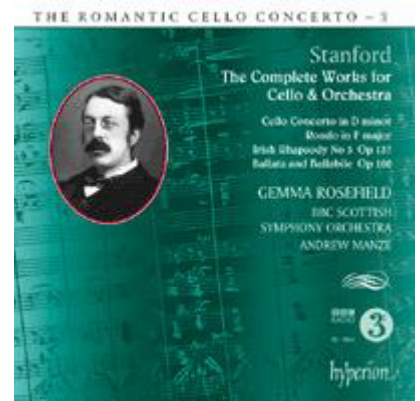


## CD REVIEW 71

THE ROMANTIC CELLO Vol. 3  
Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD:  
Cello Concerto in D minor;  
Rondo in F for cello and orchestra;  
Irish Rhapsody no 3 for cello and orchestra;  
Ballate and Ballabile for cello and orchestra.  
Gemma Rosefield, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra,  
Andrew Manze.  
Hyperion CDA 67859 (70 minutes)



For those of us who have seen Gemma Rosefield play live, we need no further commendation. She is one of best female cellists along with the cellist of the Carducci Quartet, Emma Denton, and Gemma Rosefield joins the top cellists like Isserlis and Wallfisch, Baillie and Welsh.

You can see her on You Tube playing the gorgeous Piano Trio no 1 by Mendelssohn.



*Gemma in recital at St. Paul's School, London, 2010.*



*Gemma rehearsing Haydn Cello Concerto in C Major, at Edenbridge, Kent, 2007.*

Charles Villiers Stanford has had to wait far too long to be recognised for the great composer he is. He was disliked because he was Irish and because he was honest, although not spiteful with it. He did not kow-tow to public opinion or fashion, and his music was suppressed in favour of an Edwardian composer.

Stanford wrote in every genre and successfully. His symphonies are fine and his piano concertos are very good. He wrote super string quartets. His choral works are excellent and often profoundly moving including the famous song *The Bluebird*, a simply glorious piece, and the *Te Deum* in B flat.

But he was Irish and not accepted by the British establishment.

But he is considered to be British because he was English-domiciled.

The Cello Concerto of 1881 is a good piece and can be added to the list of the great British

cello concertos such as the incomparable Walton and the Finzi. Bliss and Bax wrote cello concertos that are good. Rubbra's Soliloquy for cello and small orchestra is a gem. Listen to Rohan de Saram play it... profoundly moving!

Stanford's Cello Concerto is probably the second earliest Cello Concerto... that of Arthur Sullivan precedes it by about 15 years.

To write a successful Cello Concerto is not easy. Prokofiev was successful in this with his impressive Sinfonia Concertante. The incomparable American cellist, Lynn Harrell, has said, and it is on record, that there are only two great Cello Concertos, namely those by Dvorak and Dutilleux.

But to the Stanford concerto. I have no problem whatsoever with Gemma's playing but Manze, as a conductor is sometimes rash allowing his enthusiasm to take over. The majority of listeners will not detect this.

This concerto is technically sound, structurally sane and beautifully put to together. You may not enthuse at your first listening but persevere. It is a great work and further attention will bring its handsome rewards. Music that is instantly likable usually fades quickly.

The Rondo in F is an early piece. The Irish Rhapsody no. 3 is one of six. The first famously includes the Londonderry Air and is one of many examples of Stanford's marvellous orchestration. This third rhapsody is based on the folk song The Black Rogue.

The Ballata and Ballabile has a curious title in some respects. It is a substantial work of refinement and melody but, again, I had to listen to it several times to appreciate it. Had Ms Rosefield not been playing it, I might not have persevered or bothered. But her playing is so committed, reliable, with good intonation and logical dynamics and she is quite superb. Her musicianship cannot be bettered. Her characterisation is strong and definitive but never excessive. Her heart, soul and mind is in the music yet without the irritatingly hormonal intensity of the sorely missed Jacqueline Du Pre.

There are many reasons for buying this welcome CD... interesting and good music, excellent sound and presentation, marvellous writing for the cello and a world-class cellist.

I loved it!



*photo by Marco Borggreve*

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