



Dmitri Shostakovich: Complete String Quartets Vol. III

aud 92.528



Audio Live August 2008 (Andreas Fritz - 2008.08.01)



Es waren Dmitri Schostakowitschs Frauen, die diese drei Streichquartette...

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**Audiophile Audition August 2008
(Steven Ritter - 2008.08.30)**



Another stirring issue in an ongoing surround-sound cycle of no little...

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CD Compact Marzo 2009 (Benjamín Fontvella - 2009.03.01)

Con este volumen se completan los nueve primeros cuartetos de Shostakovich. Como...

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concerti - Das Berliner Musikleben Mai 2010 (Ulrike Klobes - 2010.05.01)

concerti.de

Gemeinsam den Emotionen nachgehen

Das Mandelring Quartett und sein Berlin-Zyklus im Kammermusiksaal

Gemeinsam den Emotionen nachgehen

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[Das Orchester](#) 11/2008 (Werner Bodendorff - 2008.11.01)

das
Orchester

Neun der insgesamt fünfzehn Streichquartette von Dmitri Schostakowitsch hat das...

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Der neue Tag 114/2008 (apz - 2008.05.17)

DER NEUE TAG

In bester Hybrid Multichannel Qualität ist das Mandelring Quartett (mit...

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Die Rheinpfalz Nr. 143/2008 (Frank Pommer - 2008.06.20)

DIE RHEINPFALZ

Der besondere Tipp – Schostakowitsch zum Geburtstag

Mandelring Quartett wird 25 Jahre alt

Der besondere Tipp – Schostakowitsch zum Geburtstag

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Die Rheinpfalz Mittwoch, 27. Januar 2010 Nr. 22 (Frank Pommer - 2010.01.27)

DIE RHEINPFALZ

Verstörte Seele

Angespielt: Das Neustadter Mandelring-Quartett beendet beeindruckend seinen fünfteiligen Schostakowitsch-Zyklus

Verstörte Seele

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Die Zeit 26. November 2009, Die Zeit Nr. 49 (Volker Hagedorn - 2009.11.26)

DIE ZEIT

Das heimliche Tagebuch

Nirgendwo wird Dmitri Schostakowitsch so persönlich wie in seinen 15 Streichquartetten. Das Mandelring Quartett legt eine eindrucksvolle Gesamtaufnahme vor

Das heimliche Tagebuch

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Diverdi Magazin Octubre 2008 (Norberto Tauste - 2008.10.01)

DIVERDI.COM

Telepática precisión

Volumen III de los cuartetos de Shostakovich por el Mandelring

El Cuarteto Mandelring, una de las jóvenes formaciones más aclamadas de nuestros días, prosigue su integral para Audite dedicada a Dimitri Shostakovich con un tercer volumen que reúne los Cuartetos n° 5, 7 y 9. El conjunto formado por los hermanos Sebastian, Nanette (violines) y Bernhard Schmidt (chelo), más el violista Roland Glassl, vuelve a demostrar que está en disposición de codearse prácticamente de igual a igual con los más ilustres intérpretes de estas piezas gracias a su profunda penetración psicológica y a una expresividad, juventud obliga, de gran vigor e intensidad. La comunicación entre los miembros del grupo, y aquí el hecho consanguíneo sin duda tiene algo que ver, raya por su precisión con lo telepático, constituyendo juntos una máquina de afinadísima emisión musical marcada por la justeza de la entonación y la clarificación de las complejas líneas melódicas de estas obras y, en general, del universo sonoro del compositor, sin destruir las fascinantes ambigüedades de su mundo emocional.

El Cuarteto n° 5 en si bemol mayor op. 92, coetáneo de la Sinfonía n° 10, proporciona al Mandelring la ocasión de modular sonoridades de densos volúmenes, casi orquestales, sin renunciar nunca a esa

elegancia rezumante de sarcasmo propia de Shostakovich que de un compás a otro se convierte en turbulencia armónica y absoluto contraste rítmico. Las formas más despojadas del Cuarteto n° 7 en fa sostenido menor op. 108 aparecen en esta versión dotadas de lunar lirismo, alcanzándose un alto grado de lacerante intimismo en esos diálogos para dos instrumentos del Lento. Por último, en Cuarteto n° 9 en si bemol mayor op. 118 el grupo atraviesa las viciadas atmósferas de la pieza iluminando con coherencia sus relaciones motivicas y elaborando un detalladísimo tejido tímbrico. Magníficas tomas de sonido en todos los casos.

