



WILSON
AUDIOPHILE
Definitive Recording

Fantasies & Finesse



The Roger Drinkall *∞* Dian Baker Duo

W-9432

Fantasies Finesse

SIDE I

Chopin: Sonata, Op. 65

1. Allegro moderato (10:55)
 2. Scherzo: Allegro con brio (5:00)
 3. Largo (4:34)
 4. Finale: Allegro (6:27)
- (26:56 Total)

SIDE 2

Schumann: Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73

1. Zart und mit Ausdruck (3:02)
 2. Lebhaft, leicht (3:19)
 3. Rasch und mit Feuer (4:43)
- (11:04 Total)

Schumann: Five Pieces in Folk Style, Op. 102

4. Mit Humor (3:46)
 5. Langsam (4:11)
 6. Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen (4:17)
 7. Nicht zu rasch (2:29)
 8. Stark und markirt (3:21)
- (18:04 Total)

THE ROGER DRINKALL-DIAN BAKER DUO

Cello and Piano

Any two accomplished musicians, given enough rehearsal time, can produce a competent performance. Roger Drinkall and Dian Baker, however, go far beyond the merely competent, rising to a higher plane where technical mastery and a perfect melding of mind and spirit make each performance pure magic.

In the eight years since they formed the Drinkall-Baker Duo, the two musicians have taken that magic to more than six hundred concerts all over the world, garnering critical acclaim and a growing international reputation.

The pair's approach is unique. They do not regard themselves as soloist and accompanist, but rather as two soloists, a true partnership of two equals. This philosophy brings to their playing a striking unity of thought and execution.

"At times, both piano and cello seemed to merge to become a single entity," wrote a reviewer in the *New Straight Times* of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. "They played with an intensity and passion that one rarely sees in classical musicians."

In addition, the duo's extensive repertoire - ranging from Bach, Beethoven and Chopin to Ginastera, Kodaly and Weill - is entirely memorized, giving them an intimacy with the music and a freedom from the page that is clearly reflected in their playing.

The combination of these qualities means that Drinkall and Baker never merely play it safe. They embrace each piece completely, playing with a sure elegance and verve that opens new vistas.

Reviewers often comment on the musicality and passion of the duo's performances:

"A profound sense of taste...richly nuanced and emotionally packed with astounding musicality and technique," said *La Stampa* of Italy.

"A delightful experience, and I can't remember when I last saw performers return for five encores...uncommon vigor and commitment...truly a delight," said *Dawn of Karachi*, Pakistan; and from *The Georgetown Times* of South Carolina: "It had to be magic...pure sorcery...unsurpassed for excitement...a real pleasure."

Roger Drinkall has been making his cello sing on stages all over the world for nearly three decades in more than thirty countries and has made a number of recordings for Asian and European networks. He graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied with Leonard Rose.

Drinkall's cello is itself a classic: an 1830 Pressenda, which the *New Straight Times* says he plays "like he was born with it, and made it sing with a tone that was dulcet even on the high notes."

The *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City concurs: "Drinkall has an exhilarating tone, bright and lively, youthful and virile--indeed a kind of heldentenor among cellos--which he enjoys using to galvanic effect."

Dian Baker was already well on the way to establishing herself as a virtuoso performer on two instruments at a young age. By age 15, she won the Bank of America award in both violin and piano and played her orchestral solo debuts on both instruments. Her virtuosity on violin gives her unique insights into playing with stringed instruments. "Baker brought...liquid clarity...beyond technical security to match (Drinkall's) intrepid music making," said the *Deseret News*.

Recently the duo performed in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic. The Prague concert was broadcast nationwide by Czech TV I. Following this European tour, the Yamaha Music Corporation engaged the Duo for a second tour of Malaysia.

