



Leoš Janáček: Complete String Quartets

aud 92.545



[American Record Guide](#) 01.03.2011 (Carl Bauman - 2011.03.01)



This edition undoubtedly has the best sound of any and certainly the best notes...

To read the complete review, please visit [American Record Guide](#) online.

Bayern 4 Klassik - CD-Tipp 6. November 2010 (Julia Schölzel - 2010.11.06)



Womit zeigt ein Mann seine Liebe? Mit roten Rosen? Mit kostbarem Schmuck? Der Komponist Leos Janáček hatte mehr zu bieten, als er im Alter von über 70 Jahren seiner jungen Angebeteten seine tiefe Leidenschaft bekundete: er schrieb ihr, getarnt als "Intime Briefe", ein Streichquartett.

"Jubel, heißes Bekenntnis der Liebe, wehklagend; unbezähmbare Sehnsucht, unerbittlicher Entschluß, mich mit der Welt um Dich zu schlagen ... Ach das ist ein Werk, als ob man es aus lebendigem Fleisch herauschnitt. Ich glaube, ich schreibe nichts Tieferes und Wahrhaftigeres mehr."

Starke Worte für starke, übermächtige Gefühle gerichtet an Kamila Stösslova, die junge Gattin eines Altwarenhändlers, die Janáček als Freundin, Geliebte und Muse umschwärmte. Als Symbol größter Nähe setzte Janáček statt der Bratsche die "Viola d'amore" ein:

"Das Ganze wird von einem besonderen Instrument zusammengehalten, es heißt Viola d'amour – Liebesviola ... In dieser Arbeit werde ich mit Dir allein sein. Kein Dritter neben uns."

Aufgekratzte Stimmung

Diese intime Begegnung äußert sich in vier Sätzen, weit entfernt von klassischen Satztypen, dabei voller emotionaler Irrationalität. Plötzliche Tempowechsel, kurze leidenschaftliche Melodiefetzen, zärtliche Elegien, so findet Janáček in der ihm typischen Art eigene "Worte" für die vier Streichinstrumente. Das Mandelring Quartett mit Gunter Teuffel an der Viola d'amore meistert souverän diese spieltechnisch anspruchsvolle Janáčeksche Syntax und schafft es, durch die Fülle der Klangfarben vom rauen Schreien bis zum fahlen Säuseln eine in der Tat aufgekratzte Stimmung zu kreieren, die dem unstillen Getriebenensein verpflichtet ist.

Rekonstruktion der Urfassung

Eine Besonderheit bezüglich des 2. Streichquartetts konnte das Mandelring Quartett für diese CD initiieren: Den ursprünglich für Viola d'amore konzipierten Part mußte Janáček aus aufführungsspraktischen Gründen für die Bratsche umschreiben. Diesen Weg gehen jetzt die Quartettmusiker gemeinsam mit Gunter Teuffel

rückwärts. Aus Skizzen und anderem Recherchematerial rekonstruierten sie die Urfassung des 2. Streichquartetts, beide viersätzigen Versionen befinden sich auf der CD und laden zum aufschlußreichen Vergleichen ein.

Einheit von Wort und Musik

Im ersten Werk dieser CD angeregt und aufgeregt durch Tolstois Erzählung "Die Kreutzer-sonate" protestierte Janáček gegen die Rachehandlungen des gehörnten Ehemanns in einer Art moralischem Kontrapunkt. Dass er dafür sprechende, ja anklagende Klänge in seinem ersten Streichquartett fand, zeigt in dieser packenden Aufnahme des Mandelring Quartetts einmal mehr die herausragende Gabe Janáčeks, Wort und Musik, Sprache und Melodie als sinnstiftende und sinnliche Einheit zu begreifen.

BBC Radio 3 Sat 29 Sep 2012, 9.00 am (- 2012.09.29)



BROADCAST CD review

Top recommendation on a single CD (also includes the viola d'amore as well as the viola version of quartet no 2)

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

[Chamber Music Magazine](#) 16.10.2012 (James M. Keller - 2012.10.16)



One figure from that list also came close to using the viola d' amore in a...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

[Classical Recordings Quarterly](#) Spring 2011 (Tully Potter - 2011.01.01)



In the 1970s, when I was researching a monograph on Czech viola players, I discovered that, contrary to received opinion, the viola d'amore had never died out. Several musicians played it in Prague and Brno in Janáček's time, including Rudolf Reissig (1874-1939), whose instrument is used by Gunter Teuffel in this recording. Janáček certainly knew what the viola d'amore sounded like, although his motivation for using it in several late works was its name. When he chose it for his Second Quartet in place of a viola da braccio, he was unaware that the Viennese composer Karl Weigl had done the same thing 25 years earlier (the writer of the main booklet note is also unaware of it and repeats the nonsense that Hindemith rediscovered the viola d'amore). The viola player of the Moravian Quartet, Josef Trkan, gamely tried to rehearse Intimate Letters using a viola d'amore but the balance was all awry and the attempt was abandoned. Janáček revised the work, adjusting those passages written for seven strings; but a recording can achieve a just balance.

