

Arthur Campbell



Johannes Brahms: Clarinet Chamber Music

Johannes Brahms

SACD aud 92.554

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 6/2006 (Diether Steppuhn - 2006.11.01)



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

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Pizzicato N° 169 - 1/2007 (Isabelle Trüb - 2007.01.01)



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 clarinetiste 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 - 2007.02.15)**



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 - 2007.01.30)



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

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www.banddirector.com March 2007 (Michael Bennett - 2007.03.14)



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 - 2007.03.01)



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

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CD Compact 03-07 (Verónica Maynés - 2007.03.01)

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

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Fanfare July/Aug 2007 (Jerry Dubins - 2007.07.01)

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. - 2007.03.01)

CLASSICAL CD REVIEW
a site for the serious record collector

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

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Scherzo Año XXII - Núm. 220 - Junio 2007 (Juan Carlos Moreno - 2007.06.01)

sch*er***zo**

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

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Le Monde de la Musique Mars 2007 (Patrick Szersnovicz - 2007.03.01)

Le méconnu Trio pour clarinette, violoncelle et piano op. 114 et les deux magnifiques Sonates pour clarinette et piano op. 120 parachèvent en 1891 et en 1894, avec le plus célèbre Quintette pour clarinette et cordes op. 115, la création instrumentale de Brahms. Usant de métamorphoses structurelles qui annoncent le principe de variation continue bientôt cher à Schoenberg, Brahms invente dans son Trio op 114 une « prose musicale » où la maîtrise architecturale génère une rhétorique neuve. Contrairement à la musique de chambre avec clavier antérieure de Brahms, ce n'est pas le piano qui domine mais plutôt la clarinette – ou l'alto, dans la deuxième instrumentation prévue par le compositeur dans les Sonates op 120. Chacune des sonates a son profil expressif, la Première, celle en fa mineur, offrant une invention mélodique digne d'un des plus grands duos composés par Brahms, la Première Sonate pour violon et piano dite « Regensonate ».

Bien accompagné par Frances Renzi, le clarinettiste Arthur Campbell ne détrône pas dans les Sonates op 120 les rares références du passé (Kell/Horszowski, Wlach/Demus, Leister/Demus, De Peyer/Barenboim, Portal/Pludermacher) ni même des versions plus récentes (Leister/Oppitz, Frost/ Pontinen), mais il fait montre d'un souci du phrasé brahmien et rend justice à la mélancolie des transitions, à la liberté mélodique comme à l'incessante imagination rythmique du vieux Brahms. Malgré de belles inflexions, un jeu d'ensemble remarquable et une certaine recherche de la perfection plastique, l'interprétation du Trio en la mineur avec Daniel Raclot et Jean-Pascal Meyer manque un peu d'originalité, d'intensité et de profondeur.

The Clarinet December 2007 (Justin O'Dell - 2007.12.01)

Arthur Campbell has released a new compact disc with three of the four chamber music works with clarinet by Johannes Brahms. The Trio in A Minor, opus 114, and both clarinet sonatas are beautifully captured in this hybrid Super Audio CD in surround sound format. This type of recording can be used in any CD player, but when played by equipment especially designed for it, the listener is rewarded with a depth of sound and range of dynamics much wider than available on ordinary CDs. When you have an SACD player, proper amplification, and five speakers, the result is truer to a live performance.

Arthur Campbell, according to the biographical notes accompanying the CD, was one of only three doctoral students of Robert Marcellus at Northwestern University in Illinois. A native of Canada, Dr. Campbell won the ICA's International Clarinet Recording Competition in 1996 and the top clarinet prize in the National Music Festival of Canada (1988). Campbell chose first-rate musicians with whom to collaborate on this recording. Daniel Raclot, principal cellist with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France, pianist Jean Pascal Meyer (in the trio), and wonderful pianist Frances Renzi (sonatas) all generously contribute their developed artistic personalities to these masterworks.