PROGRAM NOTES

Chopin's Sonata in G minor, Op. 65 for cello and piano was the last composition published during his lifetime. Completed in 1846, the sonata was dedicated to Auguste Franchomme, a cellist and long-time friend of Chopin's, with whom Chopin collaborated in writing his Grand Duo Concertant for cello and piano. Chopin and Franchomme premiered the work at Chopin's last concert in Paris, and due to Chopin's failing health only the last three movements were performed. In a concert hall filled with flowers and an admiring audience of three hundred of the Paris elite, the concert was a smashing success. Chopin was called back several times to thunderous applause, finally repeating his D-flat Waltz as an encore. The work has stood the test of time. Its unity exists on a level which is difficult to discern at first hearing, but is there nevertheless. Certainly, with its Chopinesque harmonies and continually evolving form, the Sonata would have sounded somewhat bizarre to audiences familiar with the more classical sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven. Also, although Chopin gained great popularity as a composer of miniatures, such as his waltzes, mazurkas, and other more virtuosic solo pieces, not many of his larger-scale works, particularly his piano sonatas, were appreciated in his day. Schumann said of the B-flat Piano Sonata, Op. 35 that Chopin had "bound together four of his maddest children"; elsewhere the work is referred to as "an enigma wrapped in a mystery."

With the cello Sonata, Chopin proves himself to be a master in understanding the rich melodic possibilities of the cello. Chopin must have been fond of the instrument, as he wrote four of his five total chamber works for cello--the Grand Duo Concertant for cello and piano, the Introduction and Polonaise Brillante, Op. 3 for cello and piano, and the Trio, Op. 8 for violin, cello and piano. In the Sonata, Chopin experiments with the relationship between piano and cello, exploring a wealth of different textures including piano solo in the opening of the first movement, lightly accompanied cello, cello with a piano countersubject, and piano solo with cello accompaniment.

The first movement, Allegro moderato, opens with a piano solo reminiscent of the grand orchestral introduction of the much earlier piano concertos. The cello begins a dialogue with the piano which develops to a climax, resolving into the most exquisite of second themes. The piano plays this theme alone, tension held in supreme stillness. From this point on, Chopin develops the material as a true craftsman, allowing the melody and other relevant materials to evolve organically into a tightly integrated whole. The second movement is a spirited scherzo with a middle section of extraordinarily romantic loveliness. The third movement, marked Largo and Cantabile, contains a melody of almost Schumannian pathos. The colors and transcendent peace of this movement bear striking resemblance to the middle section of the Marche Funèbre from Chopin's Piano Sonata in B-flat minor, Op. 35. The Finale of this sonata provides a fiery and passionate conclusion to the work.

Robert Schumann was a champion of Chopin's music, and was primarily responsible for introducing Chopin to the public. He frequently defended Chopin from his critics, as a fellow Romantic. Schumann wrote his Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73 and the Five Pieces in the Folk Manner, Op. 102 in 1849, a year which he considered to be his most productive year, to date. The first piece, to be played "Mit Humor" (with humor) is a lanky caricature whose melody exploits the extreme ranges of cello sound. The second piece opens with a lyrical melody which leads to a passionate middle section, eventually returning to nocturnal calm. The third piece is an interesting fusion of moods. As the title indicates, the piece is to be played "Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen" (not fast, with many different tones/timbres of playing). The cello dominates throughout, although the piano helps to create and metamorphose the character of the piece from section to section, where the cello soars high above the piano's arpeggios. The fourth piece begins with a bold melody doubled by the piano, which is transformed into a dream-like accompaniment in the middle section that allows the cello to express a soulful melody. The final piece of the set has a dark, brooding character.

Schumann's Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73 were published in 1849, for clarinet and piano (or cello or violin). Composed between the 11th and 13th of February, the Fantasy Pieces were immensely popular, as evidenced by the many editions which appeared shortly after the first edition. The pieces were subsequently arranged for piano four-hands.

