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Brahms & Hindemith: Sonatas for Double Bass and Piano

The new CD by Josef Gilgenreiner (double bass) and Matthias Gerstner (piano) has just been released by Austrian Gramophone. The recording shows the expressive facet of the solo double bass.

JOHANNES BRAHMS - SONATA FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO NO. 1 IN E MINOR, OP. 38. ARRANGED FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO BY JOSEF NIEDERHAMMER

This sonata is the first chamber music work by the young Johannes Brahms in which his own instrument, the piano, conducts a dialogue with an equal partner. The sound of the low instrument seems to have been particularly close to Brahms' heart, perhaps due to the fact that Brahms was confronted with his father's instrument, the double bass, from his earliest childhood in his Hamburg home. Prof. Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen writes: "Perhaps Brahms himself might be delighted to hear his work today in a version for piano and double bass (an instrumentation that was beyond imagination at the time and was reserved for composers of the 20th century, presumably the most prominent being Paul Hindemith)."

Since the Viennese Classical period, much solo music has been written for the double bass. Nevertheless, the existing double bass literature has never been as lavishly laid out as that for instruments such as violin or cello. Thus, double bassists have always adapted works by important composers that were composed for other instruments. This can be a matter of exploring the virtuosity of this bass instrument, or of interpreting a work in the timbres of the singing low register. The latter is particularly important to Josef Gilgenreiner. He is fascinated by the deeply melancholic character of the sonata with its mourning themes and at the same time by the heavenly splendor of the ending in the first movement. "Likewise, the simple dance of the minuet in the second movement, which repeatedly culminates in urgent intensity, and the powerful unifying character of the trio. In the last movement it is the dense fugue passages, paired with the singing joyful sections, that I find inspiring."

PAUL HINDEMITH – SONATA FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO

This sonata is characterized by an inventive and expressive richness combined with a rhythmic sweep that captures many facets of the solo double bass. It is considered one of the major works for double bassists. Hindemith contrasts the low register of the double bass with a very high register of the piano. In the 2nd movement this adds to the humorous character and helps the bass to be heard.

Click here for the trailer: [Link](#)

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JOHANNES BRAHMS - SONATA FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO NO. 1 IN E MINOR, OP. 38.
ARRANGED FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO BY JOSEF NIEDERHAMMER
Allegro non troppo – Allegretto quasi Menuetto – Allegro

PAUL HINDEMITH – SONATA FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO
Allegretto – Scherzo. Allegro assai – Molto Adagio-Recitativo-Lied. – Allegretto grazioso

Josef Gilgenreiner – Double bass
Matthias Gerstner – Piano

Label: Austrian Gramophone

CD available here now: [Link](#)

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JOSEF GILGENREINER – DOUBLE BASS

Josef Gilgenreiner is double bass player (substitute, first desk) in the Musikkollegium Winterthur and double bass lecturer (major) at the Kalaidos Musikhochschule Zurich. Since 2015, he has also been principal bass in Le Concert Olympique in Belgium.

Josef Gilgenreiner studied double bass in Vienna with Prof. Josef Niederhammer at the University of Music and Performing Arts. While still a student, he was a substitute in the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra (RSO) and the Vienna State Opera/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. As a solo bassist, he performed in the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra. In 1996 he was principal bass in the Mahler Chamber Orchestra founded by Claudio Abbado. Since then he has played with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, the Zurich Opera Orchestra, the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, the Zurich Chamber Orchestra and others. In recent years he has appeared regularly with the Bavarian State Orchestra in Munich as assistant principal bass and as principal bass.

Josef Gilgenreiner is in great demand as a chamber musician. His engagements have taken him to a variety of festivals. Among them are the Rheingau Music Festival, the Festwochen Gmunden, the Festival de Musique de Menton, the Festival St. Gallen Steiermark, the Swabian Spring, the Lenzburgiade and the Kyburgiade. He has played with musicians such as Nicolas Altstaedt, Christian Altenburger, Fazil Say, Daniel Schnyder, Paul Meyer and formations such as the Minetti Quartet, the Amar Quartet, the Ars Amata and many others. A close collaboration connects him with the internationally renowned Carmina Quartet.

Josef Gilgenreiner is a double bass lecturer (major) at the Kalaidos Musikhochschule Zurich. He regularly teaches students in the class of Prof. Josef Niederhammer in Vienna and was a lecturer in the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO). In Bad Kohlgrub (Germany) he regularly conducts his double bass master class as part of the Klassiktage Akademie.

He is the founder and artistic director of the Klassiktage Ammergauer Alpen. He was also the initiator and artistic director of the chamber music series Serenata Oberammergau.

In his own publishing house (Gilgenreiner Verlag) for sheet music, Josef Gilgenreiner publishes new compositions and double bass literature.

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MATTHIAS GERSTNER – PIANO

Matthias Gerstner is an internationally active pianist, chamber musician and song accompanist. He received a very broad education. During his school years in Erlangen he learned piano, then also organ, and some cello in addition, the latter he immediately discontinued because of the horrendous pain of the thumb attachment. After graduating from high school, he studied at the Augsburg Conservatory in organ and piano with a minor in horn, then in Münster (then a department of Detmold), where he studied concert piano. His teachers were Karl Maureen, Michael Keller, Hans Leopold Schwerdhöfer, on courses also Harald Vogel, Konrad Hansen, Vitaly Margulis. Gerstner was an accompanist at singing courses of Peter Ziethen, Konrad Widmer and performed many times with orchestra, among others with works of Tchaikovsky. He also regularly performed concerts with choir. In his numerous organ concerts, he played compositions of the North German School, works of Bach, French Romanticism and Hindemith. His double bass duo with Josef Niederhammer celebrated its 25th anniversary at the Vienna Musikverein in 2013. Since 1995 Matthias Gerstner has held a position at the Vienna Academy of Music as solo correpetitor for literature studies for students of double bass, trombone and tuba.

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