

Zelenski, Stojowski - Violin Sonatas (2005)

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Władysław Żeleński - Violin Sonata in F major op. 30 1. *1. Allegro Non Troppo* 2. *2. Allegretto*
3. *3. Molto Sostenuto - Allegro Molto Con Brio – Molt*
Zygmunt Stojowski - Violin Sonata in G major op. 13
4. *1. Allegro Non Troppo* 5. *2. Allegretto Capriccioso* 6. *3. Theme Varie*
Barbara Trojanowska (violin) Elżbieta Tyszecka (piano)

Two otherwise unknown violin sonatas by two Polish composers separated by a generation but joined by the relationship of master and pupil.

Trojanowska throws herself into these works with considerable abandon but at the expense of refinement. There are roughnesses and abrasions scattered about but with such a furiously Franckian work as the Żeleński one can forgive all. Things let up a little for the terpsichorean grace and charm of the Allegretto only to return to angst, tremors and black clouds in the molto sostenuto finale. His snatched ecstatic lyrical ideas are a Fauré-like delight (try III 3.09).

Stojowski has had some attention from Hyperion. Both his piano concertos have been recorded as has an anthology of his piano solos. Like the Żeleński this is a recording premiere for his Violin Sonata. The first movement is another high water mark example of late-romantic plunging ardour. It has a touch of salon sentimentality about it too; something Żeleński steered well clear of. What the two composers have in common is a folk accent which is clearly to the fore in the drone and slow dance of the Allegro capriccioso. Amid the wood-smoke there is also a hint of Mephistophelean enchantment. The sentimentality comes out again for the finale which veers towards Bruch.

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It is interesting to compare master and pupil as represented by these works. Żeleński would never drop his guard and allow in sentimentality. Clearly Stojowski had a more accommodating faculty. However when you hear that soft-chiming Brahmsian piano at 2:02 in the finale of the Stojowski you know that it spells a suave melody for the violin. And so it arrives with the sob and the smile of a spiritual. Then again Stojowski steels himself for a stern determined ascent at 6:12 in the finale. Sparks fly to the four winds in the stamping last three minutes of the Stojowski sonata. Such is the savagery of this music I several times thought of Bartók.

The radio studio-originated recording is gamely - almost aggressively - resonant. It's also a shade boxy.

Acte Préalable and these two artists handsomely prove that Poland was not in the dark ages between the death of Chopin and the rise of Karłowicz and Szymanowski. ---Rob Barnett, musicweb-international.com

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