

Brahms - 'Double' Concerto; Tragic Overture (1981)

Written by bluesever

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Concerto for violin, cello & orchestra in A minor ('Double'), Op. 102 1. *I. Allegro* 2. *II. Andante* 3. *III. Vivace non troppo* 4. *Tragic Overture, in D minor, Op. 81*

Zino Francescatti – violin Pierre Fournier – cello Columbia Symphony Orchestra Bruno Walter – conductor (CBS Masterworks – Great Performances 30)

"As pure as a diamond, as soft as snow." This quote from Joseph Joachim, a close friend of Brahms in his life, indubitably describes the Double Concerto. The concerto is masterfully translated through Francescatti, Fournier, and Walter. For example, several of the low-to-high runs are performed flawlessly. This further exemplifies the connection these two own through this piece. It also shows how Brahms made the connection between Violin and Cello effortlessly for the romantic period. In addition, Francescatti bridges the gap between the harshness of the Cello and the sweetness of the Violin. The cadenza in the first movement is enamored, and contains no animus against the Cello's entrance. During the cadenza, Francescatti truly shows the beauty in the main and second theme. Furthermore, Walter's conducting was quite exceptional. The strings in the first movement sound outstanding. He keeps the sections very balanced throughout this chaotic scene, yet keeping the elegance of the theme. The second and third movement are equally notable, with extraordinary balance. I must complain though, that during the first movement, the entrances of the brass with the first theme was not as immense as I would hope. Throughout the third movement, the performers keep the elegance of the first theme, and the rondo balanced eloquently. The concerto is masterfully translated through the performance, the Violin / Cello translation, and the orchestra's presentation. I don't know much to say about the Tragic Overture, but I can say that I don't think it is a very interesting piece, unless accompanied with the Academic Overture. That was a problem I found with this CD. It is very expensive, and has only four tracks, and is only about 50 minutes long. They could've put more recordings, and this would be a great buy. But, because there are only these two pieces, I would give this a four. Although, since the performance of the Double Concerto is so exceptional, I must give this a five. I would recommend making a recording of this from a friend, but you should definitely listen to the whole concerto performed by these two. ---amazon.com

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