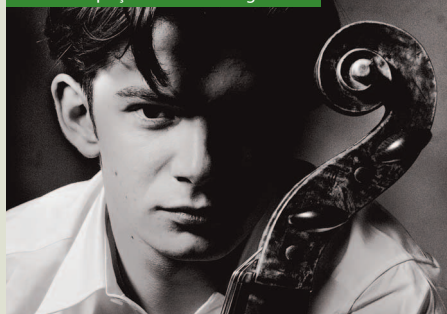


## RECITAL



theStrad SELECTION

Gautier Capuçon: wit and imagination



SHEILA ROCKEMIL CLASSICS

### RHAPSODY

**RACHMANINOFF** Cello Sonata in G minor op.19, Vocalise op.34, Variation no.18 from Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini

**PROKOFIEV** Cello Sonata in C major op.119

**Gautier Capuçon** (cello)

**Gabriela Montero** (piano)

Virgin Classics 3 85786 2



There's nothing ground-breaking about this CD featuring much-recorded repertoire. That the players excel in it is therefore all the more impressive. Gabriela Montero already has an enviable reputation as an improviser on the piano, but in the Rachmaninoff Cello Sonata she displays awesome virtuosity and a range of colours that recall Martha Argerich's mercurial brilliance. And although the cello line is littered with sumptuous melodies, it is the mighty piano part that really makes any performance.

By adopting a sparkling touch in the right hand, Montero avoids clouding the cello, though the recording throughout is astutely balanced and warm. Gautier Capuçon, however, resists any indulgence here, and musters a searing intensity in the vocally hewn melodies – poignant in the slow movement, yet fiery and passionate in the concluding finale. Two chestnuts conclude the disc's Rachmaninoff portion; these musicians clearly enjoy such inspired lyricism.

Prokofiev's sonata is graced by plenty of new recordings each year, yet this duo's highly theatrical conception of the work makes an enthralling impact. The players highlight the sound of bells that frame the work, and the quixotic mood-changes are handled much in the way of a stage curtain lifting to reveal a new scene. Again, Montero's command of colour helps establish a magical fantasy halfway through the first movement, and Capuçon characterises the ensuing whimsical theme with wit and imagination. A bold delivery of the last movement laden with grandeur signals the end of the play; the story complete, we are mesmerised.

JOANNE TALBOT

### BACH Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin BWV1001–6

**Lara St John** (violin)

Ancalagon AR 132 (hybrid SACD)



Young Canadian violinist Lara St John made her mark in the 1990s with two Bach albums, including commendable accounts of BWV1001, 1004 and 1005, and some eye-popping cover art. She now offers all six sonatas and partitas in new recordings and in Super Audio surround sound.

Her approach here is vastly different from her somewhat raw and occasionally brash initial efforts. The freedom of her interpretations may upset some traditionalists, but it lends a winning spontaneity, even if the wavering pulse of the finales of BWV1001 and 1006 and the Giga of BWV1004 is disconcerting. Puzzling, too, are her purposeful separation of the powerful Ciaccona's central major-mode section and the movement's disproportionately long final note (BWV1004), and her express tempos for the Corrente of BWV1004, the Double of BWV1002, the finale of BWV1005, the Preludio of BWV1006 and the fugue of BWV1001.

St John is particularly adept at balancing the interplay of internal parts and preserving continuity of line and rhythmic flow, as in the three sonatas' fugues, each played with an overarching sense of shape and fulfilment. There is energy and vigour in her finales of BWV1001

and BWV1002 and a keen sense of dance in the relevant movements of BWV1006. There are also some sublimely lyrical moments, notably in the reflective Grave and poetic Andante of BWV1003 and the lilting Siciliana of BWV1001, and she conveys the gravitas of Bach's language with mature assurance, resorting almost to 'bending' some notes a semitone apart for expressive harmonic effect (for example, in the Adagio of BWV1005). These attributes, combined with her clean, accurate left-hand technique, her keen ear for tonal colouring and the highly individual, largely unforced sound that she produces from her 1779 'Salabue' Guadagnini violin, result in a thought-provoking achievement from a rapidly maturing artist, beautifully recorded in a unique three-dimensional manner.

ROBIN STOWELL

### DARD Six Sonatas for cello and continuo (1759)

**Kristin von der Goltz** (cello) **Hille Perl** (viola da gamba)

**Christine Schornsheim** (harpichord)

Raumklang RK 2701 ([www.raumklang.de](http://www.raumklang.de))



Antoine Dard (1715–84) served as oboist and bassoonist at the French royal court. It is therefore no surprise that these six sonatas for bassoon or cello and basso continuo were conceived more in terms of the wind than the stringed instrument. Dard's highly personal