The Trio is the opening work on the disc. Mr. Raclot roots out just the right expression with his solo at the beginning. Too often, cellists miss the opportunity to convey the poetry and poignancy of this opening. Raclot's version radiates a melancholic wistfulness, and one imagines Brahms' tentative first scribbles as he emerged from retirement to pen this sublime work for its dedicatee, Richard Mühlfeld. I especially enjoyed the taut, composed character set up by pianist J.P. Meyer in the first half of the transition. He holds back slightly and he sets up a terrific push forward just when the clarinet joins the transition. Now the tempo carries enough momentum to welcome the second theme. Raclot penetrates beautifully with a searing, full sound here. Later in the movement, when it is the clarinetist's duty to call in the recapitulation, Campbell phrases it purely, instead of evoking longing. His attractive, lengthy phrases and clear sound are free of sentimentality, allowing the music to speak without interference. Campbell shines in the opening of the slow movement. He relishes the chance to show off his silky, soft sound. The third movement is also

very well played, but it would benefit from a little more collective contrast from the group. The main tempo, while slow, could have been more effective if the trio section had a little more Teutonic rollick. The approach is thoroughly elegant and unhurried, but sometimes I thought of a pavane more than of a Ländler.

The definition of character set up by Raclot is confident and chiseled in the opening of the last movement, however. He pilots a strong and powerful primary theme. The movement is full of fire and excitement. This trio performs expertly together, and one senses they are enjoying the music to the fullest.

Both of the opus 120 sonatas are played very well. Frances Renzi's contributions as both pianist and duo partner are commendable. Renzi has a beguiling sound, marked by clear textures and judicious use of pedaling. She supports Campbell so he can sing freely, but at the same time she succeeds as a full and sensitive chamber music participant. Campbell takes his opportunities to full advantage in the sonatas. His expression recalls that of his great master teacher, Marcellus. The phrasing is straightforward and within beats, and he rarely strays from what the composer asks. There are occasional touches of boldness, which add to the personality of the artist. Listen to the climax of the development of the second sonata, for example. For me, I found the slow movement of the F minor sonata particularly satisfying. Campbell's lucid tone and spot-on intonation make for a performance that is easy to listen to. He takes it beyond the workmanlike, with some of the tenderest playing one could wish for. Renzi superbly performs the last movement of the first sonata. She at once conveys the neo-classicist in Brahms' opening refrain, but she adeptly unleashes all the requisite power called for in the second episode.

All in all, this new Brahms release is an appealing newcomer to a bookshelf crowded with Brahms' sonatas. The use of advanced recording technology lends it further interest.

www.musicweb-international.com December 2007 (Tim Perry - 2007.12.13)



This hybrid SACD brings together three of the four masterpieces Brahms wrote for Richard Mühlfeld, the self-taught virtuoso clarinetist who inspired the composer to come out of compositional retirement. The missing piece, the gorgeous Clarinet Quintet Op.114, is frequently coupled with the Clarinet Trio, its immediate predecessor in Brahms oeuvre. Here it is replaced with the two sonatas for clarinet and piano which date from three years later.

American clarinetist Arthur Campbell turns in polished performances of the sonatas, with Frances Renzi a sympathetic associate artist. Their accounts emphasise the dreamy beauty of Brahms' writing, and Campbell's variation of tone is quite beguiling in and of itself. The performance of the first sonata is perhaps more successful. Here Campbell and Renzi find more ardour in the first movement than they manage to project in the second movement of the second sonata, both of which are marked "allegro appassionato". They also turn in a lovingly detailed accounts of the first sonata's allegretto grazioso third movement and dancing vivace finale.

For the trio Campbell is joined by a pair of French musicians, both of whom raise the intensity somewhat without erasing the lyricism of Brahms' conception. Together the three musicians deliver a fine performance of this piece. The beauty of Campbell's tone is compromised a little in the upper extremes of his register in the first movement, but elsewhere it remains warm and mellifluous. My only serious reservation here concerns the balancing of the sound, which favours the piano and clarinet but obscures Raclot's cello. Perhaps this problem is unique to the CD stereo layer of the disc, and is not repeated in the SACD layers, which I have not heard. Certainly the sound is otherwise excellent, closely recorded perhaps but lacking nothing in warmth.

The booklet notes, in both German and English, are helpful, even if the picture of Brahms selected to adorn Michael Struck-Schloen's essay depicts the composer in his youth rather than the gentleman of late middle age who penned these works.

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 - 2007.05.01)



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 - 2012.09.01)



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.



