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Gregers BRINCH (b. 1964)

Sonata for Cello and Piano No.1 [15.34]

Sonata for Cello and Piano No.2 [20.19]

String Quartet No.2 "Good and Evil" [16.46]

Rohan de Saram (cello), William Hancox (piano)

Bergersen Quartet

rec. 2008/9, St Bartholomew's Church, Brighton, UK

Stereo 24/192; also available on CD CC5889-2

CLAUDIO DVD-A CC5889-6 [52.45]

My first review of the music of Gregers Brinch had all the introductory information needed. Here I will focus only on the music on this present DVD-A.

I was comparatively unmoved by what I heard on the previous disc and as expected it has been worthwhile moving onto these two cello sonatas and a string quartet because Brinch the composer does emerge much more strongly. The Cello Sonata No.2 was dedicated to the current player Rohan de Saram. His name leapt off the page as a very significant performer from my musical youth. He came to prominence in the early 60s as one of the most outstanding young cellists but after a short but very successful time doing the young virtuoso circuit he seems to have moved over to chamber music spending many years in the Arditti Quartet amongst other performance activities. I must say his playing has lost none of its shine. He sounds quite marvellous in these two sonatas giving them the very best presentation one can imagine. Both are highly appealing works, both coherent and attractive to the listener. This is the sort of music that makes one wonder why Brinch is not more widely known. He displays both lyrical and dramatic imagination beyond the technical skill of composition. Neither sonata sounds discordantly modern, by which I mean they do not indulge in strange noises and do not sound as though any special techniques are needed to perform them. Brinch is a user of established musical norms and all the better for it. Of the two sonatas I preferred the 2nd for its variety but note that the composer seems to like the first. The String Quartet No.2 "Good and Evil" is not as portentous as the title suggests but it is quite a dramatic piece and repays repeated listening. In his notes Brinch is slightly prone to directing his listeners to find extra-musical impact. Personally I think he is talented enough to let the music speak for itself. The Bergersen Quartet, to whom the quartet is dedicated, are fine musicians and play with energy and dedication.

All this fine music-making is served by another of Colin Attwell's fine recordings. The spaciousness of St Bartholomew's, Brighton is well captured without losing any musical detail. The cellist is placed to the centre right and the large Steinway occupies the space from left to centre. The quartet is placed right across the sound-stage sounding moderately close but far enough back to hear the acoustic of the building. This is fine, natural recorded sound and on this DVD-A the home listener can hear a close facsimile of the performance. No tricks here. Doubtless the CD version is almost as good. The better one's playing system the better this will all sound.

Dave Billinge

http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2019/Apr/Brinch_v1_CC58896.htm