



Violoncelle français

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The first program is excellently played by both musicians. It consists of Brahms's E minor Sonata and Debussy's in D minor and the Cesar Franck Violin Sonata transcribed for cello and piano with the composer's approval. The emotional impression of these readings is very positive for the Brahms and the Franck, a bit less so for the Debussy. The playing is grand and tender by turns, with effective contrasts and lyricism. The Debussy is more virtuosic and slithery in technique than I like in this music. It tends to go so fast that the subtlety of the music goes by the board, particularly in the Finale. But the rest of the program is very satisfying, and these players deserve to be heard. The sound and balances are excellent.

In the second program we start off with the Debussy Sonata. At first I thought this was going to be a more sensitive reading, but it turned out to be as silly as the other one and less subtle. The three lovely Fauré pieces that follow are beautifully played, and so is the massive Franck Sonata and the contrasting Saint-Saens Allegro Appassionato and 'The Swan'. It's a well-arranged and nicely contrasted program of French masterpieces, and only the Debussy is less than satisfying.