Carl Philipp Stamitz: Quartets for Clarinet

Carl Philipp Stamitz

SACD aud 92.661

WDR 3 06.03.2013, WDR3 TonArt (Monika Kursawe - 2013.03.06)



Dass sich die vier Musiker gut kennen und hervorragend aufeinander eingespielt sind, das ist unüberhörbar. [...] Klanglich passt der schlanke, fokussierte Klarinetten von Arthur Campbell ganz hervorragend zu der Musik von Carl Stamitz. [...] Vor allem die hochvirtuosen, technisch sehr anspruchsvollen Stellen bewältigt der amerikanisch-kanadische Klarinettist mit souveräner Leichtigkeit.

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Mannheimer Morgen 04.04.2013 (ML - 2013.04.04)



Nette Klarinette

Nette Klarinette

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International Record Review May 2013 (Carl Rosman - 2013.05.01)



Even among clarinetists Carl Philipp Stamitz's name is probably better known than his music – from which one might fairly conclude that clarinetists are an ungrateful lot, since he gave us at least 11 concertos (some composed jointly with clarinet virtuoso Joseph Beer, a fine composer in his own right). Those seeking music of earth-shattering originality should certainly look elsewhere. In common with his output in general, these are amiably disposed works treading largely familiar harmonic and melodic paths – there is rather a lot of the Classical clarinet's favourite key of E flat major here and the boundaries of the quartets may easily elude the inattentive listener. Any particular innovation lies in the instrumentation itself, and perhaps also in the attribution of such a leading role to what was at the time still a relatively new arrival on the instrumental scene – period instruments might have had a chance of reproducing this effect for modern ears but the use here of the familiar modern instrumental palette irons this out somewhat. No matter.

Exactly what brought four professors from Grand Valley State University, Michigan to the Himmelfahrt-Kirche in Munich-Sendling to record Stamitz is an intriguing mystery. (It doubtless has a perfectly simple explanation which I am content to leave unsought.) Arthur Campbell studied with no less a figure than Robert Marcellus; his relatively light tone (at least, on the evidence this disc provides) is appropriate for these unassuming works and his command of Stamitz's relatively modest technical requirements unimpeachable. Those who are fussy about matters of style might find a quibble or two:

Campbell's ornamentation of Stamitz's fermatas is perhaps a little unidiomatic and there are moments where Stamitz's appoggiaturas might have been more appropriately interpreted in the long form rather than the short form Campbell chooses.

His string colleagues likewise rise easily to the demands Stamitz places on them without seeking out more in the music than the composer put there; the 'Allegros' are not over-driven, the 'Andantes' are not over-milked. To be fair, they might have delved a little further into the music's potential. The C minor 'Andante' of the Op. 8 Quartet, for example, fairly teems with expressive sighs in which these performers' legato treatment does somewhat miss the mark, and the minor-key passages in the development of the opening movement of the first quartet on the disc, Op. 19 No.3, might have benefited from a little Sturm und Drang. A relatively unsensational release but agreeable listening nonetheless.

[All about jazz](#) March 8, 2013 (C. Michael Bailey - 2013.03.08)



Beneath the veneer of the "great composers"—Bach, Mozart and Beethoven—lay a...

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Early Music Review No. 154 - June 2013 (Victoria Helby - 2013.06.01)



Carl Stamitz (1745-1801) published two sets of clarinet quartets in Paris, the first in 1773 and the second six years later. Although his musical upbringing was at the Mannheim court, where the clarinet was used in the orchestra from 1758 onwards, his travels in Europe led him to a style more reminiscent of Mozart in these attractive quartets. Indeed the first few notes of the first movement of op. 19 no. 2 are almost identical to Mozart's Andante for flute and orchestra K315 of 1778. This well-balanced recording is on modern instruments but Arthur Campbell's fluid playing has a lovely warm tone and the supporting strings are not over-vibrant. This is music which certainly deserves to be much better known.

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 3-2013 Juni/Juli (Diether Steppuhn - 2013.06.01)



Fast wie Mozart

In den 13 Sätzen dieser vier Klarinettenquartette funkelt, glänzt, trillert, singt und jubelt es in einem fort und findet doch immer wieder idyllische Ruhe in berührenden Andante-Mittelsätzen – Freudenmusik pur!

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[Musik & Theater](#) Juli/August 2013 (Mario Gerteis - 2013.07.01)



Die junge Klarinette

Die junge Klarinette

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[Das Orchester](#) 09/2013 (Heribert Haase - 2013.09.01)



Perfekt im Zusammenspiel musizieren sie in angemessenen Tempi, jedes motivische Detail herausarbeitend. Arthur Campbell spielt als Primus inter Pares mit klarem, hellem Timbre und deutlicher Artikulation. [...]

