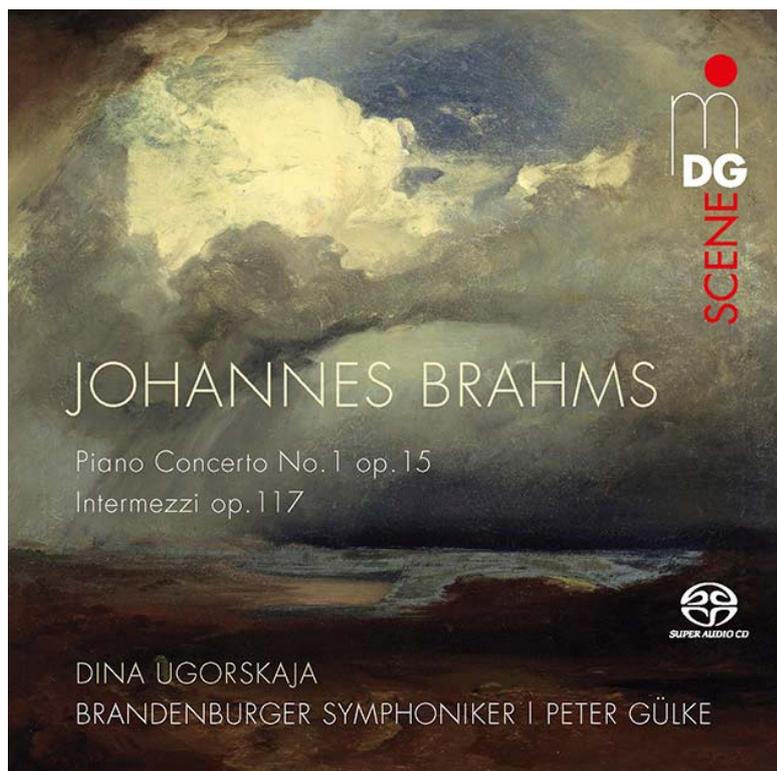


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SCENE
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Johannes Brahms
(1833 - 1897)

Piano Concerto No. 1 op. 15
Intermezzi op. 117

Dina Ugorskaja, Piano
Brandenburger Symphoniker
Peter Gülke

1 Hybrid-SACD **222**
RECORDING

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Elusive Essence

Much has been written about the compositional history of the Piano Concerto in D minor by Johannes Brahms: how the composer initially planned a sonata for two pianos and then a symphony; how Beethoven's overwhelming legacy inhibited him; how the young composer also as a pianist ended up delighting his audiences in Hanover but unsettling them in Leipzig. Dina Ugorskaja, performing with the Brandenburg Symphony under the conductor and Siemens Prize recipient Peter Gülke, is now presenting this work in its essence: a magnificent contribution to the music literature that even 160 years after its premiere continues to be filled with enigmas and marvels.

Titanic Struggle

The titanic initial theme comes out looking for a fight. Beginning with mighty drum rolls, it seems to rise up in revolt against the musicians, who have to summon all their energies to tame it. Descending trill chains flutter over the chromatic bass, and the fact that the piano is first entrusted with this theme in the recapitulation has its reasons – pianists rightly fear its octave trills!

Towering Summit

With Dina Ugorskaja, however, they are in the best hands. It is with bravura that this highly sought-after
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hands. It is with bravura that this highly sought-after pianist masters the rocky heights of this gigantic work and engages in genuinely "concerted" competition with the orchestra. Peter Gülke also contributes his share here; hardly any other conductor has at his command such a profound knowledge of the work and its author, and he convincingly puts this expertise to use with his Brandenburg Symphony.

Personal Presence

As an encore, Dina Ugorskaja offers a highly poetic rendering of the three Intermezzi from Brahms's op. 117, a work from his late period. This very personal interpretation moves listeners with its flexible tempo and an enormous spectrum of tone colors. Lovingly produced and recorded in the best 2+2+2 technique in three dimensions on our Super Audio CD, this ambitious program featuring these so very different works is an enriching addition to every record collection.

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