

Bruch, Brahms - Violin Concertos (Sarah Chang) [2009]

Written by bluesever

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Max Bruch Violin: Concerto No.1 in G minor, Op. 26 1. *Vorspiel (Allegro Moderato)* 7:56 2. *Adagio* 7:44 3. *Finale (Allegro Energico)* 7:16

Johannes Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77

4. I: *Allegro Non Troppo* 22:13 5. II: *Adagio* 8:29 6. III: *Allegro Giocoso, Ma Non Troppo Vivace - Poco Più Presto* 8:20

Sarah Chang - violin Dresdner Philharmonie Kurt Masur – conductor

Sarah Chang records two of the most popular concertos of the violin repertoire, accompanied by the exceptional team of Kurt Masur and the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra. Sarah describes the Bruch as one of her favorite concertos. It was one of the first she played, and presented it at her Juilliard audition at the tender age of five. Sarah Chang is recognized as one of today's most captivating and gifted artists, possessed of astonishing musical insight, technical virtuosity, and emotional range. She has recorded exclusively for EMI Classics from the beginning of her career, and has produced a discography that includes the violin concertos of Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Paganini No.1, Prokofiev No.1, Shostakovich No.1; Goldmark, Sibelius, Richard Strauss, and Vieuxtemps No.5; as well as Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*; Saint-Saëns's *Havanaise*, *Introduction*, and *Rondo Capriccioso*; and chamber music by Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, Franck, Ravel, and Saint-Saëns. "A flawless delivery, deep musical intelligence, and barely-contained expressive exuberance." (The Irish Times, Feb 2, 2009 on Sarah Chang's performance of the Brahms violin concerto). ---Editorial Reviews

Looking at the familiar pair of works included on EMI Classics' Bruch, Brahms: Violin Concertos, one might ask, "Haven't we had these concertos from Sarah Chang before?" Actually, we

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haven't, though the Max Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor is a key part of her personal history. It was through her ability in this work that led to Chang's discovery at the tender age of 4; why she hasn't recorded it before is something of a mystery. Nevertheless, on this disc Chang records it for the first time, along with her first recording of the formidable Brahms Violin Concerto in D, with the Dresdner Philharmonie under the direction of the conductor whom Chang calls "my musical godfather," Kurt Masur. The disc is in an "Opendisc" format and comes with a bonus CD-ROM track.

That's the good news; the not so good news is that this effort is lacking overall in soul and spirit; while one can detect Chang's long experience with the Bruch -- she plays it with absolute perfection of tone and technique -- she doesn't play it with much warmth and feeling, and Masur's band merely floats along behind her, trying not to get in Chang's way. However, Masur and company do get involved in the first two movements of the Brahms, which are sluggish and tepid; Masur's tired tempo drags the soloist right along with it. The third movement, however, brighten things up all around, and these last eight-and-a-half minutes of music are easily the most pleasurable on the album, although it's hard to say whether the listener will make it that far. The inner photo is so airbrushed it appears out of a deep freeze; appropriate, as "cold" would be a good way to describe this performance, certainly not a desirable attribute when you're dealing with warm-blooded romantic literature, as is the case here. ---Uncle Dave Lewis, Rovi

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