

STEVEN ISSERLIS

Camille Saint-Saëns - Works for Cello

Joshua Bell, violin • Pascal Devoyon, piano
NDR Symphony Orchestra, Christoph Eschenbach
RCA Red Seal 09026 63518 2 - Available from January 9, 2001

“Here’s music-making reminiscent of an earlier recording era, with a relaxed, generosity of spirit between Isserlis and Eschenbach too rarely encountered in the studio nowadays.”

Classic CD (Schumann Cello Concerto, 1997)

January sees Steven Isserlis’s latest release for RCA Red Seal, a CD devoted to the cello music of Camille Saint-Saëns. Featuring Saint-Saëns’ neglected Cello Concerto No. 2 and the second Cello Sonata, this recording is a continuation of Isserlis’ crusade to gain attention for rarely performed repertoire, highlighted by the *Sleeping Beauties* series that he has devised for the London Philharmonic Orchestra’s autumn season.

Isserlis’s debut recording for RCA Red Seal was Saint-Saëns’ Cello Concerto No. 1, described by the Penguin Guide as ‘among the finest on record.’ The disc, which also featured Saint-Saëns’ Cello Sonata No. 1 formed part of RCA Red Seal’s *Concerto!* series broadcast on Channel 4 and released on video. With this second recording, all of Saint-Saëns’ cello music, except the Suite Op. 16, is now recorded by Isserlis and available on two discs.

Unlike the exuberance and nonchalance displayed in the Cello Concerto No. 1, the works on this recording - which, with the exception of the Romance in E, Op. 67 were all composed in the later part of Saint-Saëns’ life - are rather more austere and introspective than his earlier works. Coupled with the second cello concerto, is the second cello sonata which in four movements covers the entire spectrum of emotive extremes and, *La muse et le poète* which was given its première in 1910 by Eugene Ysayë and Joseph Hollmann, the dedicatee of the second cello concerto.

A genuine advocate of French repertoire, Isserlis' discography already includes works by Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Poulenc, Franck and the complete cello works of Gabriel Fauré (also recorded with Pascal Devoyon). Isserlis has also edited *The Complete Shorter Works for Cello and Piano by Saint-Saëns*, published by Faber Music in 1998.

SAINT-SAËNS Cello Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 119
Cello Sonata No. 2 in F, Op. 123
La muse et le poète, Op. 132
Romance in E, Op. 67

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