This is at least the third recording of the restored original version. The 1997 disc by Kubín Quartet members

and the American John Calabrese (Supraphon SU3349-2) and the 2008 disc by Quatuor Diotima members and Garth Knox (Alpha 133) use the edition prepared by four Czech scholars and now published by Bärenreiter. Teuffel has consulted Dr Milan Škampa of the Smetana Quartet and leading authority on Janáček's quartets, who has material not available to the Bärenreiter team. The result sounds authoritative to me and although you pick up the wirier sound of the viola d'amore, you hardly notice that the viola part is being played by a less voluminous instrument than usual. What you do notice, straight away, in both Bärenreiter and this even newer edition, is that the main theme is hammered out pizzicato at the start – Janáček's revision is much better here. I have not heard the Alpha CD but the Supraphon is very well played, albeit recorded more distantly and resonantly, and the three-quarters Czech ensemble moves more naturally at times, especially in the nostalgic main theme of the Moderato where the Germans are slightly stiff and self-conscious.

The Mandelring Quartet plays extremely well in the Kreutzer Sonata and the normal version of Intimate Letters. My only nagging doubt is crystallised once again by that Moderato theme: the Germans have prepared the music meticulously but the syntax is not as familiar to them as to the best Czech ensembles. They are superbly recorded, quite close up but not claustrophobically so, and the disc can heartily be recommended to the curious, as I feel these players have the edge with their newly prepared edition of the original Intimate Letters.

concerti - Das Berliner Musikleben Dezember 2010 (HM - 2010.12.01)

concerti.de

Mit Liebe gespielt

Mit Liebe gespielt

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Der Tagesspiegel Nr. 20 819 (Ulrich Amling - 2010.12.05)

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

Die „Intimen Briefe“ in der wiederentdeckten Originalversion, mit Viola...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Diapason No. 588 (février 2011) (Jean-Charles Hoffelé - 2011.02.01)



Les Mandelring suivent l'exemple (pionnier) des Diotima et rendent au deuxième quatuor la viole d'amour voulue par Janacek (qui l'invitait dès 1905 dans la fosse de Osud, puis dans celle de Katia Kabanova et de L'Affaire Makropoulos). Comme les Diotima, ils proposent les deux versions de ce véritable journal intime de la passion (à sens unique) du compositeur pour Kamila Stösslova : l'habituelle avec alto, la première avec viole d'amour.

Mais il existe une nette différence entre les deux disques: chez les Mandelring, le recours à la viole ne change pas vraiment l'angle de vue. Le récit demeure, alto ou viole, totalement névrotique. En privilégiant le tranchant du discours, en mettant des mots (voire des cris) derrière les notes, leur double lecture des «Lettres intimes» ouvre grand les portes de l'opéra; une manière forte admirable si l'on consent à l'abandon de tout espace réflexif. Les micros sont dans le quatuor, tout prend un relief que l'on n'avait pas entendu depuis la version acerbe des Janacek. La viole apporte tout juste une dimension lyrique supplémentaire: elle fait un peu bande à part dans ce geste rageur. Les Diotima, eux, se pliaient davantage à sa poésie singulière. Subtilité de sybarite, car devant cette fougue, on croit voir le compositeur bouillant de passion.

Cette même présence physique anime jusqu'à la saturation une interprétation déclamatoire du Quatuor n° 1, visionnaire lecture de la Sonate à Kreutzer de Tolstoï qui narre le meurtre d'une femme adultère par son mari. C'est ici la silhouette menaçante de Pozdnychev qui surgit à nos oreilles. Le génie de Janacek en fait un mélodrame pour quatre instruments que les Mandelring portent jusqu'à l'insoutenable. La puissance sans fard de leur jeu, la plénitude de leur geste vont très loin dans le sens caché de l'œuvre.

Diverdi Magazin siglo XX, 199/enero 2011 (Mel Smith-Window - 2010.04.01)

DIVERDI.COM

Janáček al límite de sus posibilidades

Los cuartetos de cuerda del moravo, por el Mandelring

En los últimos años se han ido sucediendo diversas lecturas discográficas de los dos sensacionales cuartetos de cuerda de Leos Janáček, lo que sin duda es buena muestra del reconocimiento definitivo de uno de los compositores más genuinos del siglo XX. Sin ir más lejos, el firmante de estas líneas ha tenido la ocasión de reseñar para este Boletín la grabación del Cuarteto Brodsky, en donde se destacaba su intención de asimilarlos al repertorio moderno, o la apasionante (aun cuando pasase en su momento un tanto desapercibida) del Cuarteto Skampa para Supraphon, la cual logra, bajo mi humilde parecer, una versión juvenil, expresionista y virtuosa, que quizá defina mejor que otras la personalidad de estas filigranas cordadas que el autor moravo compuso entre ópera y ópera.

La versión del Mandelring Quartett objeto de esta reseña es técnicamente perfecta, más "clásica" que la del Skampa, o si se quiere, más "familiar", como dicen sus miembros, una familia de virtuosos perfectamente compenetrados pero que dan una idea de estos cuartetos como obras de lucimiento personal, lejos de manifestar la idea del compositor de "protesta moral contra el despotismo del hombre en su relación con la mujer". El gran aliciente de esta grabación es, sin embargo, la inclusión de la viola d'amore en el Segundo Cuarteto, del que se ofrecen por lo demás ambas versiones. Este instrumento tiene el inconveniente de su bajo volumen, pero Janáček lo escogió como representación única del amor puro y simple, identificándolo con la personalidad de su amada (que no amante) Kamila Stösslová, a la cual están dedicados ambos cuartetos. En la versiones definitiva, así como en la ópera Kata Kabanova, el compositor debió suplir el instrumento por una viola normal. Gunter Teuffel resuelve diáfaramente los problemas

técnicos y sonoros de la viola d'amore y el resultado es una versión más dinámica y realista que con la transcripción a viola normal.

