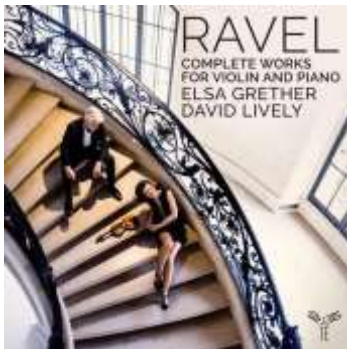


# the Strad

## Elsa Grether: Ravel

By Edward Bhesania 12 October 2022

**A complete cycle is spiced by some world-premiere arrangements**



**The Strad Issue:** November 2022

**Description:** A complete cycle is spiced by some world-premiere arrangements

**Musicians:** Elsa Grether (violin) David Lively (piano)

**Works:** Ravel: Complete works for violin and piano

**Catalogue number:** APARTÉ AP295

Apart from demonstrating Ravel's wide-ranging stylistic influences – the Gypsy exoticism of *Tzigane*, the Blues movement of the Violin Sonata in G major, the popular foxtrot from *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and traditional Hebrew songs in the *Deux mélodies hébraïques* – this disc disproves Ravel's claim that violin and piano are 'essentially incompatible'. Furthermore, Grether and Lively are always stylistically, emotionally and tonally in sync.

The contrapuntal strands of the G major Violin Sonata's first movement are distinctive yet also delicate and luminous; whereas the climax is suitably bold and alarming (the tremolo violin arpeggios here recalling those in the Piano Concerto's *Adagio*, making that movement's inclusion here, suitably arranged, more revealing). The 'Blues' movement has, in the hands of these two musicians, the perfect cocktail of American groove and French nonchalance.

The *Berceuse sur le nom de Gabriel Fauré* reflects the prayerful simplicity of the preceding (first) Violin Sonata's opening, and contrasts starkly with the scintillating vaudeville of the 'Five o'clock Foxtrot' from *L'enfant*.

The disc closes with Tzigane. Grether conjures a sense of mystery during the slow introduction but also negotiates with ease the high harmonics and the shower of alternating right- and left-hand pizzicato elsewhere. Combining speed and precision, there's a dizzying dash to the end. The recording quality matches the detail of the playing, making this album a persuasive enquiry into Ravel's kaleidoscopic art.

EDWARD BHESANIA