

K.Danczowska & K.Zimerman Play Cesar Franck, Karol Szymanowski (1981)



Cesar Franck - Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major 28:48 1. *Allegretto ben moderato* 2. *Allegro* 3. *Recitativo. Fantasia* 4. *Allegretto poco mosso*

Karol Szymanowski Mythes op.30 19:57

5. *La fontaine d'Arethuse* 6. *Narcisse* 7. *Dryades et Pan* 8. *Pieśń Roksany* 5:05 9. *Pieśń kurpiowska* 4:16

Kaja Danczowska was a pupil of the Polish violinist, Eugenia Uminska, whose pioneering 78rpm records of the Szymanowski First Violin Concerto are still cherished by older readers, and I would not part with them (Parlophone R205635, 12/48). She was also a member of the late David Oistrakh's class and has a growing reputation in her native country. As far as I know, this is her debut on records—at least as far as the West is concerned.

Her account of the Franck Sonata is distinguished by a fine sense of line and great sweetness of tone, and she is admirably partnered by Krystian Zimerman. Indeed, in terms of dramatic fire and strength of line, this version can hold its own alongside the finest in the catalogue, and it is better balanced than Kyung Wha Chung and Radu Lupu on Decca. Chung is a little too much in the background for comfort here. Nor among recent competitors is the Grumiaux version (Philips) so freshly characterized as one 50 would like: his partner György Sebok is not at his most imaginative on this occasion.

Zimerman plays with virtuosity and keen sensitivity, and it would be difficult to imagine a more supportive partner. However, the chief attraction this disc enjoys over its rivals is the coupling for there is no alternative account of any of Szymanowski's violin and piano pieces in the current catalogue. The three Mythes were once available on Supraphon played by Karel Šroubek and Josef Hala (SUAST50580, 1/68—nla) but neither this nor any other performance I

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have heard surpasses the present issue. Danczowska brings genuine vision to the ecstatic, soaring lines of "The Fountain of Arethusa" and both she and Zimerman are scrupulous in observing the dynamic nuances of its companions. Her intonation is impeccable and she brings a beguiling sense of rapture to "Narcissus" and the remaining pieces here: the transcriptions by Paul Kochanski of Roxane's Aria from King Roger and the later, darker Pieśń Kurpiowska' (Kurpian Song), which I did not know before. The sound is truthful (there are really quiet pianopianissimi—for instance at fig. 6 in "Narcissus") and a wide dynamic range.

The acoustic is resonant and I wondered once or twice whether the piano would not have gained by being fractionally more distant (just a few bars before fig. 2 in "The Fountain") but this was a momentary doubt in what is a well-engineered disc. There is some occasional humming from Zimerman which is audible at times. However, this is a marvellous record and the Szymanowski is remarkably fine. -- Gramophone [6/1981]

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