



The RIAS Amadeus Quartet Mozart Recordings

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GRAMOPHONE

The Amadeus Quartet

The third instalment of Audite's Amadeus Quartet recordings, all of them taken from Berlin RIAS broadcasts and dating from the period 1951-57, covers works already available in the Quartet's capable hands, principally in later (stereo) recordings available from DG. Comparisons reveal an impressive level of interpretative consistency, more spontaneous early on perhaps, and with most principal first-movement repeats omitted.

Most of the differences concern the sound quality, which on these RIAS tapes is appealingly intimate. Take Quartet No 18, K464, the opening Allegro, where, as presented here, dynamic contrasts tell with expressive impact but on DG, where the balance suggests listening from the rear of a medium-size concert hall, the effect is less immediate. In this instance the stereo 'pay-off' is minimal compared to the advantage of having the players sound as if they're in the room with you. And with playing as musically sympathetic and stylistically 'on the button' as we're offered here, who can complain?

Viewed overall there is some extraordinarily beautiful playing on offer: the heart-stopping Adagio from the Quintet in D major, K593, with Cecil Aronowitz, for example. The opening of the C major Quintet, K515, is perfection, an amiable but lively Allegro with a spring to its step, while the dialogue with Aronowitz in the Andante could hardly be bettered. And then there's the tragic Adagio that opens the finale of the G minor Quintet, K516, so full of implied regret. The performance of the Clarinet Quintet with Heinrich Geuser is another highlight. I'm not suggesting you replace your DG versions but you could profitably use these marvellous recordings as musically nourishing supplements to them. Superb transfers.