

Cédric TIBERGHIE

BBC Music magazine

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MUSIC CHAMBER CHOICE

Built for Beethoven

Stephen Johnson enjoys a remarkable piano-and-violin duo on disc



BEETHOVEN

Violin Sonatas in D, Op. 12 No. 1; in A minor, Op. 23; in G, Op. 30 No. 3; in C minor, Op. 30 No. 2

Alina Ibragimova (violin),
Cédric Tiberghien (piano)
Wigmore Hall Live WHLive 0036
82:24 mins

BBC Music Direct £8.99

This is very special. For a start Alina Ibragimova is more than a talented, promising youngster. She is a mature, intelligent, impassioned musician, technically and emotionally focused to a degree that would be exceptional in any violinist twice her age. Whether in *forte* or in *pianissimo* she has the kind of tone and expression that pins you to the back of your seat. For all the thought that has clearly gone into her interpretations,

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nothing sounds contrived or over-cultivated. Cédric Tiberghien is an ideal partner. While he's far from content to be an accompanist (don't forget, Beethoven called these 'Sonatas for Piano and Violin'), his alert responsiveness to the finer nuances of Ibragimova's playing is one of the features that makes these performances so magnificently alive. In fact so often in these excellently balanced and beautifully clear recordings



FROM THE TOP:
Ibragimova and
Tiberghien impress

you get the impression of two musicians bouncing ideas off each other at lightening speed. Try the beginning of Op. 30 No. 1 or the finale of Op. 30 No. 2 to experience Beethoven's playfulness at its most awesomely feline.

Then there are the passages where you sense both players working as one: the harmonic feint towards the end of the finale of Op. 12 No. 1 is a thrilling example – one of several passages that just had to

be repeated. Talking of repeats, I can't think of a chamber duo that understands better how to bring minute variations to a long repeat. Nothing is ever the same twice, but the changes in stress or inflection are so subtle you're only aware of them on the fringes of consciousness. This is labelled Volume I. If its successors are as good, it will be a cycle to contend with.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Hear an excerpt of this recording at www.bbcmusicmagazine.com