Although many of the character pieces have titles, Schumann did not give any of his three Fantasy Pieces a particular title. He does include a short phrase at the beginning of each piece to indicate its general mood and character. The first piece, marked "Zart und mit Ausdruck" (tender, delicate, and with expression), evokes a somber, almost melancholy lyricism from piano and cello. The second piece provides a healthy contrast. Marked "Lebhaft, leicht" (Lively, gentle and light), this piece bubbles along in frolicking triplets in the piano which are sub-

dued at times by the appearance of the cello's hauntingly beautiful melody. In the middle section the cello playfully joins with piano in a dialogue of triplets, eventually returning to the ecstatic mood of the opening of the piece. The third piece begins with a passionate outburst from cello and piano. Schumann marked this piece to be played "Rasch und mit Feuer" (Quick and swift, with fire). The driving intensity of the opening section becomes sublimated in the middle section where the piano shadows the cello melody. The excitement created with the return of the opening material climaxes in the virtuosic brilliance of the final measures of the Coda.

—Natassja Olsen

TECHNICAL NOTES

This recording took place in December 1992 at Maurice Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City, Utah. The hall is noted for its clean acoustics, linear reverberation, and midrange focus. As in most other Wilson Audio chamber and solo piano recordings, the perspective is close...as though the instruments are performing in your listening room.

The piano is a nine-foot Falcone - an instrument of unusual beauty in its harmonic richness as well as its left hand power. A spaced pair of omni-directional Schoeps microphones was used. This configuration yields a superbly accurate presentation of harmonics, timbres, and dynamics. The cello is an example of the Italian Luthier Pressenda, crafted in 1830, in Turin. The cello bows are the work of William Salchow of New York.

When listening to this recording, the cello is positioned in front of the piano. The cello is to the right of center, facing diagonally across the soundstage. The image of the cello is rather large, and moves in the soundstage as the cellist plays the instrument. This is a normal consequence of the spaced omni configuration, as is the recording's naturally rich harmonic structure. The microphone preamps, designed and built by John Curl, are sophisticated, fully class A, direct-coupled units.

The master tape was recorded on the Ultramaster™, Wilson Audio's exclusive 30 ips analog recorder. This instrument, designed and built by John Curl, is fully direct-coupled, and exhibits a record/playback frequency bandwidth of over 45 KHz. 3M 996 mastering tape was used. Location monitoring was on Wilson WATT III/Puppy II precision loudspeakers powered by a Spectral DMA-80 amplifier. At Wilson Audio, master tapes and reference lacquers were evaluated on both the WATT/Puppy and on the WAMM series VII, powered by a variety of amplifiers including Mark Levinson, Audio Research, Krell, Spectral, Jadis, Rowland and Audio Note. Excellent compatibility was realized with all of these designs.

This recording was made and mastered using the multi-patented CVT (Constant Velocity Transmission) technologies provided under license to Wilson Audio Specialties by MIT. The use of these technologies preserves details in the recording and mastering process that result in a record or CD with increased clarity and transparency. This ensures a more natural and lifelike representation of the original event. CVT and MIT are registered trademarks of Music Interface Technologies of Auburn, California. Analog mastering was performed at Wilson Audiophile's mastering lab in Provo, Utah.

CREDITS

Executive Producer	Sheryl Lee Wilson
Musical Producer	Bruce Leek
Technical Direction	David A. Wilson
Recording Engineering	David A. Wilson
Editing	Bruce Leek
Analog Disk Mastering	Bruce Leek, Wilson Audiophile Mastering Lab
Production Coordination	Troy Bankhead
Cabling	Balanced interfaces and loudspeaker interfaces featuring the patented CVT by MIT.
Cover Photography	Landmark Stock Exchange
Cover Design	Mathew Dalesi of C.D.S. Graphics
Falcone Piano	Performance Pianos of Salt Lake City, Utah
	Rick Baldassin, President
Special Thanks to:	Management of Maurice Abravanel Hall/Salt Lake City
Record Matrix	Ed Tobin of James G. Lee Record Processing
Record Pressing	RTI, Camarillo, California
Printing	Stoughton Printing Co.

© 1994 Wilson Audiophile Definitive Recordings, Inc.
2233 Mountain Vista Lane • Provo, Utah • 84606
Tel: 801.377.2233 • Fax: 801.377.2282



This album was manufactured in the United States of America.