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 6-2010 Dezember / Januar (Helmut Peters - 2010.12.03)



Liebes-Quartette

Liebes-Quartette

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Fanfare November 2011 (Andrew Quint - 2011.11.01)

fanfare

On a superb-sounding SACD, Audite gives us Janáček's string quartets performed by the Mandelring Quartet, whose Shostakovich cycle was so rewarding. The wrinkle here is that "Intimate Letters" (Quartet No. 2) is heard both in the familiar version and with viola d'amore substituting for viola. Janáček, infatuated with Kamila Stösslová, originally planned to employ this "instrument of love," and its presence subtly modifies the effect of the piece.

Fanfare Issue 34:5 (May/June 2011) (Paul Orgel - 2011.05.01)

fanfare

Using short, potent motives, Janáček's two string quartets communicate emotional states—foreboding, frenzied activity, anguish, and breakdown, along with moments of sweetness, nostalgia, and occasional ecstasy—with the same dramatic intensity as his operas. Both quartets share melodic material with Kát'a Kabanová (1921) and the first quartet, the "Kreutzer Sonata" from 1923, based on Tolstoy, shares its Russian setting and the theme of the mistreatment of its heroine.

In the even less musically conventional second quartet, "Intimate Letters" from 1928, the "hero" is Janáček himself, expressing his unreturned passion for Kamila Stössel. Decades ago, these pieces were off the beaten path, with older Czech quartets offering the most fully realized performances. Now, like Janáček's piano music and violin sonata, they are mainstream repertoire, recorded by many international quartets, though still a specialty of the best, newer Czech groups like the Talich, Prazák, Skámpa, Panocha, and Pavel Haas quartets.

The Mandelring Quartet, a young German quartet, plays them with near-perfect intonation, razor-sharp articulation, and very precise ensemble in these highly recommendable performances. Their playing is showcased by the very vivid sound of Audite's SACD recording in which the miking pinpoints the exact location of each player. A perfectly adequate version by the Vlach quartet on Naxos seems lackluster after hearing the Mandelring disc with its superior recorded sound and string playing with technique to spare. The older, venerable Smetana Quartet seems restrained by comparison. My favorite recording, by the Janáček Quartet, offers something less overwrought than the edgy, modern norm in these pieces, more

sense of dialogue between the instruments and of space between events.

Along with its extraordinary recorded sound, the Mandelring's disc stands out among a surplus of excellent versions of these works for including an alternate version of the second quartet. Janáček originally scored "Intimate Letters" for viola d'amore in place of the standard viola, and here, violist Gunter Teuffel performs on the actual instrument that Janáček knew—it belonged to Rudolf Reissig, a violin professor at the Brno Organ School from 1903 to 1909—in a reconstructed version of the quartet.

Aside from an obvious change in which the first movement opens with pizzicato instead of arco playing from the violins, the revisions are hard to hear. What's fascinating is how the gentler timbre of the viola d'amore, often the work's melodic protagonist, sweetens the tone of Janáček declarations of love. The other instruments react with adjustments to their volume and the general effect is less fierce than with the more projected voice of the normal viola. If you love this piece, the viola d'amore version gives insight into what Janáček imagined, but it's very subtle and I wouldn't call it a revelation.

I recently attended an excellent concert by the French Diotima Quartet in which "Intimate Letters" was programmed together with Alban Berg's 1925–26 Lyric Suite, a pairing that makes great sense since the two works are roughly contemporaneous and both have secret romantic dedications. Seeing these two dynamic pieces by two master opera composers performed made them more exciting and accessible than any recording. The Diotima has recorded both versions of "Intimate Letters."

Fipps - Das Magazin Januar / Februar 2012 (Georg Rudiger - 2012.01.01)

FIPPS
Das Magazin

Es gibt kaum eine Musik, die so express ist wie Janáček's Streichquartette. Das Mandelring Quartett ist dafür genau das richtige Ensemble. Beim ersten Quartett „Kreuzer-Sonate“ entfesseln die vier Emotionen. Sie kratzen und streicheln, attackieren und beruhigen wieder. Das zweite Quartett „Intime Briefe“ spielen sie zunächst in der gewöhnlichen Fassung mit Viola (Roland Glassl). Und liefern als überaus hörenswerte Zugabe noch die für Viola d'amore (Gunter Teuffel) geschriebene Urfassung hinterher. Das Stück klingt in der Interpretation, „als ob man es aus lebendigem Fleisch herauschnitt“, wie es einst Janáček forderte. Ein Hörereignis!

Fono Forum Januar 2011 (Marcus Stäbler - 2010.12.15)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Liebesinstrument

Im Herbst seines Lebens brach für Leos Janáček noch einmal ein neuer Frühling an: Die Begegnung mit der fast 40 Jahre jüngeren Kamilla Stösslova – wie er selbst anderweitig verheiratet – wirkte wie ein Jungbrunnen und weckte neue schöpferische Kräfte: Von seinen frischen, in rund 800 Briefen dokumentierten Gefühlen inspiriert, schuf der mährische Komponist in den letzten acht Lebensjahren eine ganze Reihe großer Werke, die wir seiner wohl (körperlich) unerfüllten Liebe verdanken. Dazu gehören neben der Oper „Katja Kabanowa“ auch die beiden Streichquartette.

Das zweite, mit dem unmissverständlichen Titel „Intime Briefe“, hätte ursprünglich nicht nur – noch deutlicher – „Liebesbriefe“ heißen, sondern außerdem die übliche Bratsche durch eine Viola d'Amore ersetzen sollen: ein ausdrückliches Liebesinstrument also.

