

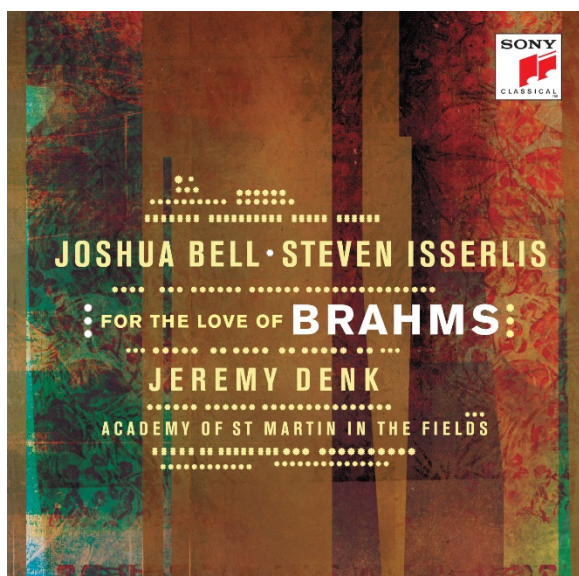


**MUSIC ABOUT LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP
INSPIRES JOSHUA BELL AND STEVEN ISSERLIS ON NEW ALBUM**

FOR THE LOVE OF BRAHMS

**Pianist Jeremy Denk and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Join in Music of Brahms and Schumann**

Album Available September 30, 2016



Violinist **Joshua Bell** and cellist **Steven Isserlis** are joined by two acclaimed musical forces - pianist **Jeremy Denk** and the **Academy of St Martin in the Fields**, of which Bell is Music Director - in a landmark joint recording, [*For the Love of Brahms*](#) (Sony Classical). Available September 30, 2016, the new album is a unique project that features works of Brahms and Schumann that Bell calls “music about love and friendship.”

A personal, deeply affectionate impulse frequently sparked the music of Johannes Brahms and his mentor, Robert Schumann – often including their mutual friend, the violinist and composer Joseph Joachim. It clearly drove all three works on *For the Love of Brahms*.

Bell, Isserlis and Denk unite here in Brahms’s first published chamber work, the Piano Trio in B Major, Op. 8 in its rarely performed original 1854 version. Isserlis also joins Bell - as violin soloist and director - and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in Brahms’s last orchestral work, the celebrated Double Concerto (for Violin and Cello) in A Minor, Op. 102. Bell, Isserlis and members of the Academy also offer the first recording of an unusual coupling: the slow movement of Schumann’s rarely heard Violin Concerto, in a version for string orchestra made by Benjamin Britten, who also added a short coda.

“I met Steven almost 30 years ago at a music festival, and he has been my close friend and frequent chamber music partner ever since. Jeremy and I have also shared a long-lasting friendship and we have recorded and performed together for more than a decade,” states Bell. “Therefore it is fitting that we all come together on this record to play music that is so deeply rooted in love and friendship.” Earlier this year, Bell, Isserlis and the Academy performed the Brahms Double Concerto to critical acclaim on an 11-date European tour, which Bell play-directed. The tour also featured the Schumann, and this recording followed. “Steven and I have performed the Double concerto of Brahms many times over the years, and I am so pleased that we found the perfect collaborators in the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields so we could finally record this piece that means so much to us,” adds Bell.

In the liner notes he wrote for *For the Love of Brahms*, Isserlis echoes the belief that Brahms's early piano trio is suffused with his profound feeling for the Schumanns – Robert as his mentor and Clara as a lifelong friend and inspiration for whom Brahms nurtured a volatile yet unfulfilled love.

Both Schumann and Brahms wrote their violin concertos for Joachim. In the 1880s, however, a misunderstanding ruptured Brahms's celebrated friendship with Joachim. Brahms's "peace offering" to Joachim was to write the Double Concerto with him in mind, a gesture that repaired, even if it could not fully restore, the friendship. Clara Schumann referred to it as 'a work of reconciliation'.

"It was fascinating to explore in this album the extremes of Brahms' creative career, from the passionate declarations of his youthful trio in B major to the late Double Concerto, his mellow, affectionate farewell to orchestral music. Since the concerto was written to celebrate Brahms' friendship of over 30 years with violinist Joseph Joachim, it is rather fitting that this recording should mark almost 30 years of close friendship between Joshua Bell and myself," observes Isserlis.

Bell also has a personal affection for Schumann's Violin Concerto, especially its slow movement – "it may be my favorite slow movement in any concerto," he says. Britten's version was made for a special performance at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1958. It allows the slow movement (which Schumann linked without pause to the final movement) to stand on its own. Isserlis (who also plays the cello melody with which the movement opens) was intrigued to find this arrangement in the Britten-Pears catalogue; he got hold of a copy of the manuscript, and immediately sent it to Bell. Isserlis, Bell and the Academy performed it on the tour in early 2016 for almost certainly the first time since its premiere over half a century ago.

For the Love of Brahms continues Joshua Bell's long and acclaimed partnership with the London-based chamber orchestra Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Since 2011, Bell has been the orchestra's Music Director and only person to hold this title since Sir Neville Marriner founded the orchestra in 1958. Bell's most recent Sony Classical recordings with the orchestra include Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, Beethoven's Fourth and Seventh symphonies (Bell's first recording as Music Director), and a Bach concerto collection.

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For The Love of Brahms Tracklisting

- Double Concerto in A Minor, Op. 102 for Violin, Cello and Orchestra
- 1 I. Allegro
- 2 II. Andante
- 3 III. Vivace non troppo
- 4 Violin Concerto in D Minor, WoO 23: II. Langsam (codetta by Benjamin Britten)
Piano Trio in B Major, Op. 8 (1854 Version)
- 5 Allegro con moto - Tempo un poco più Moderato
- 6 Scherzo: Allegro molto - Trio: Più lento - Tempo primo
- 7 Adagio non troppo - Allegro - Tempo primo
- 8 Finale: Allegro molto agitato - Un poco più lento - Tempo primo

JOSHUA BELL

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