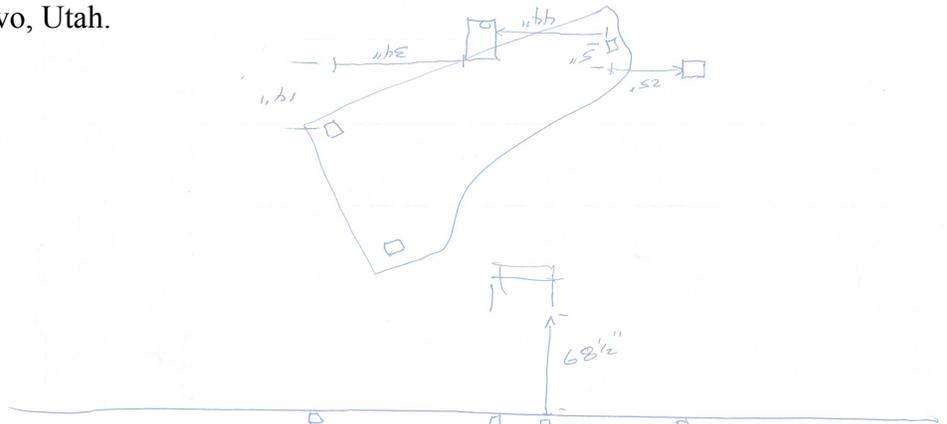
The original recording took place in March 1995 at Maurice Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City, Utah. The hall is noted for its clean acoustics, linear reverberation and mid-range focus. As in most other Wilson Audiophile chamber recordings, the perspective is close... as though the instruments are performing in your listening room.

The piano is a nine-foot Fazioli. One of its unique characteristics is that it is entirely hand-made. This piano began its life in Italy's Valde de Fiemme's forest of red spruce, where Stradivarius sought wood for his violins. When the trees are one-hundred and fifty years old, one out of every 200 of them has the special resonant qualities to make them perfect for use throughout this instrument. This rare timber is then entrusted to the finest craftsmen, who spend two years building each piano. Less than twenty have been shipped to North America. This recording was made using the five-hundredth Fazioli piano. The cello is an example of the Italian Luthier Pressenda, crafted in 1830, in Turino. Its wood comes from the same forests as the piano, making these two instruments the perfect pair. The cello bows are the work of William Salchow of New York.

When listening to this recording, the cello is positioned in front of the piano. The cello is to the right of center, facing the front of the soundstage. The image of the cello is rather large, and moves slightly in the soundstage as the cellist plays the instrument. This is a normal consequence of the spaced omni configuration, as is the recordings naturally rich harmonic structure. The microphone preamps, designed and built by John Curl, are sophisticated, fully class A, direct-coupled units.

The master tape was recorded on the Ultramaster, Wilson Audio's exclusive 30 ips analog recorder. This instrument, designed and built by John Curl, is fully direct-coupled, and exhibits a record/playback frequency bandwidth of over 45 KHz. The mastering tape used was 3M 996. Location monitoring was on Wilson WATT V/Puppy V precision loudspeakers powered by a Brown Electronic Labs Model 1001 Mark II amplifier. At Wilson Audio, master tapes, and reference lacquers were evaluated on both the WATT V/Puppy V and on the WAMM series VII, powered by a variety of amplifiers including Mark Levinson, Audio Research, Krell, Spectral, Jadis, Rowland and Audio Note. Excellent compatibility was realized with all of these designs.

This recording was made and mastered using the multi-patented CVT (Constant Velocity Transmission) technologies provided under license to Wilson Audio Specialties by MIT. The use of these technologies preserves details in the recording and mastering process that result in a record or CD with increased clarity and transparency. This ensures a more natural and lifelike representation of the original event. CVT and MIT are registered trademarks of Music Interface Technologies of Auburn, California. Both analog and digital mastering were performed at Wilson Audio's mastering facilities in Provo, Utah.



TRANSFER NOTES

Description of equipment and processes used for Master Tape transfers to DSD format in Dave Wilson's Music Room:

Bruce Brown flew from Seattle to Provo to work hand-in-hand with Dave and Daryl Wilson. Each Master Tape was inspected, cleaned, and treated with Last #9 and #10 preservatives. All of the Master Tapes were baked to reformulate the binding. This was done in an incubator at 135 degrees and then they were left to cool back down to room temperature. All splices were inspected and repaired, if necessary. Each transfer was executed on the UltraMaster, a one-of-a-kind Studer A80 designed and built by John Curl with Custom electronics.

Each Master Tape was stored by Wilson Audiophile "tails-out" in which Puget Sound Studios did a library wind to the take-up reel. All levels were set according to included EQ sheets and each 1KHz tone was further set at precisely 1KHz, via a custom Vari-speed adjustment. This provided the exact speed the Master Tapes were recorded at.

A total of five different Analog-to-Digital converters were used to provide samples for the Wilsons to evaluate. Ultimately an EMM Labs ADC-8 Mk IV, custom modified by Andreas Koch, was chosen by Dave and Daryl Wilson for the transfers from the UltraMaster using the original Master Tapes into a Sonoma DSD workstation for capture and editing. Monitoring from the Sonoma DSD workstation was routed through a modified Playback Designs MPS-5 via USB-X with Light Harmonic USB cable. All DSD files were transferred into a Merging Technologies Pyramix DSD/DXD Masscore workstation for sample rate conversion, format conversion, and meta-data tagging. The Pyramix Hepta filter was used for conversion to PCM. Files were then listened to for quality assurance.

Description of the Equipment used in the Provo, Utah "Wilson Music Room" that Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC used for Sonic Evaluation:

Speakers: Wilson Audio Alexandria XLF, two Thor's Hammers

Electronics: Apple Mac Mini, Amarra & Audirvana Plus, Weiss int 202, Audio Research DAC8, VTL 7.5 mk3 Pre-Amp, VTL Siegfried mk2 amplifiers, 2 Wilson Audio W.A.T.C.H. Controllers

Cables: Audioquest Firewire, Transparent Opus



CREDITS

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Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

Transfer Editing *Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios*

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