Der Bratschist Gunter Teuffel hat nun, mit Hilfe des Janáček-Kenners Milan Skampa, eine mögliche Urfassung dieses zweiten Quartetts rekonstruiert und sie gemeinsam mit dem Mandelring-Quartett aufgenommen – für eine SACD, die auch die etablierte Fassung und das erste Quartett enthält. Die reizvolle Gegenüberstellung ermöglicht einen spannenden Vergleich und lässt uns erahnen, wie der Komponist das Stück gemeint haben könnte. Die siebensaitige Viola d'Amore gibt dem Gesamtklang eine etwas weichere, silbrige Farbe und lässt die leisen Flüsterstellen noch intimer wirken. Auch sonst ist die Aufnahme sehr ausdrucksvoll und intensiv: Das Mandelring-Quartett betont den eruptiven, mitunter fast collagenhaften Charakter der Musik, indem es die schroffen Kontraste schonungslos scharf aufeinanderprallen lässt. Hier spricht die hitzige Emotionalität eines jugendlichen Liebenden von 74 Jahren.

hifi & records 2/2011 (Uwe Steiner - 2011.04.01)



Leos Janáček

Streichquartette Nr. 1 und Nr.2 (2 Fassungen)

Leos Janáček

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

International Record Review December 2010 (John Warrack - 2010.12.01)



Entitling this record 'Leoš Janáček: complete string quartets', as Audite does, looks rather odd when he wrote only two. The simple explanation is that we have three performances here: the First Quartet ('after L. N. Tolstoy's 'Kreutzer Sonata') and the Second Quartet in two versions, one with the traditional four instruments, the other with viola d'amore replacing the usual viola; but things are a bit more complicated than that.

In 1903, on one of his summer visits to the spa of Luhačovice, Janáček met Kamila Urválková. She had already been the subject of an opera, Kamilla, by, so to speak, a previous relationship with another composer, Ludvík Čelanský, in which to her irritation she was portrayed as an air-headed little flirt. The susceptible Janáček was immediately smitten. 'She was one of the most beautiful of women', he declared in his autobiography (from photographs, one can see that he had a point), adding, 'Her voice was like violas d'amore.' He had come upon the viola d'amore in Berlioz's treatise on orchestration, where its tone is described as 'faible et doux', suitable for 'l'expression des sentiments extatiques et religieux', and he had heard it in a work that much influenced him, Charpentier's Louise. When he then set to work on a new opera, Fate, all about the composition of an opera in a spa, the heroine 'Míla', which also means 'dear', was associated with love music on the instrument (he used it similarly in Kát'a Kabanová, and elsewhere, as can be heard in Charles Mackerras's recordings).

So it was primed in his imagination for the association with Kamila Stösslová, another Luhačovice encounter, the muse of his late years and the subject of the Second Quartet. This was originally subtitled on the autograph sketch 'Listy milostné', 'Love letters': only later came the more discreet title 'Listy důvěrné', usually translated as 'Intimate letters' but better really the more elliptical 'Confidential letters'. Originally, the instrument at the centre of the quartet was to be the viola d'amore; but when the Moravian Quartet came to play the work through to Janáček, he was forced to concede that the instrument was impracticable and reluctantly cut it out. As John Tyrrell sagaciously puts it, in a sub-chapter on the viola d'amore in his

Cambridge Opera Handbook on Kát'a Kabanová (Cambridge; 1982), 'While there is much to be said for authentic recordings with the viola d'amore included ... in general we should regard the instrument as one of the inspirational devices which helped Janáček to compose.'

We live, of course, in an age of 'authenticity', which is also an age of many paradoxes, as when Mackerras candidly admits that with the viola d'amore in Kát'a, 'Modern recording ... has made it possible to realise [Janáček's] intention to the letter.' This is less necessary with the string quartet. 'Authenticity' is handsomely served by the viola d'amore player, Gunter Teuffel, using the actual instrument owned by Rudolf Reissig, who taught at Janáček's Organ Conservatory from 1903 to 1909. Pictures show a beautiful instrument, with a broad belly and bridge to accommodate the seven playing strings as well as the seven resonating strings which provide the characteristic halo of sound. The opening solo, however, is partly inaudible. This makes it odd to have chosen to overshadow it by using the opening chordal theme in the powerful version for bowed strings, rather than the lighter pizzicato (there are other differences, deriving from issues with the manuscript and parts). Pizzicato was used on the only previous record with the viola d'amore, clearly played by John Anthony Calabrese with the Kubin Quartet as part of Volume 4 of the fascinating 'The Unknown Janáček' Supraphon series. Later in the movement on the new recording, the *molto meno mosso* sounds well, and on the penultimate page the *adagio* solo, singing through carefully disposed chords from the other strings, is beautiful. Similarly, the opening solo of the second movement is sweet and clear, the instrument holds its own in the lilting *moderato*, and in the finale adds a fascinating colour to the elaborate textures at the *espresso* section (Fig. 12). There are further complexities of version, it should be added, too complex to be pursued here, as Janáček modified the score. The seriously curious should consult the text published in 2009 as part of the ongoing Janáček Complete Edition.

What of the actual performances? In the First Quartet, the music is very well phrased, with smooth and well-blended tone, though there is some lack of menace, of the sense of living on the edge of an abyss in this reflection of Tolstoy's threatening story. Emotions that are barely controlled can sound too controlled here, and it is part of Janáček's idiom for there to be sudden outbursts that are far from tame. A comparable smoothness marks the playing in the Second Quartet, a sense of emotions running easily and comfortably rather than with such urgency that they have to be held fiercely in check, which is part of the whole situation that led to Janáček composing the work as he did. There are stronger, more urgent performances from the Skampa and Panocha Quartets, not to mention the classic old version by the Talich Quartet, and indeed the excellent Janáček Quartet. Yet for Janáček collectors, this is of course an enthralling disc, and one to engage the attention of anyone gripped by the passionate, even violent interactions of Janáček's life and his music.

