

Weinberg • Druzhinin

Druzhinin Solo Viola Sonata **Weinberg** Complete Sonatas for Solo Viola. Clarinet Sonata, Op 28 (version for viola and piano)^a

Julia Rebekka Adler *va* ^a**Jascha Nemtsov** *pf*

Neos © 2 NEOS11008/9 (131' • DDD)

A Weinberg viola recital marked by commitment and virtuosity

Little by little the music of Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–96) is emerging from the shadows. Was he a major independent voice or a mere acolyte, a

Shostakovich clone with Jewish inflections? Did the influence go both ways?

The jury is still out and a clutch of solo viola sonatas preoccupied with technical challenge won't make much difference, however much we admire the composer's professionalism and skill in exploiting the resources of his chosen instrument (and idiom). Jascha Nemtsov's booklet-note fails to clarify the composer's standing in Soviet musical life, stating that the first of the sonatas (1971) was "ignored" when it was dedicated to the Beethoven Quartet's viola player Fyodor Druzhinin (1932–2007), edited for publication and taped by him for LP. The later works which remained unpublished were written for other well entrenched figures: Dmitri Shebalin of the Borodin Quartet and Mikhail Tolpygo

of Svetlanov's USSR Symphony Orchestra. The solo sonata by Druzhinin himself offers efficient and effective invention from a similar template. Nemtsov features as pianist in a transcription for viola of Weinberg's more overtly appealing and klezmerish Sonata for clarinet and piano (1945) which has already been recorded in its original form (RCA, 1/07).

Perhaps the imminent (July 2010) first staging of *The Passenger*, Weinberg's mid-Sixties opera based on the novel by Polish Holocaust survivor Zofia Posmysz, will clinch the matter. Like Hindemith, Weinberg produced so much that it can be difficult to get a sense of his oeuvre's peaks and troughs. There's no faulting the commitment and virtuosity of Julia Rebekka Adler here, nor her instrument's big, dark, Bashmet-like sonority, well captured by the sound team at Bavarian Radio. A specialist issue but a distinguished one. **David Gutman**

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