Diverdi Magazin 189 / febrero 2010 (Pablo-L. Rodríguez - 2010.02.01)

DIVERDI.COM

Shostakovichfest

El cuarteto Mandelring culmina una impresionante integral Shostakovich en Audite

El termino "Hausmusik" alude a la música pensada para su interpretación en casa por la familia y los amigos con el fin de entretenerse realizando algo edificante. Esta actividad, tan cotidiana en algunos países de profunda tradición musical como Alemania, es el sustrato ideal para que fructifique una formación camerística estable y de primer nivel como el Mandelring Quartett. Ni uno de los tres componentes del mismo son hermanos y crecieron creciendo juntos (los violinistas Sebastian y Nanette Schmidt junto con el violonchelista Bernhard), a los que se unió en 1999 el violista Roland Glassl, que hoy es uno más de la familia, tras la salida de su antecesor. Michael Scheitzbach, para montar su propio conjunto camerístico (el Ensemble Abraxas). El cuarteto surgió del ambiente musical familiar, tal como explicaba en 2003 el primer violín dentro de un artículo publicado en la revista The Strad: "Nuestro padre tocaba el piano y había siempre música en casa. Cada uno de nosotros asumimos un instrumento de cuerda por lo que empezamos a tocar juntos muy temprano. Era una especie de experimento, pero fructificó". Aunque con el tiempo cada uno de los hermanos ha terminado haciendo su vida, la casa familiar sigue siendo el cenro de operaciones del cuarteto; sin ir más lejos la formación toma su nombre de la calle en donde se encuentra la casa de sus padres en la localidad alemana de Neustadt an der Weinstraße. Tal como podemos ver en un documental incluido en DVD dentro del segundo disco de este proyecto Shostakovich de Audite, allí se encuentran con sus padres (Roland ha sido adoptado como uno más de la familia), comparten comidas, juegan con sus hijos, practican sus hobbies (Sebastian es un gran aficionado a los coches)y, por su puesto, preparan sus conciertos; de hecho, el ambiente de la zona les ha animado a fundar un festival veraniego de música de cámara en la vecina Hambach, el Hambacher Musik Fest, donde a las veladas de música de cámara en su castillo se une el atractivo de la zona vitivinícola del Palatinado a orillas del Rin.

La carrera del Mandelring Quartett despegó en 1991 cuando ganaron en Munich el concurso internacional de música del ARD, el concurso Evian o se alzaron tres años más tarde con el Premio "Paolo Borgiani" en Reggio Emilia. En esos años iniciaron también su carrera fonográfica en el sello Largo con la integral de los cuartetos de Berthold Goldschmidt (1903-1996), el último de los cuales les está dedicado. Su siguiente proyecto lo realizaron en 1992 y 2003 en el sello CPO y supuso la recuperación del noneto. uno de los 37 quintetos y nueve de los 34 cuartetos del compositor francés Georges Onslow (1784-1853). Y es que los cuatro miembros del Mandelring Quartett están profundamente implicados en dar rienda suelta a su curiosidad a la hora de diseñar proyectos interesantes tanto para ellos como para los promotores y el publico. Precisamente el interés de Ludger Böckenhoff por ampliar el sello Audite, que había lanzado en 2000, a grandes proyectos fonográficos hizo que el Mandelring Quartett pasase a formar parte de su escudería. Inicialmente planificaron una integral de los cuartetos de Schubert que ha quedado detenida desde 2005 tras tres lanzamientos y que se ha combinado con un interesante proyecto iniciado en 2004 y concluido en 2007 de grabar los cuartetos de Brahms junto a otros de amigos y defensores suyos como Félix Otto Dessoff, Friedrich Gernsheim o Heinrich von Herzogenberg. No obstante, el proyecto más prestigioso del Mandelring Quartett, y más aclamado por la prensa internacional, es la integral de los

cuartetos de Dimitri Shostakovich que iniciaron en 2006 y que acaban de concluir tras cinco lanzamientos.