Kulimu 36. Jg. 2010 Heft 3 (ts - 2010.09.01)

KULIMU
Kunst & Literatur & Musik

Leoš Janáček: Complete String Quartets

Leoš Janáček: Complete String Quartets

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Janáček era molto interessato alla viola d'amore, che impiegò nelle opere...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

NDR Kultur 8. November 2010 um 15:20 Uhr (Friederike Westerhaus - 2010.11.08)



Seit mehr als 25 Jahren besteht das Mandelring Quartett. Der Erfolg des Streichquartetts lässt sich an zahlreichen Auszeichnungen wie dem "Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik" und einer Nominierung für den Midem Classical Award ablesen. Ein Markenzeichen der vier Musiker ist, dass sie sich intensiv mit einem Komponisten auseinandersetzen, wenn sie seine Werke einspielen. Ob Brahms, Schubert oder Schostakowitsch - immer haben sie das gesamte Quartett-Schaffen der Komponisten im Blick. Mit ihrem Schostakowitsch-Zyklus ist ihnen eine neue Referenzaufnahme gelungen.

Auch auf seiner neuen CD hat sich das Mandelring-Quartett wieder einem spannenden Projekt zugewandt: den beiden Streichquartetten von Leoš Janáček, die in seinen letzten Lebensjahren entstanden. Das zweite Streichquartett hat das Mandelring Quartett sogar doppelt eingespielt, in zwei verschiedenen Fassungen: mit Bratsche besetzt - und mit Viola d'amore.

Die "Liebesviola"

Das Streichquartett "Intime Briefe" von Janáček ist eine Liebeserklärung. Nicht etwa an seine Ehefrau, sondern an die ebenfalls verheiratete Kamila Stösslová, seine Geliebte und Muse. In nur drei Wochen brachte es der 73-jährige Janáček zu Papier und schrieb in einem seiner fast tausend Briefe an Kamila: "Das Ganze wird von einem besonderen Instrument zusammengehalten werden. Es heißt Viola d'amore, Liebesviola."

Die Viola d'amore ist ein Instrument in Bratschenlage, meist mit sieben Saiten und zusätzlichen Resonanzsaiten, das seine Blütezeit im Barock erlebte und einen einschmeichelnden Klang hat. Janáček liebte diesen Klang und setzte das Instrument häufiger ein. Doch der Bratschist des Quartetts der Uraufführung konnte die Viola d'amore nicht gut genug spielen. Janáček schrieb das Werk deshalb für Bratsche um, erklärt Bernhard Schmidt vom Mandelring-Quartett: "Es gibt eine Aussage von Janáček: 'Ich musste sie herausschneiden, aber es war entsetzlich.' Sie lag ihm unglaublich am Herzen, die Viola d'amore, in diesem Werk. Und er hat in der ursprünglichen Partitur vor jede Zeile von Hand extra eingetragen: 'Viola d'amour'."

Höchst lebendiges Gespräch

Das Mandelring Quartett hat mithilfe des Janáček-Kenners Milan Skampa die Fassung für Viola d'amore rekonstruiert und mit dem d'amore-Spieler Gunter Teuffel eingespielt. Für das Quartett, das seit vielen Jahren mit der üblichen Fassung vertraut ist, war die Auseinandersetzung mit der Viola d'amore ein spannender Prozess, erzählt die Geigerin Nanette Schmidt: "Es braucht ein bisschen, bis man auch adäquat reagieren kann. Wir mussten das alles klanglich etwas abspecken, sonst hätten wir ihn totgemacht."

Insgesamt bekommt das Quartett mit der d'amore einen deutlich intimeren Charakter. Durch die

Des-Dur-Stimmung erklingen andere leere Saiten als bei der Bratsche. Nicht überall sind die Unterschiede so deutlich, aber der Gesamteindruck verändert sich spürbar. Es wird nachvollziehbar, warum Janáček für "Intime Briefe" ursprünglich die Viola d'amore einsetzen wollte.

Wohltuend ist, dass das Mandelring Quartett beide Fassungen gleichermaßen ernst nimmt. Beide Interpretationen zeichnen sich durch eine große Homogenität aus. Und beide lassen die für Janáček so typischen, dem Alltag abgelauchten "Sprechmelodien" plastisch und greifbar werden - man wird Zeuge eines höchst lebendigen Gesprächs.

Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 02/2011 (Lutz Lesle - 2011.02.01)

NEUE ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR
musik

Janáček, Leoš

Complete String Quartets

Janáček, Leoš

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Ostthüringer Zeitung Jg. 20, Nr. 307 (Dr. sc. Eberhard Kneipel - 2010.12.31)

