

ONLY CELLO

Valérie AIMARD, cello solo

II - Conversations with Roger LENOIR, sound engineer

"The origins of the project, the repertoire, the instrument"

RL - We understand very well your generous educational approach with "Cello Kids". What about "Only Cello"? Is it a technical challenge? Artistic? A challenge to yourself, in the manner of a seasoned mountaineer who wishes to "do Everest"? or browsing the entire repertoire of the solo cello?

This project, which has lived in me since 2018, imposed itself very naturally. More than a challenge, it is rather a huge urge and almost a necessity to absorb myself into it. I love to play the cello, and especially this one. My life is being a cellist, but ultimately my hobby is to work on my cello!

The composer Guy Reibel pointed out to me during one of our many "creative conversations", it's not 2 years of work on this recording, it's ALL, my whole life as a cellist, my roots as a cellist.

When the idea for this Anthology was born, life's turning points and griefs made that my parents passed away in a very short period of time. The music has been of immeasurable help. I took refuge in work, this cello becoming even more than before a double, an alter ego. This Anthology is dedicated to their memory.

RL - Is it for educational, artistic purposes, for older students and fans of the cello repertoire?

VA - Clearly from the outset, it is a work of personal and artistic achievement. We always think we don't know anything! ... but in this case if I put it all together, it is a considerable sum. Over 30 years spent with the cello, a sort of legacy of all the music that I have absorbed, stored. Beyond personal achievement, it is interesting to make this accumulated knowledge known to other cellists, to an audience.

If we add up the repertoire of the 2 channels Only Cello and Cello Kids, that's almost 200 works, often unknown to the public and rarely performed. A sort of cello encyclopedia !

RL - Do you want to prove something?

VA - No, really nothing! When I met Bernard Greenhouse, one of the first things he said to me was "You don't have to prove anything, but be as sincere as possible". It was the time when I was graduating from the Conservatory, when I took competitions and this sentence changed my whole approach to music. If anyone listens to this entire Anthology, I think they'll know me really well in the end !

RL - You play an instrument that you have chosen for its warm sound quality, rich in low mid-register, particularly singing, which seems perfectly suited to "romantic lyricism". However, you approach a very wide repertoire from baroque to contemporary pieces. How do you manage to reconcile these aesthetics, these styles with a single cello?

VA - Yes... that cello! Almost "him" is the real reason for this whole recording! I 'm so fond of it ! The meeting was made thanks to my luthier Pierre Caradot at the end of 2008. It previously belonged to my friend Antoine Lederlin of the magnificent Belcea Quartet. When I tried it, I played the whole repertoire all the Christmas holidays, I couldn't stop. I haven't left it since.

It is an Italian cello made in Milan in the year 1694, probably by Grancino.

A "musical" and very endearing cello, which speaks, which reacts to the slightest inflection with great precision, a great ease of playing and a lot of projection. The phrasing, the harmony, the polyphony, the rhythm itself emerge naturally and its tone quality touches very immediately. What's so magical about it ? Precisely that it adapts to all styles.

I also play a wonderful Joseph Henry bow made around 1850, for over 20 years it has really been like an extension of my arm.

Other cellist would have chosen to change instrument, bow, strings or tuning according to different styles. It's my artistic choice to keep the same instrument, the same bow through these 350 years of music. And to hope that if some hear differences in styles or sounds ... maybe I have something to do with it too !!!

To be continued...