El interés de estos cinco SACDs (a los que se añade el referido DVD con el segundo) no sólo reside en la calidad musical, sino también en la técnica. Creo que estamos ante la primera integral de los cuartetos del compositor sanpeterburgués en sonido envolvente y, si a ello le añadimos la marca de calidad sonora de Böckenhoff (que ya hemos comentado en estas páginas en relación con el cofre dedicados a las grabaciones de Furtwängler para la RIAS: véase Boletín n° 181, págs. 38-39), el resultado no puede ser más satisfactorio a la hora de disfrutar con impresionante equilibrio, espacialidad y precisión de todos los detalles de cada interpretación. Estos cinco discos contienen una visión completamente nueva, donde cada uno de los cuatro músicos busca su personalidad sin detrimento del conjunto, sumamente intensa (el manejo de las tensiones es impresionante en algunas obras) y con un extraordinario predominio de la claridad formal (se consiguen versiones muy equilibradas), tímbrica (toda una lección de manejo del fraseo y de diferentes tipos de vibrare o golpes de arco) y dinámica (hay contrastes ciertamente de impacto) de estas quince obras excepcionales de la literatura para dieciséis cuerdas.

Cada lanzamiento incluye alguna versión excepcional e incluso el orden de su publicación resulta sumamente interesante para la escucha de todo el ciclo. El primer volumen se inicia con una versión fascinante de ese personalísimo divertimento shostakovichiano que es el Primer cuarteto o el Segundo impresiona por su mezcla de virtuosismo y entonación. El volumen dos resulta algo menos convincente pues se adopta un acercamiento cómodo y menos implicado; el Tercer cuarteto esta admirablemente locado (impresionante desarrollo fugado del primer movimiento) pero le falta humor negro. Su versión desgarradora de principio a fin del Octavo, que ha sido criticada por algunos por su enfoque de los dos últimos movimientos, puede resultar comprensible; recordemos que escuchamos a un cuarteto alemán en una efígie fúnebre personal compuesta tras una visita a Dresde en 1960. El tercer volumen, que incluye los retratos de las tres mujeres más importantes en la vida del compositor (su primera esposa Nina en el Séptimo, su segunda esposa Irina en el Noveno o su amante la compositora Galina Ustvolskaya en el Quinto) supera las trallas del anterior, al ahondar con mayor acierto en la uniformidad de los tempi (los lentos no demasiado lentos y los rápidos con más intensidad que velocidad), algo que, por cierto, también hacía el Cuarteto Beethoven que estrenó estas tres obras; de este lanzamiento Norberto Tauste publicó una breve reseña en el Boletín n° 174, pag. 53. El cuarto volumen sigue el camino ascendente marcado por el anterior con una versión del Décimo cuarteto admirablemente equilibrada de carácter y ahondando en los contrastes (excelente aquí la passacaglia) o un Duodécimo de corte intimista y profundizando en los coqueteos dodecafónicos del compositor ruso. Finalmente, el quinto volumen plasma con sorprendente precisión y riqueza de matices todas las caras de la muerte; resulta un digno colofón para este verdadero Shostakovichfest y culmina con una versión del Quincuagésimo cuarteto completamente personal y fascinante en esa sucesión de reflexiones funerarias contenidas en seis movimientos lentos.

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 3/08 - Juni/Juli (Detlev Bork - 2008.06.01)



Packend

Packend

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Fono Forum 10/2008 (Marcus Stäbler - 2008.10.01)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Expressiv

Die Streichquartette von Schostakowitsch bergen häufig intime Botschaften des Komponisten. So auch die drei hier eingespielten Werke, denen auf unterschiedliche Weise Bezüge zu wichtigen Frauen in seinem Leben eingeschrieben sind. In der dritten Folge seiner Gesamtaufnahme beweist das Mandelring-Quartett ein feines Gespür insbesondere für die zerbrechlich zarten, aber auch für die expressiv klagenden Momente – und überhaupt für die vielen Zwischentöne der Musik, die hier mit einer wunderbar breit gefächerten und warmen Farbpalette abgebildet sind. Dabei werden die harschen, ruppigen Gesten keineswegs geglättet, sondern mit der gebotenen Schärfe exekutiert - und so entsteht eine facettenreiche, restlos überzeugende Interpretation.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 19. Juli 2008 (Gerhard Rohde - 2008.07.19)

Frankfurter Allgemeine
ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND

Das Quartett als Spiegel der Welt

Dmitri Schostakowitsch hat in seinen fünfzehn Streichquartetten eine Art Tagebuch verfasst aus dunkler Zeit. Jetzt ist die Gesamtausgabe mit dem Mandelring Quartett komplett

Das Quartett als Spiegel der Welt

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International Record Review June 2008 (Raymond S. Tuttle - 2008.06.01)

