

Frances Renzi



Johannes Brahms: Clarinet Chamber Music

Johannes Brahms

SACD aud 92.554

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 6/2006 (Diether Steppuhn - 01.11.2006)



Man kann Brahms' wunderbare späte Klarinettenwerke nicht oft genug hören. Dass...

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Pizzicato N° 169 - 1/2007 (Isabelle Trüb - 01.01.2007)



Malgré tout son classicisme, la musique de Brahms parle d'abord au cœur. C'est bien le cas dans cet enregistrement des œuvres maîtresses pour l'instrument à la sonorité chaleureuse qu'est la clarinette, et dont Brahms raffolait. Si le Trio op. 114 démontre une maturité et une générosité d'expression chez un compositeur au faite de sa carrière, les deux Sonates op.120, qui font partie du répertoire des altistes, sont également des chefs d'œuvre à part entière. Les Sonates sont interprétées par Frances Renzi, une pianiste sensible qui dialogue avec Arthur Campbell à la clarinette avec un timbre et un phrasé soignés. Le clarinettiste possède une technique solide et suit les méandres romantiques de la partition avec aisance. Il éprouve parfois de la peine à maîtriser le timbre dans les passages les plus doux. Jean-Pascal Meyer donne un caractère plutôt tendu à la partie de piano dans le Trio, alors que Daniel Raclot charme par sa sonorité généreuse et sa présence à la partie de violoncelle.

**Audiophile Audition February 2007
(Gary Lemco - 15.02.2007)**



In surround sound, Daniel Raclot's cello opening makes a lovely A Minor triad to...

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opushd.net - opus haute définition e-magazine Numéro 22
(Jean-Jacques Millo - 30.01.2007)



Regroupant les trois grandes partitions de musique de chambre pour clarinette de...

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www.banddirector.com March 2007 (Michael Bennett - 14.03.2007)



This is a beautiful recording in all sense of the word. The Trio in A minor, Opus...

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www.ResMusica.com Mars 2007 (Maya Prynda - 01.03.2007)



Une version sans couleurs de l'œuvre pour clarinette de Brahms

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CD Compact 03-07 (Verónica Maynés - 01.03.2007)

Algunas de las más hermosas piezas dedicadas al clarinete son, sin lugar a...

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Fanfare July/Aug 2007 (Jerry Dubins - 01.07.2007)

fanfare

Brahms's four works for clarinet—the trio and two sonatas recorded here, plus the Quintet, op. 115—were all products of the composer's late years, and byproducts of his relationship with the virtuoso clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld. The sonatas, in both their originally conceived versions for clarinet and their composer-sanctioned versions for viola, along with the trio and quintet, have been covered in these pages a number of times; so brevity is in order.

Canadian-born clarinetist Arthur Campbell, now a US resident, received his degrees from Northwestern University, earning his doctorate as a student of renowned clarinetist Robert Marcellus. Pianist Frances Renzi, who partners Campbell in the sonatas, graduated from the University of North Texas, and then pursued graduate studies at Juilliard under Rosina Lhevinne and Beveridge Webster. French pianist Jean Pascal-Meyer, heard here in the trio, studied with, among others, Gabriel Tacchino and Gaby Casadesus. Cellist Daniel Raclot studied at the Limoges Conservatory in France, and took further training under André Navarra and Genevieve Joy.

One would be hard-pressed to find a recording of these works poorly played on today's modern clarinet, (Campbell plays Leblanc, Opus II models). And therein is the dilemma, for there are so many recordings to choose from. What it comes down to in the end, I think, is one's preference for the style or school of playing. There's the English school, represented by artists past and present, such as Reginald Kell, Jack Brymer, Janet Hilton, and Thea King. The approach, not unlike that of a certain school of English singing, emphasizes a "white" sound that is light on vibrato, pure of tone, precise in pitch, and smoothly regulated or modulated between the instrument's register breaks.

The French school, of which Gervase de Peyer is probably the most famous exponent, tends to cultivate a somewhat less focused sound in favor of a richer color palette and a more pronounced vibrato. Between the two—English and French—my personal taste leans towards the former. I've long had de Peyer's Angel/EMI LP of the Mozart and Brahms clarinet quintets with the Melos Ensemble in my collection, though I've never much cared for the performances.

That brings us to the American school, which has managed to produce, in my opinion, the finest clarinetists of all—Stanley Drucker, David Shifrin, Richard Stoltzman, Harold Wright, and let us not forget Benny Goodman; and now Arthur Campbell can be added to this prestigious list. The American approach is one that adopts the best attributes of the English style, (the purity of tone and pitch and well-balanced registration) while eschewing the bland "white" sound in favor of the richer color palette and vibrato of the French school, but without the flaw of flabby focus.

This latest entry then into a highly crowded field is highly recommended for exquisite playing, enhanced by a wonderfully warm and perfectly balanced recording. The hybrid SACD will play on all CD players; and, of course, when played on a system equipped for full surround sound will add an extra degree of dimensionality.

www.classicalcdreview.com March 2007 (R.E.B. - 01.03.2007)

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The Brahms chamber works featuring clarinet are magnificently played by...

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Scherzo Año XXII - Núm. 220 - Junio 2007 (Juan Carlos Moreno - 01.06.2007)

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El clarinete es el instrumento de la madurez de Johannes Brahms, aquel al que,...

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If you prize the autumnal beauty of these pieces above their latent passion, these accounts will give you pleasure.

American Record Guide May/June 2007 - Vol. 70, No 3 (Paul L. Althouse - 01.05.2007)



After completing his second string quintet in 1890, Brahms declared his intention to retire at age 57. We are glad he changed his mind, and before his death in 1896 he wrote several memorable pieces: 20 short piano works and four chamber pieces for clarinet, three of them included here.

This is quite wonderful. Campbell, a Canadian native who studied with Robert Marcellus, is a terrific player with excellent breath control and pure, non-wheezy tone. He sounds good at all dynamic levels and uses no vibrato (unlike, for example, Stoltzman in the slow movements of the sonatas). Campbell has surrounded himself with talented colleagues. I was particularly impressed with some deft playing by pianist Jean-Pascal Meyer in the trio, but in truth all the players deserve high praise for bringing these late, autumnal works to life so beautifully.

As our Overview (S/O 2006) pointed out, there are several fine recordings of Brahms's clarinet pieces, but this one is certainly worthy of inclusion.

Pizzicato N° 225 - 9/2012 (Alain Steffen - 01.09.2012)



Klanglich hervorragender Brahms

Johannes Brahms hat wunderbare Kammermusik für Klarinette geschrieben. Diese klanglich hervorragende SACD von Audite mit dem Trio a-moll für Klarinette, Cello und Klavier op. 114 und den beiden Sonaten für Klarinette und Klavier f-moll op. 120/1 und Es-dur op. 120/2 bietet diese drei Werke in sehr guten Interpretationen an. Hier wird konsequent und hochrangig musiziert, und wenn es auch ein bisschen an Fantasie fehlt, so bleiben die Interpretationen durch die enorme Präsenz der Musiker und durch die Aufnahmetechnik hörenswert.