

BRAHMS: *Cello Sonatas*;
SCHUBERT: *Arpeggione Sonata*
Silvia Chiesa; Maurizio Baglini, p
Decca 476 4422—78 minutes

These three classics of the cello literature relate well together in these readings. The two Brahms sonatas rate among my all-time favorites, and the Schubert is always interest-

ing, if less musically powerful. At least that was my impression until I heard this recording.

The Brahms sonatas are played in an unusual fashion. I get the feeling that the pianist is more in control than the cellist sometimes. Baglini is fond of the sound of his Fazioli instrument. It sounds lush and unusually clear and resonant in this recording. Sometimes the piano takes over—sometimes unexpectedly. The phrasing and balances seem rather like a husband and wife having a musical relationship. That is the case here, according to my editor. They don't always agree, but they come to an understanding as the music progresses. It is an interesting, if sometimes not entirely consistent interpretation. The exposition repeat is omitted in Sonata 1. Considering the length of the program, that was necessary. All the others are observed.

In the Schubert the musical roles are clearer. Chiesa takes over to a marked degree and shows that she has a strong musical personality and very agile fingers. This is a lovely performance and has a clearer direction.

This interests me considerably, though I would rather live with the Schubert permanently than with the Brahms. I hope these artists stay with it, however. The piano sound and balances are unusual and original, and the cellist has a strong personality as well.