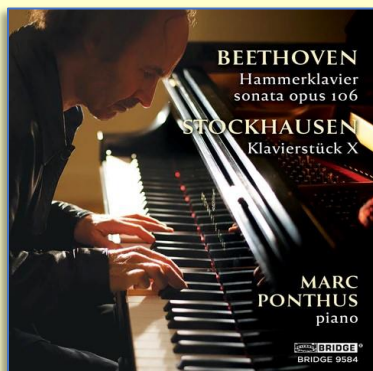


## Phil's Classical Reviews

Atlanta Audio Club

November, 2023



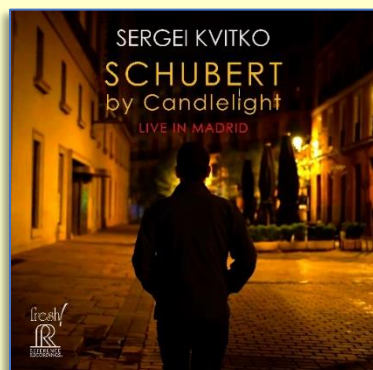
Beethoven: Piano Sonata no. 29 in B-flat, Op. 106, "Hammerklavier" + Stockhausen: Klavierstück X  
Mark Ponthus, pianist  
(Bridge Records)



"Dependent Arising," Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 77; Maneein: Dependent Arising – Concerto for Violin  
Rachel Barton Pine, violin  
Tito Muñoz conducts Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Cedille)



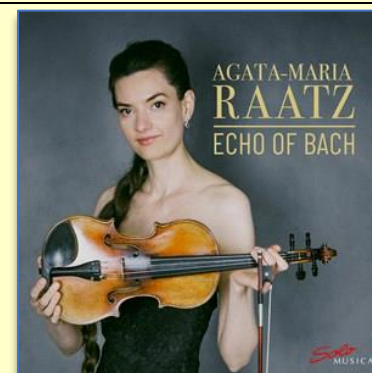
"Remembering Tebaldi," Arias by Rossini, Verdi, Boito, Catalani, Puccini, Mascagni, Giordano, Cilea and Alessandro Scarlatti  
Melody Moore, soprano; Lawrence Foster, Transylvania State Choir & Philharmonic (Pentatone)



"Schubert by Candlelight," Sergei Kvitko, pianist, plays Moments Musicaux, Op. 94; Impromptus, Op. 90; 2 Scherzi, Minuet  
(Reference Recordings)



Inez Matthews, soprano, sings Schubert: Die schöne Müllerin, Winterreise  
Accompanied on piano by Lowell Farr  
Mid-1950's recordings, newly restored and remastered (Parnassus)



"Echo of Bach," Partita No. 2 for Solo Violin, BWV 1004; Ysaÿe: Sonata for Solo Violin, Op. 27; Westhoff: Suite No. 5  
Agata-Maria Raatz, violin  
(Solo Musica)

Talented young Polish violinist / composer Agata-Maria Raatz gives an exceptional account of three works in the solo violin repertoire by Bach, Westhoff, and Ysaÿe. As an artist who combines innovative ideas with traditional values in her artistry, all three are right up her alley.

The program begins with Suite No. 5 in D Minor by the Dresden composer Johann Paul von Westhoff (1656-1705). This work is doubly intriguing, both in its own right and as a precursor to Bach. Westhoff's

violin writing, quite advanced for its day, is distinguished by double stopping up to the fourth position and a distinctly German love of dense polyphony and robust themes. His music also displays a certain Italian influence, making it all the more intriguing.

Wethoff's Suite is in four movements. After an achingly beautiful introduction, we are treated to the Allemande, rich in inspired polyphony. A lively courante is followed by a Sarabande in rich chromatic harmonies and eloquent phrasings. The Gigue, with a handsomely elated Echo, is lively in its robust figurations. A bonus movement, entitled "Forget Me Not" exudes harmonies and a strange beauty of its own in the way of multiple voices, which Agata-Marie executes superbly.

That brings us to J. S. Bach's Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004. The Allemande in beautifully sustained, contrasting voices and a surprisingly devil-may-care attitude is followed by a sprightly Corrente in sprightly tripping metre, and then a passionate Sarabanda that opens with a long-drawn "sigh," and a rousing Giga in lively perpetual motion, an apotheosis of the familiar old sailor's dance that seems as if it could go on forever.

That brings us to the climax of this particular partita, namely the Ciaconna, or Chaconne. The bonus movement to end all bonus movements, it leaves the listener wrung dry at the end of almost a quarter-hour of non-stop high-energy contrapuntal drama. Midway though, we have a quietly intense, meditative section of great spiritual beauty. With her superb pacing and well-nigh ideal regard for the contours of the form, Agata-Maria Raatz turns an inherently square-toed conception into a thing of beauty.

The recital concludes, with the greatest satisfaction in Sonata No. 2, Op. 27 for Solo Violin by the great Belgian violinist / composer Eugène Ysaÿe. It is in four movements: 1) Obsession – Prelude: Poco vivace, 2) Malinconia – Poco lento, 3) Danse des Ombres: Sarabande, and 4) Les Furies. In the opening movement, start-stop hesitations at the outset are later contrasted with lots of drive, adding raw excitement. The second movement lives up to its name (melancholy) in its slow gradations of tempi. The third opens in a rather playful mood despite its title (Dance of Shadows), a coruscating sarabande in which a drone gradually comes into play,

		<p>and then the tempo quickens and broadens. This is the deep-water mark of the sonata.</p> <p>In the finale, the mood changes dramatically, with eerie queeping, heard initially, eventually overtaken by more vigorous bowings and decisive closing measures appropriate to the subject. It is a dance of the Furies in which the theme of the <i>Dies Irae</i> (Day of Wrath, the chant for the dead), heard in all three previous movements, makes its final appearance.</p>
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