



Max Reger: Complete String Trios & Piano Quartet in A Minor, Op. 133

aud 97.714

EAN: 4022143977144



[American Record Guide](#) (Don O'Connor - 2018.05.01)

In these chamber works, the music is sometimes dense and dissonant, but at the same time these characteristics often combine to form music that's passionately emotional. It's easy to hear why Schoenberg regarded Reger as a genius.

Trio 1 has a slow, soulful introduction, giving way to further emotional sounds. II has a sweet tune of near-Schubertian purity. It's developed with intense feeling and innovative key changes by a man who wrote a book on that technique. III, a vigorous scherzo, has an athletic theme whose first and second phrases give the impression of being in different keys. IV pays homage to Mozart, especially the finale of Symphony 39. The debt is audible, but the music still has a life of its own transcending mere imitation.

Trio 2 has an expressive I, and II is even more poignant. It's a set of variations, another Reger specialty. The brief—three-minute—last movement has a bouncing cello theme worked through with exceptional contrapuntal skill.

The opening bars of the quartet surge out to the listener, then taper down to starker voicing. The music builds to overwhelming richness and must be one of the most tremendous movements ever written for this medium. II, the scherzo, is a cute fugato. Its interlude has slower, more introverted music, developing over an uneasy syncopated pedal before the fugato theme returns. It wears its learning lightly. Much of III is a dialog between strings and keyboard. With its heartfelt arching lines, it gives the impression of a formal structure assembling itself. IV contrasts a sparkling opening in high register with a more legato melody. To use a contradiction, there's a feel of weighty whimsy. A second theme has a gradually rising chromatic contour like the last movement of the composer's *Eichendorff Suite*. The music concludes with Brahmsian depth and scope.

The playing on all three pieces is first-rate. The players have accurate intonation—not always a given with Reger—and full, steady tone quality. They also have complete sympathy with this music. The recording has resonant, close-up sound.

REGER: Trios 1+2; Piano Quartet 2
Dedev Esinger, p; Trio Lirico
Audite 97.714—84 minutes

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