

She uses them sparingly, in just the right combinations for what he wants to achieve at any given moment, so that one gets the impression of economy rather than massiveness. That is certainly the feeling you get from Alsop's reading, which is consistently characterized by its beautiful clarity and sense of purpose. There is no fat in this account, no wasted motion, no fuzziness as it moves from one enchanting moment to the next.

The notable exception to what we just observed about Mahler's eschewing massive effects is the sensational opening of the Fourth movement, in which he gives us an abrupt cymbal crash, a loud chord in the woodwinds, string and brass, and a bass drum stroke, all in quick succession. It's enough to lift the unwary listener out of his seat (as it did in fact to an unfortunate lady at the work's first performance in Budapest!) But, as it happens, Mahler has set us up for this stunning moment by the very quiet, slow diminuendo at the end of the slow movement, a grotesque funeral march that is both shadowy and lugubrious.

The other thing you notice about Alsop's account of this work is her spontaneous embrace of its lyricism. Seldom had any composer used vocal-like lyricism as the wellspring of a symphony the way Mahler does here, and that goes beyond the obvious fact that he pulled the melodies of several songs from his cycles *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Magic Horn of Youth), and *Songs of a Wayfarer*, including the pristine beauty of "*Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld*" (I went this morning over the fields) to give the first two movements an immediate appeal for the listener. The most notable use of dance music occurs, appropriately, in the scherzo movement, in the form of an Austrian dance, the *Ländler*, the gracefully gliding contrasted middle section of which Alsop keeps moving steadily and purposefully along, just a little ahead of the beat so that it seems effortless.

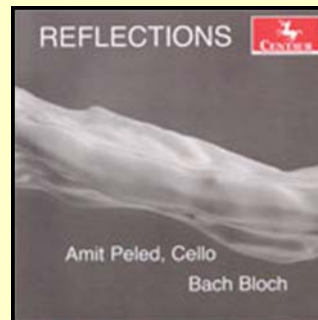


Franz Liszt Recital
Daria Scarano, piano
Centaur Records

Daria Scarano, Moscow-born American pianist who completed her doctoral studies at the University of Maryland, shows a definite affinity for the music of Franz Liszt in this, her debut recording on Centaur Records. That affinity is a rarer achievement than you might imagine, since it is so easy for keyboard artists to become so involved with the formidable technical

clarinet and syncopated strings. The following Allegretto, filled with humorous touches, is probably the fastest slow movement Schubert ever wrote. The hi-jinks continue with the rather impulsive Minuet, in dance time but not strictly danceable, with a gracious trio for oboe and bassoon in the form of an Austrian folk dance, the *Ländler* (This is a good place to talk about the various solos by the Basel SO woodwinds, which are all first-rate throughout the CD). The finale, *Presto vivace*, is a real rouser in the manner of a *Tarantella* with striking dynamic contrasts.

The Fifth Symphony is the more Mozartean of the two, though not without elements revealing an earnest young romantic at work. This symphony is very economically scored without clarinets, trumpets, or timpani, and that places greater emphasis on the strings, which have a lithesome, upbeat sound in the quickly spirited opening movement. The yearning melody for the oboe, spun out over a gently rocking accompaniment in the strings in the *Andante*, is sheer poetic enchantment, up to Schubert's highest standard. Again, the scherzo movement is a vivacious Minuet with a *Ländler* for the trio, this time for bassoon and strings and with a rustic burden lending a definite outdoorsy quality to the proceedings. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, is short and passionate. Davies builds it to a fine frenzy right up to the very end.



Bach: Cello Suite No. 1 + Bloch: Schelomo
Amit Peled, cello
Hajime Teri Murai, Peabody Symphony Orchestra
Centaur Records

Amit Peled, Israeli cellist who balances his active performing career with teaching at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, shows why he is much in demand in both capacities in a really sensational first release in what promises to be a series pairing each of J. S. Bach's six solo cello suites with a masterwork from the concerto repertoire.

First, we hear Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G major, in which Peled establishes a formidable presence right from the beginning in the Prelude, where he steps up and boldly challenges all the arpeggiated chords that give this music its distinctive character. There follow in succession an Allemande that is more passionate than that stately old dance has a right to be, a swiftly moving Courante, a deeply felt and deeply moving Sarabande, a pair of rhythmically alert Minuets that preserve the graceful