

CDS REVIEWS

PROKOFIEV Violin concertos no.1 in D major op.19 & no.2 in G minor op.63, Sonata in C major for two violins op.56*

Pavel Berman, Anna Tifu* (violin) Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana/

Andrey Boreyko
DYNAMIC CDS 676

Indianapolis prizewinner Pavel Berman brings freshness and eloquence to Prokofiev



When compared with, say, Itzhak Perlman's EMI recording with Gennadi

Rozhdestvensky or Isaac Stern's Sony classic with Eugene Ormandy, the natural perspectives of this new version, where Pavel Berman's sweet-toned playing emerges seductively from the orchestral ranks, are such that one could almost be listening to different pieces. Subtle internal orchestral detail is revealed (particularly in the First Concerto) that usually lies concealed behind the solo image. The passages where Berman duets engagingly with solo woodwind instruments or harp feel more 'sinfonia concertante' than concerto proper. The effect, especially towards the end of the finale, is often magical, as Berman's silvery purity becomes enveloped in a pulsating web of orchestral sound.

Those raised on classic accounts from David Oistrakh (EMI), Kyung-Wha Chung (Decca) or Shlomo Mintz (Deutsche Grammophon), in which one can hear and feel the contract of bow on string or fingers on fingerboard, may

find the effect here, especially in the Second Concerto, initially disorientating. Yet to hear Prokofiev's super-virtuoso writing emerging with such blemishless poise and unforced eloquence comes as a welcome relief compared to the claustrophobic intensity of most recorded accounts.

The Double Violin Sonata is also beautifully played and recorded, with Prokofiev's lyrical genius well to the fore.

JULIAN HAYLOCK