

# Example of essay on louis vierne: sonata in b minor

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Alfred Schnittke: Sonata Nr. 1 (1878)

## **Bela Bartok: Rhapsody Nr 1 for cello and piano BB 94**

Kanae Matsumo - piano

Jonathan Thompson - cello

This modernist collection of works provided an ideal atmosphere for a concert which really showcased the talents of Kanae Matsumo and Jonathan Thompson, both consummate and talented artists in their own right. The former is a pianist full of exceptional promise who also demonstrated astonishing and totally commanding virtuosity in the Bartok piece which is terrifically demanding. Thompson is a great cellist who also demonstrates incredible promise and talent with a main focus on the dark shades of the instrument. There was also substantial chemistry between both artists.

The concert started off with the sonata by Vierne which is a fairly straightforward work in three movements. Here we could appreciate the texture and clarity of Matsumo's playing especially in the First Movement which is marked Poco lento-Allegro molto. Here we could observe the slowish opening where the dynamics are rather reminiscent of the organ which was Vierne's favourite instrument and which showed off Matsumo's consummate and hugely artistic skills.

The second movement which is marked Molto largamente - allegro also has some interesting points of reference. The melody is very pronounced as is the articulation of the beat which demonstrates a certain clarity and this was definitely brought out by Matsumo in her fiendishly effective playing. It was perhaps the highlight of the work and I felt very attuned to it all. The concluding Allegro molto was also quite effective with the tempo whipping

up proceedings and once again I was very impressed by Matsumo's technical prowess and capability to portray the musical power of the work.

Alfred Schnittke's piano sonata written in 1978 is an altogether different ball game. Here we have a substantial element of dissonance and texture changes which definitely need a very capable pianist to bring out completely. Matsumo appeared quite relaxed in the first movement with the daunting technical challenges not really an issue although she seemed to suffer slightly towards the end when the music takes on a really frenetic pace. The second movement was however brilliantly played where Schnittke seems to delve deeper into the darker recesses of one's could portraying imagery of death and the dying – definitely one of his most morose and darker works. The final movement, also marked Largo like the first one brought out some fine elements in Matsumo's playing. Matsumo played the whole sonata with great passion and virility bringing substantial technical expertise to proceedings and also imbuing the music with considerable emotion.

Finally there was the Rhapsody by Bela Bartok which is a work full of traditional Romanian and Hungarian folk melodies although the modernist element is never far behind. For this work, Matsumo was joined by Jonathan Thompson who is one of the most promising cellists around at the moment and he certainly did not disappoint. This work is in two movements marked Lassu and Friss, terms which bring to mind the dances in the Hungarian gypsy mould. Thompson played very creatively especially in the second movement and here he was ably supported by Matsumo who never seems to tire even after playing such consummately difficult music. The concert was

not for the faint hearted but definitely enjoyable especially for those like me who have a penchant for tough and mentally challenging music.