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[Glarean Magazin](#) 26.09.2013 (Michael Magercord - 2013.09.26)

Glarean Magazin

Literatur – Musik – Schach

Der Meister des Andante im Schatten Mozarts

Der Komponist Carl Philipp Stamitz hatte ein Musikerleben geführt, wie es dem romantischen Bild eines Künstlerlebens entsprach. Er selbst war kein Romantiker, dafür lebte er 50 Jahre zu früh. Doch rastlos war er seit seinem 25. Lebensjahr durch die damalige Welt der Musik gehetzt, von Paris bis Dresden, zunächst als Violinen- und Bratschenvirtuose, dann als versierter Komponist von hochmodischer Musik, die an den fürstlichen Höfen angesagt war. Achtzig Symphonien sind so entstanden, eine erhoffte Anstellung aber verschaffte ihm das unermüdliche Werken nicht. Nach zwanzig Jahren Wanderleben heiratete er, ließ sich in Greiz, dem Heimatort seiner Frau nieder, zeugte vier Kinder, die alle früh verstarben, und schließlich starb er 56-jährig 1801 in Jena, verarmt. Drängt sich da nicht langsam ein Vergleich auf mit einem anderen Musiker seiner Zeit?

Mozart hatte ein ähnliches Schicksal ereilt, und ebenso wie bei dem Salzburger spiegelt sich das rastlose Leben kaum in seiner Musik wieder. Es heißt, dass so mancher Laie die Symphonien der beiden kaum von einander unterscheiden könnte, wären nicht jene des etwas jüngeren Mozarts immer noch so häufig zu hören, während die von Stamitz nur selten aufgeführt werden. Beide waren zu ihrer Zeit versierte Musikarbeiter, die aus der Aufführungspraxis all die Tricks kannten, mit denen man Eindruck schinden konnte, ohne dass sich der Ausführende dabei die Finger an seinen Instrument brechen muss.

Wie Mozart, war auch Stamitz ein Frühbegabter. Als Sohn eines böhmischen Komponisten, wurde er im Alter von sechzehn Jahren bereits Mitglied der renommierten Hofkapelle im heimatlichen Mannheim. In der nordbadischen Stadt war eine der wichtigsten Schulen der damaligen Musikwelt angesiedelt. Auch Mozart ist durch diese Schule gegangen. Ihre Neuerungen haben Wesentliches geleistet bei dem Übergang vom Barock in die Klassik. Hier wurde das erste Orchester in einer Instrumentenbesetzung zusammengestellt, die noch heute als der europäisch-abendländische Orchesterapparat gilt. Und dazu gehörte zum ersten Mal auch eine Klarinette.

Stamitz war der erste Komponist, der diesem Instrument eine Solofunktion zu billigte. Elf Klarinetten-Konzerte hatte er komponiert, und eben auch die in dieser CD zusammengestellten vier Quartette. Diese Quartette haben alle drei Sätze, schnell, langsam, schnell, wobei die ersten Sätze in sich schon sonatenartig angelegt sind, was ihre etwas serielle Herstellung unterstreicht. Seine Zeitgenossen

lobten besonders seine hohe Kompositionskunst beim Andante, die seien «meisterhaft gerathen – eine Folge seines gefühlvollen Herzens», schrieb etwa der Kritiker Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart.

Fazit: Für Klarinettenfreunde ist diese Einspielung der Klarinettenquartette von Carl Philipp Stamitz ein Muss, für Freunde des Rokoko ebenso. Für alle anderen Musikliebhaber sind sie ein weiteres Zeugnis dafür, dass jenes Zeitalter vielleicht doch nur eine musikalische Übergangsperiode war zwischen dem Bachschen Barockzauber und der wuchtigen Klassik, eine für das Ohr allerdings besonders gefällige.

Eingespielt sind diese Quartette gewohnt souverän von dem amerikanischen Klarinettenisten Arthur Campbell und seinen Lehrer-Kollegen von der Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Es ist bereits seine dritte Einspielung im deutschen Label Audite. Es zeichnet einen Kenner und Könnner seines Instrumentes aus, auch mit den Leerstellen, die ein Komponist wie Stamitz dem Gestaltungswillen des Instrumentalisten immer ließ, etwas anfangen zu können. Somit wird selbst die doch etwas repetitive Musikform schließlich mit einer sehr persönlichen Note versehen.

