



Fauré authentique

aud 97.825

EAN: 4022143978257



Gramophone (01.06.2024)

GRAMOPHONE Dust as the musical world has moved on from the polarity of authentic versus modern performance, here comes the A-word again. This recital's claim to authenticity is first and foremost based on Francois Dumont's 1891 Erard piano, from the Musee de la Musique in Paris, illustrated in glossy photos in the digital booklet; its sound is light and transparent but not heard to its best advantage, I fear. The notes also bring up Marc Coppey's cello-playing as a marker of authenticity. But here the argument is soggy, resting on the assertions of his 'fully engaging with the fluid rhetoric of Faure's musical language' and eschewing 'a perpetual espressivo, which would be stylistically incongruous'.

Well, it's true that Faure's scores are not burdened by excessive indications, but espressivo certainly appears regularly, not least in the First Sonata. And whatever the theory, the cello sound falls short in terms of charm, sophistication and eloquence. The shortcomings of the current disc are particularly apparent in comparison with existing recordings, of which there are more than might be expected and whose numbers may swell as the centenary year proceeds. Particularly short-changed are those pieces that balance poise with pathos, such as the famous Elégie. Compare here the austerity and dryness of Coppey and Dumont with the elegantly weighted sound world of Isserlis and Devoyon or the quiet wistfulness of Gagnepain and Dayez on period instruments.

As with those discs, at the heart of Coppey and Dumont's programme are the two late sonatas. These are a far cry from the Fauré of sweet melodies and salon-music airiness. Darkly serious and densely textured, each sonata is a kaleidoscope of complex and unexpected harmonies and rhythmical patterns. The First, composed in 1917, clearly carries the scars of the Great War and its associated disillusionments; the jagged lines and a general feeling of unease of the first movement lead to a posttraumatic and elusive second and an impatiently flowing finale. Belonging to the period following Faure's resignation from the Conservatoire due to health issues, not least his incipient deafness, the Second Sonata is marked by greater inwardness and withdrawal, and even the playfulness of the dialogue of melodies in the first movement is now surrounded by a melancholic haziness. The second movement, echoing 'the Elégie, is a transcription of a funeral march composed for the centenary of Napoleon's death, to be performed at Les Invalides. Here again, I find Coppey and Dumont merely plodding, where Isserlis and Devoyon are majestic, and Gagnepain and Dayez are poetically mournful.

The interleaved shorter pieces return us to the Fauré of salon music, from the undulating melodies of the Sicilienne (originally incidental music to Moliere's Le bourgeois gentilhomme) to the sunlit, Catalan-tinted Sérénade (dedicated to Casals)

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Fauré

Fauré authentique'
Complete Works for Cello and Piano
Marc Coppey νς François Dumont ρf with
Pauline Bartissol νς
Audite (AUDITE97 825 • 67')



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Michelle Assa

Selected comparisons:

Isserlis, Devoyon RCA 09026 68049-2 (8/95)

Gagnepain, Dayez Zig-Zag Territoires ZZT070602 (A/07)