INTERNATIONAL
RECORD REVIEW

The Mandelring Quartett are named for a street in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse on which three of its four members lived. This is not surprising, though, as the three Schmidts are siblings. Violist Roland Glassl joined them in 1999, but the Mandelring (with a different violist, of course) have been playing for longer, winning their first major award in 1991. With this release they are halfway through a Shostakovich cycle. I missed the first two volumes (the second of which was reviewed in October 2007), but I am so impressed by this third that I might now purchase its predecessors. The prose on the back of the jewel-case verges on purple. In these three quartets, we read, Shostakovich not only interpreted the achievements of his great role-model Beethoven into contemporary musical language, he also paid tribute to the three important women in his life: his late wife Nina [in No. 7], his last wife Irina [No. 9] and his secret love Galina Ustvol'skaya [No. 5]. Michael Struck-Schloen's actual booklet notes are more temperate, although they have not always been translated into idiomatic English. These three quartets span 1952 to 1964. (As a frame of reference, Symphonies Nos. 10-13 came in between.) Struck-Schloen aptly compares the Fifth Quartet in its compelling constructivism and dramatic form to the middle Beethoven quartets. It is in this quartet that Shostakovich quotes Ustvol'skaya's Clarinet Trio. The Seventh Quartet is construed as a work

of grief – but with Shostakovich, that is hardly a unique distinction, and it has too much violence to be simply elegiac. Similar to what he would later say about the Fifteenth Symphony, Shostakovich at one point referred to the Ninth Quartet as a children's piece (about toys and excursions). As with the symphony, this description smells like a red herring. Interestingly, both works evoke the finale of Rossini's William Tell Overture: the symphony quotes it explicitly, and the quartet dances around it, via its obsessive anapaestic rhythms. It's impossible not to compare the Mandelring with the Hagen, another three-sibling group. The Hagen play the Seventh Quartet with a fuller tone and give the lower strings more prominence, although it is not easy to rule out the role of the engineering. The Mandelring play this music more edgily; both groups rough up the tone when it seems appropriate to do so, however. Interpretatively, the Hagen and the Mandelring are very similar – implacable, passionate and haunting – and their tempos are almost identical. DG's engineers bring the Hagen closer to the listener than Audite's do for the Mandelring. The Audite disc is an SACD, but I played it on a conventional CD player, so that needs to be taken into consideration. The Fitzwilliam Quartet were once everyone's favourite Western interpreters of the quartets, but I confess that my enthusiasm for their recordings has waned with so many fine new ones appearing in the digital era, present company included. I wish the Hagen Quartet would record a complete Shostakovich cycle, but the Mandelring Quartett seem poised to console that particular disappointment of mine.

ionarts.blogspot.com Thursday, May 29, 2008 (jfl - 2008.05.29)

IONARTS

SOMETHING OTHER THAN POLITICS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Shostakovich with the Mandelring Quartett

Shostakovich's String Quartets are, alongside those of Bartók, Villa-Lobos, and possibly Bloch, the towering [20th century] achievements in that art-form. They confidently burden the weight of examples Haydn and Beethoven had set. And if Shostakovich's symphonies can be regarded as exemplifying his public face, the quartets are a window into his more private side. Even if you don't buy into the largely Western reception of Shostakovich as the freedom-fighter in musical code, with every symphony somehow having anti-communist messages woven into every other movement, the quartets will reveal a much more troubled and torn man than the symphonies would on their own.

Just as it has become the norm for every better orchestra to record a Mahler symphony cycle in the last ten years, it's part of the good tone for aspiring and established string quartets to delve into Shostakovich cycles. After the pioneering Beethoven (Legendary Treasure), Shostakovich (Regis), Fitzwilliam (Decca), and Borodin String Quartets (an early cycle on Chandos Historical and a complete one on Melodiya) had completed their cycles, there was little to challenge the primacy especially of the latter two until the Emerson String Quartet darted into the relative void with their squeaky clean, live cycle from Aspen on DG. Since then complete cycles have been added by the Brodsky (Warner), Sorrel (Chandos), St. Petersburg (Hyperion), Éder (Naxos), Rubio (Brilliant), Manhattan (Ess.a.y), Danel (Fuga Libera), and Rasumovsky (Oehms, not yet available) Quartets.