0 54536-9432-1 8



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PRODUCED BY: Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC

ORIGINAL RECORDING ENGINEER: David A. Wilson

PROJECT MANAGER: Daryl C. Wilson

ANALOG TO HIGH DEFINITION DIGITAL TRANSFER:
Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

TRANSFER EDITING: Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

SONIC EVALUATION: David A. Wilson, Sheryl Lee Wilson, Daryl C. Wilson

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Description of equipment and processes used for Master Tape transfers in
Dave Wilson's Music Room:

BRUCE BROWN FLEW FROM SEATTLE TO PROVO TO WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH DAVE AND DARYL WILSON. EACH MASTER TAPE WAS INSPECTED, CLEANED, AND TREATED WITH LAST #9 AND #10 PRESERVATIVES. ALL OF THE MASTER TAPES WERE BAKED TO REFORMULATE THE BINDING. THIS WAS DONE IN AN INCUBATOR AT 135 DEGREES AND THEN THEY WERE LEFT TO COOL BACK DOWN TO ROOM TEMPERATURE. ALL SPLICES WERE INSPECTED AND REPAIRED, IF NECESSARY.

EACH TRANSFER WAS EXECUTED ON THE ULTRAMASTER, A ONE-OF-A-KIND STUDER A80 DESIGNED AND BUILT BY JOHN CURL WITH CUSTOM ELECTRONICS.

EACH MASTER TAPE WAS STORED BY WILSON AUDIOPHILE "TAILS-OUT" IN WHICH PUGET SOUND STUDIOS DID A LIBRARY WIND TO THE TAKE-UP

REEL. ALL LEVELS WERE SET ACCORDING TO INCLUDED EQ SHEETS AND EACH 1 KHZ TONE WAS FURTHER SET AT PRECISELY 1 KHZ, VIA A CUSTOM VARI-SPEED ADJUSTMENT. THIS PROVIDED THE EXACT SPEED THE MASTER TAPES WERE RECORDED AT.

A TOTAL OF FIVE DIFFERENT ANALOG-TO-DIGITAL CONVERTERS WERE USED TO PROVIDE SAMPLES FOR THE WILSONS TO EVALUATE. ULTIMATELY AN EMM LABS ADC-8 MK IV, CUSTOM MODIFIED BY ANDREAS KOCH, WAS CHOSEN BY DAVE AND DARYL WILSON FOR THE TRANSFERS FROM THE ULTRAMASTER USING THE ORIGINAL MASTER TAPES INTO A SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION FOR CAPTURE AND EDITING. MONITORING FROM THE SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION WAS ROUTED THROUGH A MODIFIED PLAYBACK DESIGNS MPS-5 VIA USB-X WITH LIGHT HARMONIC USB CABLE. ALL DSD FILES WERE TRANSFERRED INTO A MERGING TECHNOLOGIES PYRAMIX DSD/DXD MASSCORE WORKSTATION FOR SAMPLE RATE CONVERSION, FORMAT CONVERSION, AND META-DATA TAGGING. THE PYRAMIX HEPTA FILTER WAS USED FOR CONVERSION TO PCM. FILES WERE THEN LISTENED TO FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE.

Description of the Equipment used in the Provo, Utah "Wilson Music Room" that Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC put to use for Sonic Evaluation:

SPEAKERS: WILSON AUDIO ALEXANDRIA XLF, TWO THOR'S HAMMERS
ELECTRONICS: APPLE MAC MINI, AMARRA & AUDIRVANA PLUS, WEISS INT 202, AUDIO RESEARCH DAC8, VTL 7.5 MK3 PRE-AMP, VTL SIEGFRIED MK2 AMPLIFIERS, 2 WILSON AUDIO W.A.T.C.H. CONTROLLERS
CABLES: AUDIOQUEST FIREWIRE, TRANSPARENT OPUS

© *Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC*
2233 Mountain Vista Lane
Provo, UTAH 84606
801.377.2233