Das ist allerdings auch nötig, um dieser Musik noch heute etwas besonderes abzugewinnen. Ja, wäre da nicht Mozart, dann hätten wohl die Werke von Stamitz das Zeug gehabt, noch heute die Rolle der sicheren Konzertsaalfüller zu übernehmen. So aber werden sie doch eher selten gespielt oder eingespielt. Stamitz also erfüllt bis auf den heutigen Tag auf seine Weise das Bild des romantischen Künstlers: Genial, aber auch immer ein wenig im Schatten seiner und kommender Zeiten verbleibend.

Audiophile Audition May 1, 2013
(Daniel Coombs - 2013.05.01)



The performances are all wonderful. In particular, I have never heard Arthur Campbell before. He was a student of the great Robert Marcellus and has lovely, focused but warm tone. The string players, Gregory Maytan, Paul Swantek and Pablo Mahave-Veglia are equally skilled. This is a very enjoyable disc that clarinetists for sure and all lovers of chamber music would appreciate!

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Record Geijutsu March 2013 (- 2013.03.01)



japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

Klassieke zaken 33ste Jaargang Juni 2013, Nr 3
(Oswin Schneeweisz - 2013.06.01)

KLASSIEKEZAKEN

Op het label Audite verscheen een prachtige opname van deze mijlpalen uit de kamermuziekliteratuur, met klarinettist Arthur Campbell in de hoofdrol. Het is een uitvoering die recht doet aan de melodische kracht van deze stukken, want Campbell weet zijn klarinet in de andantes met een fraai ingetogen en kleurrijke toon te laten zingen. Qua frasering en dynamiek laat deze opname ook weinig te wensen over.

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[ouverture Das Klassik-Blog](#) Freitag, 15. August 2014 (- 2014.08.15)

ouverture
Das Klassik-Blog.

Arthur Campbell hat hörbar Freude an diesen Werken. Mit seinem sanglichen Spiel und seinem schmeichelnden Ton fügt er sich ein zwischen die Streicher Gregory Maytan, Violine, Paul Swantek, Viola und Pablo Mahave-Veglia, Violoncello. Er setzt auch Kontraste und Glanzpunkte, und der Zuhörer freut sich über die Eleganz dieser charmanten Musik. Unbedingt anhören – das ist Kammermusik, die rundum gute Laune bringt, in einer hinreißend gelungenen Einspielung.

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Works for Clarinet and Piano by Schumann, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc and Arnold

Robert Schumann | Claude Debussy | Camille Saint-Saëns | Francis Poulenc | Malcolm Arnold

CD aud 97.536

Fono Forum Mai 2012 (Clemens Haustein - 2012.05.01)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Sonaten-Miteinander

Bei Duo-Sonaten unter Beteiligung von Klavier und einem "solistischen" Instrument stellt sich immer die Frage, wie sehr sich dieses "solistische" Instrument zurücknimmt, an das Klavier anpasst, ein Miteinander zweier eigentlich gleichberechtigter Partner ermöglicht. Allzu oft wird Klavier mit "Begleitung" gleichgesetzt – während Violine, Cello oder ein Blasinstrument munter auftrumpfen. Ohne daran zu denken, dass zu dieser Sonate eben zwei gehören.

In dieser Hinsicht spielt der kanadische Klarinetist Arthur Campbell auf dieser CD mit verschiedenen Werken für Klarinette und Klavier so vorbildlich, wie man es selten hört. Er hält sich in Klang und Gestus so sehr zurück, dass mancher Hörer, der den Fokus vor allem auf die Klarinette legt, von so viel Zurückhaltung enttäuscht sein könnte. Wer das Miteinander von Klavier und Blasinstrument verfolgt, wird dagegen begeistert sein. Campbell verschmilzt gleichsam mit dem Klang des Klaviers (Helen Marlais), woraus sich Interpretationen von beeindruckender Geschlossenheit ergeben. Selten hat man den brodelnden Unterbau in der Klavierstimme zu Schumanns Fantasiestücken op. 73 so deutlich wahrgenommen, selten wurden die Schumann'schen Stücke dabei so elegant und zart gespielt. Selten auch fügte sich die Klarinettenstimme in Debussys "Première Rhapsodie" so nahtlos in die impressionistischen Klavierklänge ein. Immer bleibt Campbells und Marlais Spiel exakt, elegant, ohne Übermaß. Die Schönheit dieses tatsächlich gemeinsamen Spiels ist so einnehmend, dass kaum mehr etwas zu fehlen scheint. Nicht einmal romantische Gefühlsausbrüche.