One of the most exciting prospects for a cycle of Shostakovich quartets these days is the Israeli-Russian Jerusalem Quartet. They have two recordings of DSCH out, so far, and the leisurely pace seems to be beneficial to the project, assuming a whole cycle is planned. Definitely planning a complete cycle is the Mandelring Quartett from Germany who have arrived on volume three of five of their multi-channel SACD project. I have enjoyed them live and on disc – and in particular their innovative Brahms cycle - coupled with neglected contemporaries like Dessoff – has piqued my interest.

The first two instalments of this group, consisting of the siblings Sebastian, Nanette, and Bernhard Schmidt (violins and cello, respectively) as well as violist Roland Glassl, have already picked up several recommendations – promises of excellence that the third, which includes String Quartets nos. 5, 7, and 9, seems to hold.

Serving as my primary comparison for these recordings is the second Borodin cycle – newly re-mastered and released on Melodiya and more than ever my favorite for the emotional grit and grip that they exude. The sound, formerly “good enough”, is now very fine indeed; the background hiss audible, but even on headphones never intrusive – a definite improvement on the old BMG-distributed cycle.

String Quartet no.7, a sorrowful little number dedicated to the memory of his first wife Nina Vassilyevna Shostakovich who had died of cancer in 1954, is – in the inimitably translated liner notes of the Melodiya release – “a more little of all Shostakovich’s quartets. But there’s said a lot – and said newly.”. Indeed. The opening movement (Allegretto) has a light flexibility, deliberate elasticity with the Mandelring Quartett (3:34); the Borodin is notably faster (3:19) with more anguished peaks. The Hagen Quartett, whose latest disc includes this quartet (as well as nos.3 and 8), is more like spun silver threads; a perfection of individual voices.

The slow Lento movement highlights the Hagen’s individual excellence and separation again – whereas the Mandelrings sound a little hazier. But whereas the Hagens are utterly gloomy here, catching a grove only very late in the shortest of movements (2:46 with the Hagen, 2:52 with the Mandelring, and 3:34 with the Borodin), the Mandelring is comparatively bright. The Hagen Quartet seems to celebrate slacking dystopia and shapelessness, the Mandelring finds more purpose. Neither could possibly sustain the movement over three and a half minutes in the way that the Borodin does, without ever dropping the musical thread. Their take is not gloomy but steady – offering a constantly moving pulse throughout, lyrical toward the end, and almost unnoticeably slow.

Even the speedy and wild(er) third movement – Allegro – has a dark, melancholic, even lethargic undertone, a trace that all the busyness on the surface cannot dispel. It’s not unlike the 8th Symphony, in a way, but a merciful 50 minutes shorter. The Mandelring (5:11) buzz along with abandon and the superb sound on this Audite disc comes to the fore, especially where Bernhard Schmidt’s cello gets all the room to bloom that it needs. Just one detail, a possible caveat: alone, they sound pretty nice, even at the densest and wildest moments. Cut to the Borodin (at 5:35 again the slowest of the three) – and you notice the difference. The latter rip into the music with more pointed accentuation and a gusto that seems to put their poor instruments in immediate danger.

At high volumes the Mandelring quartet sounds weighty and beautiful, the Borodin shrill to the point of unbearable. Which of these two you find a recommendation or warning in a Shostakovich quartet will depend entirely on what it is that you want to get out of these works. If you have made proper acquaintance with them, you will undoubtedly have a preference already. The Hagen (5:16), not unlike the Borodin, but with frightening assuredness and accuracy, instead of frighteningly free-wheeling, rip through the first three minutes like the half-demented.

Judging by the Seventh Quartet, one might expect the Fifth Quartet to be something slightly mellower in the hands of the Mandelring Quartett by comparison with the Borodin’s version. Instead, they bulldoze through the opening Allegro non troppo with an intensity that rivals the Borodin every step of the way. Only at their wildest moments – this time due to the better, fuller sound, not because of lacking aggressiveness – are they less shrill than the Borodin’s who have the more delicate, even sweet, moments in the gentle, pizzicato-dominated closing pages.

In String Quartet no.9, the Borodin are at their most bracing. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that – like Quartet no.6 and the Piano Quintet with Sviatoslav Richter – it was recorded live. Some additional background noise, more reverberation and curious balances make the difference between Audite’s impeccable and Melodiya’s raw sound far more notable.