OTZ

Einfallsreiche Liebeserklärung

Einfallsreiche Liebeserklärung

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Pizzicato N° 211(3/2011) (Guy Wagner - 2011.03.01)

pizzicato
Remy Franck's Journal about Classical Music

Neue Massstäbe

Eine besondere Originalität bekommt diese Neuproduktion der beiden Janáček-Quartette durch die Tatsache, dass das zweite, 'Intime Briefe', in zwei Fassungen gespielt wird, der üblichen mit Bratsche und der vom Komponisten gewünschten mit Viola d'amore: "Das Ganze wird von einem besonderen Instrument zusammengehalten werden. Es heißt Viola d'amour – Liebesviola, hatte Janáček seiner Altersgeliebten und Muse Kamila Stösslová geschrieben, und in der Tat ist diese Komposition aus dem letzten Lebensjahr von Leos Janáček (1854-1928) eine tief sinnige Liebeserklärung an diese Frau. Doch auch schon das erste Quartett, das sich auf Tolstois 'Kreutzer Sonate' (1823) beruft, dreht um die Tragik der Liebe. Im Zentrum steht Beethovens emotionsreiche Musik, die einen Ehemann dazu bringt, seine untreue Gattin umzubringen. Das Mandelring Quartett dringt ganz, ganz tief in diese Komposition ein und spielt sie mit einer Herbheit und Intensität, die fast unerträglich werden: eine überwältigende Leistung.

Faszinierend ist dann der Vergleich der beiden Fassungen der 'Intimen Briefe'. Zur Information: Die

Liebesviola ist ein Instrument mit sieben Saiten und dazu noch Resonanzsaiten, ihre Klanglage ähnelt derjenigen der Bratsche. Da aber der Bratschist der Uraufführung die Viola d'amore nur ungenügend spielen konnte, musste der Komponist schweren Herzens die Stimme für Bratsche umschreiben. Für die Mandelring-Einspielung der Originalfassung mit Viola d'amore musste diese von einem Janáček-Exegeten rekonstruiert werden, und statt des gewohnten Bratschisten des Quartetts, Roland Glassl, wurde ebenfalls ein Spezialist des ungewöhnlichen Instruments, Gunter Teuffel, ins Projekt eingespannt.

Es ist ungemein interessant zu erfahren, wie sich die beiden Fassungen unterscheiden. Ich muss gestehen, dass ich die Viola d'amore-Version der traditionellen vorziehe: Sie gibt stärker den Charakter des 'Intimen' wieder, den diese musikalischen 'Briefe' nun einmal haben. Beide Fassungen werden von Sebastian Schmidt, Nanette Schmidt, Bernhard Schmidt und ihrem jeweiligen Partner mit jener phänomenalen Präzision, Akribie und Intensität gespielt die man von diesen Interpreten gewohnt ist. Und wieder setzen sie Maßstäbe...

Record Geijutsu February 2011 (- 2011.02.01)



japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

Rondo Nr. 650 / 23. - 29.10.2010 (- 2010.10.23)



Das Mandelring Quartett entwickelt sich derzeit dank seiner erstaunlichen...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

schallplattenmann.de Ausgabe #697 vom 22. November 2010 (Sal Pichireddu - 2010.11.22)



Klassik – Janáčeks intime Streichquartette, erstmalig mit der Originalfassung des Quartetts "Intime Briefe"

Klassik – Janáčeks intime Streichquartette, erstmalig mit der Originalfassung des Quartetts "Intime Briefe"

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Scherzo Jg. XXVI, N° 265 (Santiago Martín Bermúdez - 2011.04.01)

sch*er***zo**

Continúa la insistencia de las formaciones para cuarteto en estas dos obras...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Schwäbische Zeitung 29. Dezember 2010 (man - 2010.12.29)

Schwäbische Zeitung

Geheime Botschaften

Geheime Botschaften

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Stereoplay Januar 2011 - 1/2011 (Martin Mezger - 2011.01.01)

stereoplay

Leos Janáček, Streichquartette Nr. 1 und Nr. 2 (zwei Fassungen)

Leos Janáček, Streichquartette Nr. 1 und Nr. 2 (zwei Fassungen)

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Strings Magazine May 2011 (Edith Eisler - 2011.05.01)

STRINGS
FOR PLAYERS OF VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, BASS, AND DOUBLE BASS

Leos Janáček (1854–1928) was in many ways a unique composer. He was profoundly influenced by the Moravian folk music and the speech patterns of the Czech language, especially the dialect of his native region, and even his instrumental works have a “spoken” quality. Indeed, his music has a highly personal character that makes it daunting to perform and helps explain why he did not gain international recognition until well beyond middle age. His two string quartets are among the most difficult in the literature. The best players call them virtually unplayable, and their individualistic musical and emotional language test the performers’ flexibility and empathy to the utmost.

Among the great Czech quartets, this recording by the Mandelrings—Sebastian and Nanette Schmidt, violins; Roland Glassl, viola; Bernhard Schmidt, cello; and Gunter Teuffel, viola d’amore—is one of the best. The players’ tone is rich and warm. The balance is exemplary, the texture clear; lines stand out and interweave in a colorful tapestry. They enter into all the changes of mood and expression: the melodies melt with tenderness and sorrow, the dances leap boisterously

Janáček’s life and work were closely intertwined: he wrote all his late compositions for the young woman

who had become his muse. In the Second Quartet, "Intimate Letters," the viola part was originally written for viola d'amore (the instrument of love), but finding a player for it proved to be so difficult that Janáček rewrote it for viola. This recording presents both versions, a most interesting idea: the d'amore's mellow sound and Baroque inflections underline the music's tender, pleading intimacy.