English Translation:

Sonaten-Miteinander ("Sonata Togetherness")

For duo-sonatas with a piano and a 'soloist' instrument, the question always arises of how much the 'solo' instrument holds back, adapts to the piano, how much it enables the coexistence of two equal partners. Far too often, piano is equated with 'accompaniment' while violin, cello, or a wind instrument vigorously trumps. Without even thinking that two belong in this sonata.

In this regard, on this CD the Canadian clarinetist Arthur Campbell plays various works for clarinet and piano so exemplarily [flawlessly] as one seldom hears. He holds back in tone and gesture so much, that many listeners whose focus lies primarily on the clarinet could be disappointed at this reserve. On the other hand, whoever follows the togetherness of piano and wind instrument will be inspired. Campbell virtually fuses with the tone of the piano (Helen Marlais), which results in an interpretation of impressive inclusiveness. Seldom has one so clearly observed the bubbling substructure of the piano part of Schumann's Fantasy Pieces op. 73 and, thereby, seldom have the Schumann pieces been played so

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Stereo 5/2012 (Clemens Haustein - 2012.05.01)

STEREO

Bei Duo-Sonaten unter Beteiligung von Klavier und einem "solistischen"...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

International Record Review April 2012 (Raymond S. Tuttle - 2012.04.01)



Arthur Campbell and Helen Marlais are husband and wife and both are on the teaching faculty at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This CD was recorded north of the border, however, in Alberta, and in two sessions, together spanning exactly six years. As the present release is identified as the first volume in a projected series, one hopes that future volumes will not be released at Six-year intervals!

Representing German, French and British composers, and a period of 113 years, this programme offers many opportunities for the performers to point up the contrasts between these works, as well as the ways in which they resemble each other. If there is a fault with this generally fine release, it is that Campbell and Marlais do not do this as much as they might. Overall, while the playing is at a very high level in terms of technique, it is a little muted emotionally.

Take, for example, Schumann's three Fantasiestücke. These are terrific pieces, full of melancholy (the first), fancy (the second) and passion (the third). Performers should not hesitate to make Schumann's highs very high and his lows very low; I think there is more risk in underplaying his music than in overplaying it. Campbell and Marlais, perhaps in fear of exaggerating, mute the emotional extremes in these pieces. The result is very 'proper' but I would argue that such reserve goes against the grain of the music. A quick listen to Reginald Kell reveals almost identical tempos in the first two pieces (he is quite a bit faster – correctly so, I think – in the third), but a very different sound and approach throughout. Kell's brighter sound, with more 'ping' and vibrato, draws back the curtain and reveals that this music is not quite, well ... normal. On the other hand, Marlais is a more positive piano partner than the one assigned to Kell.

Two years earlier, Kell also recorded Debussy's Première Rapsodie – like Campbell, in the version for clarinet and piano. Kell and Campbell both finish the piece in a few seconds over eight minutes, yet there is a world of difference in how they get from Point A to Point B. Again, Kell's sound is more forward and exciting. This is partly due to the recording, hiss be damned. (Audite's engineering is velvety and balanced.) Much of it is due to Kell, himself, however, who moulded the sound of his clarinet the way that the best singers do with their voices. Kell and Rosen are more spontaneous than Campbell and Marlais, whose reading, with everything in its place, reminds us that Debussy composed the Rapsodie as a test piece. Turning to a British player with a wonderfully French name, Gervase de Peyer is a little more controlled (or should I say 'controlling'?) than Kell, but he too, when compared to Campbell, has a more enlivening flicker in his sound and in his interpretation. Last but not least, Martin Fröst's reading combines Campbell's straightforward tone with a more emotionally volatile response to the music.

These differences, generally speaking, also extend to the sonatas by Saint-Saëns and Poulenc – all cornerstones of the repertory, Campbell and Marlais seem best suited to the former, a work which exudes rectitude and comfortable propriety. (In the last movement, Saint-Saëns does run a little wild, as he had a

tendency to do in his last movements!) Here, the evenness of Campbell's tone production is an asset. On the other hand, Campbell and Marlais don't have as much fun as the other performers do with Poulenc's often cheeky and even outrageous sonata. It is interesting that both of these sonatas came from the very end of each composer's life, yet there is little stock-taking or navel-gazing in either of them!