Listen to the third movement (Allegretto furioso), where the Mandelring Quartett doesn’t gallop into this movement like mad, as does the Borodin Quartet. Rather it starts as a graceful, agile dance, replaced by sudden vigour and anxious terror. The Borodin move from madly riveting to a brutal, metallic harshness that disabuses the listener of the idea that this might be the “Quartet for Children” that Shostakovich had promised the Beethoven Quartet for their 40th anniversary. Unless the same misunderstanding regarding “Toys and spending time in the open air” occurred here as it did in his 15th Symphony – distinctly not a

toy-shop symphony, despite Shostakovich's claims to that effect – the 1964 9th String Quartet is in fact a different, new work than the one he promised to produce with those words in 1952. You could also consider a link between the reoccurring galloping spiccato beat of the Allegretto to the "William Tell" quotes in the 15th Symphony, but if the similarity is anything but coincidental would be difficult to prove. When it finally saw the light, Shostakovich dedicated the quartet to his new, third, wife, Irina Supinskaya.

When anxiety and strife give way to the agonizing Adagio, the calm deliberation and the atmospheric sound of the Mandelring Quartet (3:03) are every bit as raw and tender as the much slower Borodin (4:04). Their concluding Allegretto is a strident highpoint of this release.

The peaks and extremes of the Borodin, not to mention the frequently abrasive sound – which I find quite appropriate most of the time – make that cycle stand out more and may be more immediately captivating or exciting. But especially on repeat- and closer listening, the Mandelring's carefully considered, always unpredictable ways are a treasure, not only for audiophiles but for all who want more than the "authentic Russian" version of the Borodin, Beethoven, or Shostakovich Quartets.

klassik.com August 2008 (Michael Pitz-Grewenig - 2008.08.19)
source: <http://magazin.klassik.com/reviews/revie...>



Ohne interpretatorische Kniefälle und weihevollens Weihrauchschwenken

Ohne interpretatorische Kniefälle und weihevollens Weihrauchschwenken

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Mannheimer Morgen (rud - 2008.06.19)



Tief und zum Staunen

Tief und zum Staunen

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Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 4/2009 (Thomas Schulz - 2009.07.01)



Die Streichquartette Dmitri Schostakowitschs enthalten vielleicht das Beste, mit...

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Partituren #17 – Juli/August 2008 (GR - 2008.07.01)



Zwei herausragende Schostakowitsch-CDs hat das Mandelring Quartett im Rahmen ihrer Gesamteinspielung schon vorgelegt. Gestalterische Expressivität verbindet sich bei den Pfälzern mit klanglicher Differenzierung und einem zwar klugen, aber nie kopflastigen interpretatorischen Zugriff. Ihr ausgewogener, eher dunkel timbrierter Ensembleklang verleiht auch Schostakowitschs fünftem Quartett die nötige emotionale Tiefe. In der Durchführung des Kopfsatzes wird der Streicherklang bis zum Zerbersten gespannt, der zweite Satz berührt gerade in seiner Zerbrechlichkeit. Und wenn sich wie bei den atemberaubend schnell musizierten Finali der Quartette 7 und 9 die geschärften Linien eng miteinander verzahnen, kann man nur noch staunen.

schallplattenmann.de Ausgabe #577 vom 31.03.2008 (Sal Pichireddu - 2008.03.31)



Bahnbrechender, intimer und warmer Shostakovich, Teil 3

Bahnbrechender, intimer und warmer Shostakovich, Teil 3

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Scherzo mayo 2009 (Juan Carlos Moreno - 2009.05.01)



A pesar de su juventud, el Cuarteto Mandelring es ya un conjunto plenamente...

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[Sikorski](#) Augsut 2010 (- 2010.08.01)



Gesamteinspielung der Schostakowitsch-Quartette durch das Mandelring Quartett komplett

Gesamteinspielung der Schostakowitsch-Quartette durch das Mandelring Quartett komplett

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The Ottawa Citizen December 27, 2008 (Richard Todd - 2008.12.27)



Fasten your seatbelt for this musical ride

Fasten your seatbelt for this musical ride

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Universitas Nr. 2/2010 (Adelbert Reif - 2010.02.01)



Über den Grad der Bedeutung von Dmitri Schostakowitsch (1906-1975) für die...

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www.classicalcdreview.com October 2008 (R.E.B. - 2008.10.01)



The Mandelring Quartet continues its series of the Shostakovich string quartets...

