

William Busch - Cello and Piano Concertos (2008)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Cello Concerto: I. Lento - Allegro con spirito* 10:12 2. *Cello Concerto: II. Allegretto (quasi andante) con dolcezza* 6:42 3. *Cello Concerto: III. Molto vivace con brio* 6:33 4. *Piano Concerto: I. Allegro* 11:55 5. *Piano Concerto: II. Allegro Tranquillo* 5:32 6. *Piano Concerto: III. Allegro non troppo* 10:51 Raphael Wallfisch (cello) Piers Lane (piano) Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Vernon Handley (conductor)

William Busch was much admired by Vaughan Williams, Tippett and Finzi, but just as he was establishing a reputation as a composer he died, of a brain haemorrhage, aged just 43. This is music of a highly personal nature...The Cello Concerto is a masterpiece. An excellent recording, clean, bright and clear with first-rate balance between the superb soloists and orchestra. John Amis's very informative, and personal, notes in the booklet complete one of the very best issues ever to come from Lyrita. Buy it. Cherish it. ---Bob Briggs, musicweb-international.com

Proving that there are still forgotten twentieth century English composers deserving of being recognized, Lyrita has released the first recordings of the Cello Concerto and the Piano Concerto of William Busch. A student of Ireland and a friend of Alan Bush, Busch had a deserved dual reputation as a sharp-edged, strong-willed modernist composer and a kind-hearted and retiring man when he died in 1945 at the age of 43, leaving behind a beloved wife, two children, and an impressive but soon-forgotten body of works. This is a shame: the works here are fully worthy of joining the English standard repertoire. Busch's Piano Concerto was premiered in 1937 and dubbed by Vaughan Williams as a "masterly" work, while his Cello Concerto was premiered in 1941 under Adrian Boult, and he, too, was favorably impressed by the composer's craft and inspiration.

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As played here by pianist Piers Lane and cellist Raphael Wallfisch and accompanied by Vernon Handley leading the Royal Philharmonic, both works live up to these compliments. Lean, muscular music full of powerful ideas and gripping developments expressed with intensity, Busch's music is still resolutely tonal and unfailingly direct. And yet it's also deeply melodic music with expressive themes that will stick in your ear given half a chance. Both the Cello Concerto and the Piano Concerto make virtuoso demands on the soloists as well as the orchestral players, but the writing is never merely showy but rather always straight to the point without a wasted note or gesture. Imagine a more sinewy and less sarcastic Walton or a more refined and less bucolic Vaughan Williams and you'll have some idea what to expect. If you enjoy those composers' works, you'll surely enjoy Busch, as well. Lyrita's digital sound is clean, clear, colorful, and deep. ---James Leonard, Rovi

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