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Maria Kliegel (cello)

Anniversary Edition

NAXOS 8.578370-72 [3 CDs: 236]

Cellist Maria Kliegel, who numbers Starker and Rostropovich among her exemplars, had her seventieth birthday in 2022. This three-disc set celebrates her long years of inspiration and of dedication to music, to Naxos and to her audiences. We are assured that these tracks – all 33 of them – have been personally selected by Kliegel from her vast Naxos discography.

And yet ... and yet ... this could have been so much more. As it is, this box, presented in a wide format case, is a thing of samples and movements which I also have sampled and excerpted. The very few complete works are here because they are short. They are the Popper Fantasie, Bruch's Kol Nidrei (here most sensitively done) and two morceaux by Fauré. If the purchaser wants expanded commentary on the full works the originals of the some of the source discs can be found reviewed on this site. Some more off-the-beaten track works (Onslow, Gubaidulina and Schnittke) do find a place but many classics are there; with the obvious exception of the Dvořák. It is a strange concatenation because, with three discs tightly packed, we could, with a different mind-set, have had the full Brahms, Beethoven, Shostakovich and Schnittke concertos (one each) and a goodly array of the complete chamber works and the smaller scale vignettes.

The Barchet is a lovely evocation of a guitar serenade. I wasn't engaged by the Senaillé or the chamber Popper; the orchestral Popper – as 'dolloed up' by Peter Breiner – is a cut above. Both Kodály and Brahms are favoured with two works each and everything about them impresses. I single out the movements from the Brahms Double and the romantic Kodály Duo as specially rewarding. The Castelnuovo-Tedesco is gorgeous, as is the fluttering heart-beat of the Fauré Papillon. The movement from the second concerto by Shostakovich is painted in aggressively glowing colours. Kliegel is well served by her chamber partners, advocate-conductors and orchestras. The last track on CD3 (Elgar) ends on an affirmative note in which fantasy and heart are entwined.

The booklet's substantial essay by Remy Franck is the very opposite of the short-breathed guiding principle of the discs. It is fulsome and looks to substance and to the longer attention span that should have been adopted for these discs. The tracks are comprehensively set out, with every detail you might have wished. There are six personable photographs of Kliegel.

Kliegel – a very fine cellist – draws deep on the well-springs of expression, technical mastery, character and dynamic variegation but this set is not what I think of as an 'Edition'. What it presents is a taster or calling-card for the complete works. It could have been so much more. I think for example of what Naxos have done at even greater length for Gerard Schwarz both as trumpeter and as conductor.

What this set also serves as – at least for this listener – is a reminder that Kliegel is a force in the land; a salutary lesson for me. It would now be good to hear her in the Frank Bridge Suite and Oration, the Lennox Berkeley concerto, the Sallinen and Kokkonen concertos and the Kodály Sonata for solo cello. There is time in hand if Kliegel and Naxos are so inclined and I hope they will be.

Rob Barnett



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CD 1

Beethoven Triple Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano in C Major, Op. 56 I. Allegro

Lalo Cello Sonata III. Allegro

Kodály Cello Sonata, Op. 4 I. Fantasia: Adagio di molto

Brahms Double Concerto for Violin and Cello in A Minor, Op. 102 I. Allegro

Bach Cello Suite No. 5 in C Minor, BWV 1011 I. Prélude 06:28 V. Sarabande

Gubaidulina Sieben Worte (Seven Words) IV. Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen? (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?)

Chopin 12 Etudes, Op. 10: No. 6 in E-Flat Minor, Op. 10, No. 6 (arr. Glazunov for cello and piano)

Nocturne No. 20 in C-Sharp Minor, Op. posth. (arr. Piatigorsky for cello and piano)

CD 2

Brahms Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Major, Op. 78 (arr. P. Klengel for cello and piano)

Dohnányi Rurália hungarica, Op. 32d, "Andante rubato"

Barchet Images de Menton: V. Boulevard de Garavan

Senailié 10 Violin Sonatas, Book 4: No. 4 in D Minor: IV. Allegro spiritoso (arr. J. Salmon for cello and piano)

Popper Fantasy on Little Russian Songs, Op. 43

Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 119 II. Allegro non troppo

Castelnuovo-Tedesco Figaro (Concert Paraphrase of Largo al factotum from Rossini's The Barber of Seville)

Huguet y Tagell Suite espagnole No. 1: Flamenco

Tchaikovsky 6 Morceaux, Op. 51: No. 6. Valse sentimentale (arr. L. Rose for cello and piano)

Mendelssohn Cello Sonata No. 1 in B-Flat Major, Op. 45, MWV Q27 II. Andante

Popper Im Walde, Op. 50 (arr. P. Breiner for cello and orchestra) V. Herbstblume (Autumn Flower) 02:36 VI. Heimkehr (Homecoming)

Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 2 in G Major, Op. 126 III. Allegretto

CD 3

Bruch Kol nidrei, Op. 47

Schumann Cello Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 59 III. Finale: Allegro molto

Schnittke Cello Concerto No. 1 I. Pesante – Moderato

Fauré Papillon, Op. 77 03:17; Romance, Op. 69

Onslow Cello Sonata in F Major, Op. 16, No. 1 III. Allegretto

Saint-Saëns Suite in D Minor, Op. 16 II. Sérénade: Andantino 3:15; III. Scherzo: Allegro grazioso

Kodály Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7 I. Allegro serio, non troppo

Schumann 5 Stücke im Volkston (5 Pieces in Folk Style), Op. 102 (version for cello and piano) No. 2. Langsam

Elgar Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85 IV. Allegro – Moderato – Allegro ma non troppo