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www.musicweb-international.com May 2008 (Jens F. Laurson - 2008.05.01)



Shostakovich's String Quartets are, alongside those of Bartók, Villa-Lobos, and possibly Bloch, the towering achievements in that art-form. They confidently burden the weight of examples Haydn and Beethoven had set. And if Shostakovich's symphonies can be regarded as exemplifying his public face, the quartets are a window into his more private side. Even if you don't buy into the largely Western reception of Shostakovich as the freedom-fighter in musical code, with every symphony somehow having anti-communist messages woven into every other movement, the quartets will reveal a much more troubled and torn man than the symphonies would on their own.

Just as it has become the norm for every better orchestra to record a Mahler symphony cycle in the last ten years, it's part of the good tone for aspiring and established string quartets to delve into Shostakovich cycles. After the pioneering Beethoven (Legendary Treasure), Shostakovich (Regis), Fitzwilliam (Decca), and Borodin String Quartets (an early cycle on Chandos Historical and a complete one on Melodiya) had completed their cycles, there was little to challenge the primacy especially of the latter two until the Emerson String Quartet darted into the relative void with their squeaky clean, live cycle from Aspen on DG. Since then complete cycles have been added by the Brodsky (Warner), Sorrel (Chandos), St. Petersburg (Hyperion), Éder (Naxos), Manhattan (Ess.a.y), Danel (Fuga Libera), and Rasumovsky Quartets.

One of the most exciting prospects for a cycle of Shostakovich quartets these days is the Israeli-Russian Jerusalem Quartet. They have two recordings of DSCH out, so far, and the leisurely pace seems to be beneficial to the project, assuming a whole cycle is planned. Definitively planning a complete cycle is the Mandelring Quartett from Germany who have arrived on volume three of five of their multi-channel SACD project. I have enjoyed them live and on disc – and in particular their innovative Brahms cycle - coupled with neglected contemporaries like Dessooff - has piqued my interest.

The first two instalments of this group, consisting of the siblings Sebastian, Nanette, and Bernhard Schmidt (violins and cello, respectively) as well as violist Roland Glassl, have already picked up several recommendations – promises of excellence that the third, which includes String Quartets nos. 5, 7, and 9, seems to hold.

Serving as my primary comparison for these recordings is the second Borodin cycle – newly re-mastered and released on Melodiya and more than ever my favorite for the emotional grit and grip that they exude. The sound, formerly “good enough” is now very fine indeed; the background hiss audible, but even on headphones never intrusive – a definite improvement on the old BMG-distributed cycle.

String Quartet no.7, a sorrowful little number dedicated to the memory of his first wife Nina Vassilyevna Shostakovich who had died of cancer in 1954, is – in the inimitably translated liner notes of the Melodiya release – “a more little of all Shostakovich’s quartets. But there’s said a lot – and said newly.”. Indeed. The opening movement (Allegretto) has a light flexibility, deliberate elasticity with the Mandelring Quartett (3:34); the Borodin is notably faster (3:19) with more anguished peaks. The Hagen Quartett, whose latest disc includes this quartet (as well as nos.3 and 8), is more like spun silver threads; a perfection of individual voices.

The slow Lento movement highlights the Hagen’s individual excellence and separation again – whereas the Mandelrings sound a little hazier. But whereas the Hagens are utterly gloomy here, catching a grove only very late in the shortest of movements (2:46 with the Hagen, 2:52 with the Mandelring, and 3:34 with the Borodin), the Mandelring is comparatively bright. The Hagen Quartet seems to celebrate slacking dystopia and shapelessness, the Mandelring finds more purpose. Neither could possibly sustain the movement over three and a half minutes in the way that the Borodin does, without ever dropping the musical thread. Their take is not gloomy but steady – offering a constantly moving pulse throughout, lyrical toward the end, and almost unnoticeably slow.

Even the speedy and wild(er) third movement – Allegro – has a dark, melancholic, even lethargic undertone, a trace that all the busyness on the surface cannot dispel. It’s not unlike the 8th Symphony, in a way, but a merciful 50 minutes shorter. The Mandelring (5:11) buzz along with abandon and the superb sound on this Audite disc comes to the fore, especially where Bernhard Schmidt’s cello gets all the room to bloom that it needs. Just one detail, a possible caveat: alone, they sound pretty nice, even at the densest and wildest moments. Cut to the Borodin (at 5:35 again the slowest of the three) – and you notice the difference. The latter rip into the music with more pointed accentuation and a gusto that seems to put their poor instruments in immediate danger.