Malcolm Arnold's Sonatina, even more than Poulenc's Sonata, was made for fun. Surprisingly, Campbell and Marlais are even more explosive here than de Peyer and Pryor, yet the latter pair capture a mocking quality in the outer movements that eludes the present performers.

The booklet notes are interesting. I did not know, for example, that Colin Davis started his musical career as a clarinetist, and that he premiered Arnold's Sonatina.

I don't want to make too much of my negative comments. By most measures, this is an admirable CD, and if the combination of works is appealing, then don't hesitate. Do, however, treat yourself to some of the alternatives, in the individual works that appeal to you most.

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 3-2012 Juni/Juli (Diether Steppuhn - 2012.06.01)



Souveräne Zurückhaltung

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Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Diverdi Magazin n°214 (mayo 2012) (Blas Matamoro - 2012.05.01)

DIVERDI.COM

Una pareja bien avenida

Un variado programa de obras para clarinete y piano en Audite

La redonda, estricta y mixturadamente sensual/heroica sonoridad del clarinete ha venido seduciendo a los músicos, al menos desde el rococó. Canta con los románticos, se queja con los expresionistas, hace un poco de todo en el jazz, coopta a los neopopulistas interbólicos, en fin: se las arregla para protagonizar momentos de lo sinfónico y confidencias de cámara.

Este programa dei dúo clarinete-piano lo muestra con una astuta conformación de su contenido. A las piececitas Biedermeier de Schumann, a quien imaginamos tocándolas con sus amigos, entre ponches de coñac y vaharadas de pipas, se suma fácilmente la rapsodia debussyana, ya que el músico francés - recúrrase a sus preludios para piano - debe a Schumann, y reconocidamente, el gusto por el fragmento, la ráfaga, esa música que viene de algún lado y se escapa hacia otro lado, como quiere Roland Barthes. Luego tenemos a Saint-Saens, maestro como pocos en saber escribir para cualquier instrumento, cualquier combinación, cualquier formación, siempre con su cautela redaccional, su fraseo de burguesa elegancia, su pudor sentimental y su gusto por la melodía como canto, co mo ilación de una sola voz. De alguna manera, Poulenc es el don Camilo del siglo XX, devoto de la finura armónica, capaz de voluptuosidades melancólicas y de melancolías voluptuosas, mezcladas con evocaciones del jazz y mínimas fanfarrias de barracón ferial.

Pero la sorpresa es la sonatina de Malcolm Arnold, con un andantino de recatado canto entre dos efusiones bailables. Es la estética temperamental de un inglés, esa mezcla armoniosa de la genteel tradition, de la cortesía ceremonial y su alta dosis de cautela, con el otro extremo del alma inglesa: la extravagancia, lo insular, mirar a lo lejos en el mar y de espaldas al macizo continente.

Pizzicato N° 222 - 4/2012 (RéF - 2012.04.01)

**Klangbilder (***Translation*

After the recording of Brahms works in 2007 (Supersonic im Pizzicato), the American clarinet virtuoso Arthur Campbell continues his collaboration with Audite. The perfectly balanced chamber music atmosphere of this recording, the sensitive dialogue between the clarinetist and pianist, are striking. The program, with works of German, French, and British composers spanning two centuries, shows the multiple facets of the clarinet and the wonderful moods it can engender. And that's what Campbell is about, too. He doesn't want to shine, he is concerned about expression, and with that he is helped by what one must call an outstanding art of coloring. In Schumann's Fantasy Pieces at least, but also in the sonatas of Saint-Saëns, Poulenc and Arnold he succeeds in making every movement a small evocative tone picture.