Stuttgarter Zeitung Nr. 61 | Dienstag, 15. März 2011 (Uwe Schweikert - 2011.03.15)

**STUTTGARTER
ZEITUNG**

Alterswildheit

Streichquartette. Das Mandelring-Quartett hat Leoš Janáček's packend emotionale Werke technisch perfekt eingespielt

Alterswildheit

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Süddeutsche Zeitung Dienstag, 23. November 2010 (Harald Eggebrecht - 2010.11.23)

**Süddeutsche
Zeitung**

Silberklang der Liebe

Janaceks „Intime Briefe“ erstmals in der Urfassung mit Viola d'amore

Silberklang der Liebe

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

The Absolute Sound Jan 14th, 2013 (- 2013.01.14)
source: <https://www.theabsolutesound.com/article...>

the absolute sound

The Mandelring delivers idiomatic performances that capture the nervous, speech-like character of Janáček's music as well as its melancholy-tinged lyricism. Audite's aural perspective is front-row-immediate, with sharp dynamic contrasts and a widely spread soundstage.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

The Strad December 2010 (Tim Homfray - 2010.12.01)

the Strad

This would count as a desirable disc of Janáček's quartets even without its...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

theartsdesk.com Saturday, 23 October 2010 (Graham Rickson - 2010.10.23)

theartsdesk.com

Complete string quartets? Janáček left us just two, but this new release commands attention with a reconstruction of the Second Quartet in its original form, complete with viola d'amore. Both works can make for painfully intense listening, dating from Janáček's amazingly creative final period, where he produced a series of staggeringly original and quirky works. The 1923 First Quartet, subtitled The Kreutzer Sonata after Tolstoy's disturbing novella, always sounds to me like a succession of sighs, swoons and gasps, of short, choppy phrases and mercurial mood changes. It's remarkable to hear Janáček's free avoidance of conventional classical forms; themes recur unexpectedly, tension rises and ebbs, and after some passionate sparring in the last movement the music just stops enigmatically.

The Second Quartet, better known as Intimate Letters, is an explicit declaration of love to Janáček's much younger mistress, composed over a three-week period in 1928. His original scoring rather appropriately included a viola d'amore, an archaic seven-stringed viola variant with sympathetic strings under the fingerboard, vibrating with each bowed note. Janáček's original viola player found the instrument too difficult to manage, so the quartet was revised for conventional viola. "So I had to cut the viola d'amore, but it was awful" was Janáček's comment after revising the work. Gunter Teuffel's edition is based on surviving original scores, and the tone of the viola d'amore is immediately apparent when the two versions are compared. There are several other changes too, notably the original pizzicato opening to the first movement, better matched to the softer, veiled tone of the viola d'amore solo. This issue is more than a fascinating curiosity, with the Mandelring Quartet fully at ease with the technical demands of both quartets. There's a magical largamente climax in the middle of the Second Quartet's third movement and it sounds stunning here – an explicit declaration of love, the first violin singing out in the upper register. Both works are masterpieces, and I envy anyone hearing them for the first time.

Wiener Zeitung Donnerstag, 20. Jänner 2011 (me - 2011.01.20)



Vergleichen macht sicher

Janacek, Leos: Streichquartette

Vergleichen macht sicher

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.allmusic.com 01.01.2011 (Mike D. Brownell - 2011.01.01)

allmusic

Janáček: Complete String Quartets

Janáček: Complete String Quartets

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.ClassicsToday.com 01.05.2011 (David Hurwitz - 2011.05.01)



The playing here is extremely beautiful for the most part, but in the first...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.musicweb-international.com December 2010 (Siebe Riedstra - 2010.12.31)



A must-have for Janáček-fans and chamber music aficionados alike

Leoš Janáček is a unique phenomenon in the history of classical music. He was born in humble surroundings in 1854 in the small Moravian town of Hukvaldy. After his studies he became the head of his own music school in the town of Brno. Until 1895 he devoted himself mainly to folkloristic research. His early musical output was unremarkable and influenced by contemporaries such as Antonín Dvořák. His later, mature works incorporate his earlier studies of national folk music in a modern, highly original synthesis. This was first evident in the opera *Jenufa*, which was premiered in 1904 in Brno. In the year 1916, at age 62, *Jenufa* was performed to great acclaim in Prague. When *Jenufa* was staged in the opera-houses of Vienna (1918) and Berlin (1924), he finally achieved international recognition. In the eight years before his death at age 74, he astonished the musical world by completing five more operas.

In the summer of 1917, while on holiday at his beloved spa Lucacovice, he met a beautiful woman half his age, with whom he fell madly in love. A love-affair never materialized, but she was to remain the object of his affection for the rest of his days. While staying faithful to her husband and children, Kamila Stösslova maintained an extensive correspondence with the aging composer. Some six hundred letters that Janáček wrote to her have been preserved and published, and a large number of his works are dedicated to her. The inspiration Janáček found in his love for Kamila not only prompted him to compose five operas, but also made him turn to the more intimate medium of chamber music. In his final years he wrote a string quartet, violin sonata, wind quintet, the *Concertino* for piano, the *Capriccio* for left hand piano, and his last completed instrumental composition, the second string quartet of 1928.

Both string quartets are dedicated to Kamila Stösslova, and both have nicknames. The first is called 'Kreutzer Sonata' after the Tolstoy novel, which refers to Beethoven's Violin sonata of the same name. Janáček called his second quartet 'Intimate Letters', and in a letter to Kamila we read: 'today, it's Sunday, I'm especially sad. I've begun work on a quartet; I'll give it the name Love Letters'. Each movement evokes a certain point in their relationship, and when the quartet was near its premiere he wrote that 'you stand

behind every note, you, living, forceful, loving. The fragrance of your body, the glow of your kisses - no, really of mine. Those notes of mine kiss all of you. They call for you passionately'.