At high volumes the Mandelring quartet sounds weighty and beautiful, the Borodin shrill to the point of unbearable. Which of these two you find a recommendation or warning in a Shostakovich quartet will depend entirely on what it is that you want to get out of these works. If you have made proper acquaintance with them, you will undoubtedly have a preference already. The Hagen (5:16), not unlike the Borodin, but with frightening assuredness and accuracy, instead of frighteningly free-wheeling, rip through the first three minutes like the half-demented.

Judging by the Seventh Quartet, one might expect the Fifth Quartet to be something slightly mellower in the hands of the Mandelring Quartett by comparison with the Borodin’s version. Instead, they bulldoze through the opening Allegro non troppo with an intensity that rivals the Borodin every step of the way. Only at their wildest moments – this time due to the better, fuller sound, not because of lacking aggressiveness – are they less shrill than the Borodin’s who have the more delicate, even sweet, moments in the gentle,

pizzicato-dominated closing pages.

In String Quartet no.9, the Borodin are at their most bracing. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that - like Quartet no.6 and the Piano Quintet with Sviatoslav Richter - it was recorded live. Some additional background noise, more reverberation and curious balances make the difference between Audite's impeccable and Melodiya's raw sound far more notable.

Listen to the third movement (Allegretto furioso), where the Mandelring Quartett doesn't gallop into this movement like mad, as does the Borodin Quartet. Rather it starts as a graceful, agile dance, replaced by sudden vigour and anxious terror. The Borodin move from madly riveting to a brutal, metallic harshness that disabuses the listener of the idea that this might be the "Quartet for Children" that Shostakovich had promised the Beethoven Quartet for their 40th anniversary. Unless the same misunderstanding regarding "Toys and spending time in the open air" occurred here as it did in his 15th Symphony – distinctly not a toy-shop symphony, despite Shostakovich's claims to that effect – the 1964 9th String Quartet is in fact a different, new work than the one he promised to produce with those words in 1952. You could also consider a link between the reoccurring galloping spiccato beat of the Allegretto to the "William Tell" quotes in the 15th Symphony, but if the similarity is anything but coincidental would be difficult to prove. When it finally saw the light, Shostakovich dedicated the quartet to his new, third, wife, Irina Supinskaya.

When anxiety and strife give way to the agonizing Adagio, the calm deliberation and the atmospheric sound of the Mandelring Quartet (3:03) are every bit as raw and tender as the much slower Borodin (4:04). Their concluding Allegretto is a strident highpoint of this release.

The peaks and extremes of the Borodin, not to mention the frequently abrasive sound - which I find quite appropriate most of the time - make that cycle stand out more and may be more immediately captivating or exciting. But especially on repeat- and closer listening, the Mandelring's carefully considered, always unpredictable ways are a treasure, not only for audiophiles but for all who want more than the "authentic Russian" version of the Borodin, Beethoven, or Shostakovich Quartets.

www.new-classics.co.uk June 2008 (John Pitt - 2008.06.25)

new classics

Dmitri Shostakovich's fifteen String Quartets are among the 20th century's most profound chamber works, outstanding both in their craftsmanship and spirituality. This highly decorated Soviet 'model composer' composed chamber music increasingly in his later years as he sought to maintain his inner non-conformism. The Quartets are consequently very personal and poignant works. Influenced by Ludwig van Beethoven's legacy, Shostakovich experimented with a suite-like variety of forms and extended his musical spectrum considerably. His Fifth Quartet, written in 1952, is a masterpiece and was the first to have a direct connection with one of his symphonies (the Tenth). The Seventh Quartet, completed in 1960, is his shortest and is dedicated to the memory of his first wife, Nina, who had died in 1954. The work moves between passion and tension and draws largely on fugal writing to make the distinctions apparent. The Ninth Quartet (1964) is another highly personal work, dedicated to Irina Antonovna Shostakovich, the wife he married two years before. This third volume of Audite's Complete Edition of Shostakovich String Quartets includes all three of the above pieces played by the acclaimed Mandelring Quartett, who give impressive and emotional performances of this technically demanding yet compelling music.

www.parutions.com Mardi 7 juillet 2009 (- 2009.07.07)



Dimitri Chostakovitch – Intégrale des Quatuors à Cordes vol: 3

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www.sikorski.de Januar 2010 (- 2010.01.15)



Gesamteinspielung der Schostakowitsch-Quartette durch das Mandelring Quartett komplett

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