Pizzicato N° 222 - 4/2012 (RéF - 2012.04.01)

**Klangbilder**

Nach der Einspielung von Brahms Werken im Jahre 2007 (Supersonic im Pizzicato), setzt der amerikanische Klarinettenvirtuose Arthur Campbell seine Zusammenarbeit mit Audite fort. Frappierend ist die perfekt ausbalancierte Kammermusikatmosphäre dieser Aufnahmen, das sensible Dialogieren des Klarinettenisten und der Pianistin. Das Programm mit Werken deutscher, französischer und britischer Komponisten aus zwei Jahrhunderten zeigt die vielfältigen Facetten der Klarinette und die wunderbaren Stimmungen, die sie erzeugen kann. Und darum geht es Campbell auch. Er will nicht brillieren, er ist um Ausdruck bemüht, und dabei hilft ihm eine Kunst der Färbung, die man als herausragend bezeichnen muss. In Schumanns Fantasiestücken sowieso, aber auch in den Sonaten von Saint-Saëns, Poulenc und Arnold gelingt ihm jeder Satz als kleines evokatives Klangbild.

English Translation:

Klangbilder ("Tone Pictures")

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Fono Forum Mai 2012 (Clemens Haustein - 2012.05.01)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Sonaten-Miteinander ("Sonata Togetherness")

Translation

For duo-sonatas with a piano and a 'soloist' instrument, the question always arises of how much the 'solo' instrument holds back, adapts to the piano, how much it enables the coexistence of two equal partners. Far too often, piano is equated with 'accompaniment' while violin, cello, or a wind instrument vigorously trumps. Without even thinking that two belong in this sonata.

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Fanfare 08.08.2012 (Richard A. Kaplan - 2012.08.08)

fanfare

Arthur Campbell (not to be confused with clarinetists James Campbell or David Campbell) is professor of clarinet at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The opening sentence of the booklet notes reads, "This program begins a journey through the repertoire for clarinet and piano that Campbell and Marlais explore together each season." Well and good, if there weren't dozens of other clarinet recital discs released each year, many of them including much of the repertoire given here.

Do Campbell and his wife, Helen Marlais, bring anything to these pieces that warrants acquisition of yet another clarinet recital CD? In a word, no. Campbell has an attractive enough sound, in a generic way, but his performances are consistently undercharacterized; moreover, there are some technical problems that become troublesome: His trills are too slow, and he has a tendency to blur (dare I say "fudge"?) rapid runs. In the second Schumann piece, he consistently tries to compensate for slow finger technique by starting the most difficult triplet figure too soon, which hardly helps. And, in the Lento of the Saint-Saëns sonata, he overblows the sempre f opening section in the lowest register of the instrument, and his frequent gasps for air become distracting. Stick with David Shifrin, Jonathan Cohler, and the young Anna Hashimoto in this repertoire.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Johannes Brahms: Clarinet Chamber Music	1
Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 6/2006.....	1
Pizzicato N° 169 - 1/2007.....	1
Audiophile Audition February 2007.....	1
opushd.net - opus haute définition e-magazine Numéro 22.....	1
www.banddirector.com March 2007.....	2
www.ResMusica.com Mars 2007.....	2
CD Compact 03-07.....	2
Fanfare July/Aug 2007.....	2
www.classicalcdreview.com March 2007.....	3
Scherzo Año XXII - Núm. 220 - Junio 2007.....	3
Le Monde de la Musique Mars 2007.....	3
The Clarinet December 2007.....	4
www.musicweb-international.com December 2007.....	5
American Record Guide May/June 2007 - Vol. 70, No 3.....	6
Pizzicato N° 225 - 9/2012.....	6
Carl Philipp Stamitz: Quartets for Clarinet	7
WDR 3 06.03.2013, WDR3 TonArt.....	7
Mannheimer Morgen 04.04.2013.....	7
International Record Review May 2013.....	7
All about jazz March 8, 2013.....	8
Early Music Review No. 154 - June 2013.....	8
Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 3-2013 Juni/Juli.....	8
Musik & Theater Juli/August 2013.....	8
Das Orchester 09/2013.....	9
Glarean Magazin 26.09.2013.....	9
Audiophile Audition May 1, 2013.....	10
Record Geijutsu March 2013.....	10
Klassieke zaken 33ste Jaargang Juni 2013, Nr 3.....	10
ouverture Das Klassik-Blog Freitag, 15. August 2014.....	10
Works for Clarinet and Piano by Schumann, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc and Arnold	12
Fono Forum Mai 2012.....	12
Stereo 5/2012.....	13
International Record Review April 2012.....	13
Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 3-2012 Juni/Juli.....	14
Diverdi Magazin n°214 (mayo 2012).....	14
Pizzicato N° 222 - 4/2012.....	14
Pizzicato N° 222 - 4/2012.....	15
Fono Forum Mai 2012.....	15
Fanfare 08.08.2012.....	16