To symbolize that love, Janáček chose an instrument that embodies the feminine form both in sound and appearance: the viola d'amore. The viola d'amore is part of the old viol family; it has seven strings plus five resonating strings. The tuning is based on a major triad, not on fifths like the violin. It was very popular in the baroque era, and Antonio Vivaldi wrote several concertos for the instrument. When the viol family was replaced by the modern violin, viola and cello, the viola d'amore lay dormant for several centuries. In the twentieth century, with its renewed interest in old music and instruments, it came to life again. Paul Hindemith, among others, was responsible for resurrecting its use. Janáček fell in love with its sound and used it in his opera *Katya Kabanova*, another work that was dedicated to Kamila. When he started his second quartet, he decided that he would substitute the viola with a viola d'amore. The viola d'amore has one severe drawback: the sound that it produces is very delicate and soft, and there is no way that it can compete with the much more forceful violin and cello - even when played on gut strings. Janáček abandoned the idea and reverted to the normal viola. Unfortunately an original score has not been preserved.

The Mandelring Quartet asked viola d'amore player Gunter Teuffel to make a reconstruction of Janáček's original ideas. Teuffel worked out a performance version in which the viola d'amore is reinstated. In a very thorough and elaborate text in the booklet, he explains his decisions. Better yet, the label Audite has provided us with a video that has been published on youtube. In this clip Teuffel explains the way the instrument is built and played, and together with the other members of the quartet he plays important excerpts from the score. He tells us (in German) that the other players are holding back, but to tell the truth, what we hear is a full-blown string quartet. One must assume that the recording technician helped a little in redressing the balance.

Audite presents two recordings of the second quartet, first the published version, and next the reconstruction. An ear-catching difference occurs in the very opening, where the full chords in first and second violin are delivered pizzicato, not arco. This creates space for the fragile sound of the viola d'amore to blossom. To detect most of the other changes one really needs a score - available free of charge in the Petrucci library on the internet. In the video we notice that on the last page of the score it is not the first violin, but the viola d'amore that delivers the high embellished notes that float over the whipping chords of the other instruments.

The Mandelring Quartet consists of three siblings: Sebastian Schmidt leads, his sister Nanette plays second violin, and brother Bernhard cello. Roland Glassl is the viola player. They record exclusively for the label Audite and have won praise for their award-winning issue of the complete string quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich. Musicianship is impeccable and intonation is spot-on. The rough-and-ready attack that mars so many recordings of these very orchestrally conceived scores is fortunately missing. The large helping of general pauses in these pages can turn tricky, but here they are realized to perfection.

The recording is exemplary. The position of each player is defined very precisely, which is something that really matters in the case of the reconstructed Second Quartet. The viola d'amore is placed slightly to the right of centre, and can be followed very easily. This is a must-have for Janáček-fans and chamber music aficionados alike.

www.ResMusica.com 11 février 2011 (Jean-Luc Caron - 2011.02.11)



Les Mandelring au service de Janáček

Les Mandelring au service de Janáček

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.SA-CD.net February 7, 2011 (Polly Nomial - 2011.02.07)



Yet another magnificent disc from this wonderful ensemble.

After a...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.SA-CD.net January 4, 2011 (Beagle - 2011.01.04)



[this began as a reply to jdaniel in the Discussion thread, who asked...]

"Do...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

American Record Guide 01.03.2011.....	1
Bayern 4 Klassik - CD-Tipp 6. November 2010.....	1
BBC Radio 3 Sat 29 Sep 2012, 9.00 am.....	2
Chamber Music Magazine 16.10.2012.....	2
Classical Recordings Quarterly Spring 2011.....	2
concerti - Das Berliner Musikleben Dezember 2010.....	3
Der Tagesspiegel Nr. 20 819.....	3
Diapason No. 588 (février 2011).....	4
Diverdi Magazin siglo XX, 199/enero 2011.....	4
Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 6-2010 Dezember / Januar.....	5
Fanfare November 2011.....	5
Fanfare Issue 34:5 (May/June 2011).....	5
Fipps - Das Magazin Januar / Februar 2012.....	6
Fono Forum Januar 2011.....	6
hifi & records 2/2011.....	7
International Record Review December 2010.....	7
Kulimu 36. Jg. 2010 Heft 3.....	8
Musica dicembre 2011 - gennaio 2012.....	9
NDR Kultur 8. November 2010 um 15:20 Uhr.....	9
Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 02/2011.....	10
Ostthüringer Zeitung Jg. 20, Nr. 307.....	10
Pizzicato N° 211(3/2011).....	10
Record Geijutsu February 2011.....	11
Rondo Nr. 650 / 23. - 29.10.2010.....	11
schallplattenmann.de Ausgabe #697 vom 22. November 2010.....	11
Scherzo Jg. XXVI, N° 265.....	12
Schwäbische Zeitung 29. Dezember 2010.....	12
Stereoplay Januar 2011 - 1/2011.....	12
Strings Magazine May 2011.....	12
Stuttgarter Zeitung Nr. 61 Dienstag, 15. März 2011.....	13
Süddeutsche Zeitung Dienstag, 23. November 2010.....	13
The Absolute Sound Jan 14th, 2013.....	13
The Strad December 2010.....	14
theartsdesk.com Saturday, 23 October 2010.....	14
Wiener Zeitung Donnerstag, 20. Jänner 2011.....	14
www.allmusic.com 01.01.2011.....	15
www.ClassicsToday.com 01.05.2011.....	15
www.musicweb-international.com December 2010.....	15
www.ResMusica.com 11 février 2011.....	17
www.SA-CD.net February 7, 2011.....	17
www.SA-CD.net January 4, 2011.....	17