



Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: String Quintets in A major (Op. 18 No. 1) & in B flat major (Op. 87 No. 2) & Four Pieces for String Quartet (Op. 81)

aud 92.659



[American Record Guide](#) December 2014 (Greg Pagel - 2014.12.01)



Haydn, the “father of the string quartet”, never wrote a quintet for strings; nor did many classical composers (but Mozart did). As stated in the notes for this release, it was felt that the four instruments could achieve perfect harmony, and a “fifth person” did not add to the conversation. In the romantic era, adding richness to the inner parts was sometimes desired. The greatest quintet, Schubert’s in C, uses two cellos, but the two-violin format, as in Beethoven, Brahms, and Dvorak, is somewhat more common. Mendelssohn’s use of two violas.

Quintet 1 bears the opus number 18, though it was in fact composed after Mendelssohn’s great Octet, Op. 20. This quintet is rarely performed, possibly because it is eclipsed by the monumental Octet, but I would not call it a minor work. It is mature, yet youthful in its exuberance. As the notes tell us, Mendelssohn here is “paying tribute to Mozart in tone-color, but thinking harmonically in romantic directions”. Quintet 2 was composed almost 20 years later, and it is full-blown romanticism. It opens with a heroic theme over tremolos, and almost never loses steam. Even III, Adagio, takes full advantage of the five instruments to produce a full-bodied, broad sound. IV sounds almost orchestral. The Pieces for Quartet, Op. 81 are charming minor works discovered and published after the composer’s death.

This is Volume IV in Mandelring’s cycle of Mendelssohn’s complete chamber music for strings. I had the pleasure of reviewing Volume III (Octet, Quartet 5, and Pieces 1+2—May/June 2014), and this volume is also a delight. The Mandelring Quartet has a reputation for a homogeneous tone, and this quality is maintained when the ensemble is augmented (or doubled!). Perfect engineering, good notes. A must-have for lovers of chamber music for strings.

BBC Music Magazine June 2014 (JD - 2014.06.01)



Mendelssohn's String Quintets are hugely rewarding, rich and vital pieces. The Mandelring Quartet and Gunther Teuffel present full-on interpretations, yet occasionally push too hard and let elan spill into some aggressive sounds.

Der Reinbeker 25. Mai 2014 (50. Jahr, Nr. 10) (Peter Steder - 2014.05.26)

DER
REIN-
BEKER

Werke zweier Jubilare

Technische Perfektion? Selbstverständlich. Gestaltungskompetenz? Unbestritten. Besonders ohrenfällig: die Durchsichtigkeit des Stimmengeflechts. [...] Die jüngsten Einspielungen dürften auf lange Sicht den Rang von Referenzaufnahmen haben.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Fono Forum Juni 2014 (Marcus Stäbler - 2014.06.01)

FONO FORUM
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

Expressive Glut

Mit der vierten und letzten Folge seiner Mendelssohn-Einspielung ist das Mandelring-Quartett bei den Werken angelangt, die am seltensten aufgeführt werden: Anders als die Quartette, die seit dem Mendelssohn –Jubiläum 2009 deutlich präsenter sind, haben es die Quintette immer noch nicht so richtig geschafft, sich im Konzertrepertoire zu etablieren. Warum bloß?

Die vorzügliche Aufnahme macht die Antwort auf diese Frage nicht leichter. Gerade das zweite Quintett op. 87, 1845 entstanden, fesselt den Hörer vom ersten bis zum letzten Takt mit einer Fülle an Ideen und prägnanten Charakteren, die der Komponist zu einem Meisterwerk gebündelt hat. Vom beschwingten Walzercharme des Andante führt ein Spannungsbogen über die dramatischen Gesten im Adagio direkt bis ins Finale, dessen musikalische Stromstöße die Energie des Kopfsatzes wieder aufnehmen.

Das Mandelring-Quartett spielt hier mit genau jener expressiven Glut, die schon die vorangehenden Folgen der Mendelssohn-Aufnahme durchlodert hat, und entfacht gemeinsam mit dem Bratschisten Gunter Teuffel eine bisweilen orchestrale Klangfülle. Die reizt der Komponist im ersten Quintett op. 18 noch etwas sparsamer, aber gleichwohl bereits sehr effektsicher aus. Gerade im Kopfsatz nutzt er die Möglichkeiten der erweiterten Besetzung, um eine Steigerung von geradezu sinfonischer Kraft zu inszenieren. Umso stärker wirkt dann der Kontrast zu den elfenhaft huschenden Staccati im Scherzo und dem virtuos wirbelnden Finale. Dem Mandelring-Quartett kann man nur zum geglückten Abschluss einer hervorragenden Gesamteinspielung gratulieren. Und allen anderen Ensembles zurufen: Ran an den Speck!

Gramophone September 2014 (Caroline Gill - 2014.09.01)

GRAMOPHONE
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This is the final volume in the Mandelring Quartet's complete survey of Mendelssohn's chamber music for strings, and as its predecessors have proved themselves to be the first elements of a cycle that would be definitive once complete, the stakes are particularly high for this concluding volume.

It doesn't disappoint, with the contrast in outlook and maturity between the early works and their more adult examples as happily apparent as ever in the difference in character and youthful buoyancy they bring out in each. The phrasing, particularly in the slow movements, may be sinuous and sustained but the articulation

remains adequately spartan to allow the music to shine through as the art it was, rather than the purely cerebral achievements of a prodigy testing out his new-found skills. It drives Mendelssohn's enthralling musical ideas with the kind of conviction that makes it difficult to turn off this disc without listening from beginning to end. It is recorded with their customary clarity, too, which adds an extra dimension to their performance, particularly in the last two movements of the Four Pieces: in the more muscular passages of the Fugue, where Mendelssohn uses its subject in repeatedly different and increasingly outlandish scenarios, and in the spontaneity of the two contrasting sections of the Capriccio.

Everything the Mandelrings have to throw at these pieces shows them to their best advantage - fleet-footed bowing, tongue-in-groove intonation and ensemble, and a sense of momentum that always drives the music in the right direction. The definitive set is complete.

<http://theclassicalreviewer.blogspot.de> Wednesday, 14 May 2014 (- 2014.05.14)



This final instalment of the Mandelring Quartet's Mendelssohn series for Audite makes a worthy conclusion to a cycle that must shoot to the top of any recommendation

The performances of the Quintets cannot fail to win new enthusiasts for these wonderful works. They receive a first rate recording and there are excellent booklet notes. This final instalment in this Mendelssohn series makes a worthy conclusion to a cycle that must shoot to the top of any recommendation.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

International Record Review June 2014 (Michael Jameson - 2014.06.01)



Mendelssohn's quintets for strings provide an engaging addendum to his string quartets and to the Octet in E flat major, Op. 20, though neither is especially well known nor frequently performed. Adopting the Mozartian model, adding a second viola to the conventional string quartet instrumentation (Schubert's C major Quintet, D956 followed Boccherini's example, incorporating a second cello), they are of particular interest historically, coming from opposing phases of Mendelssohn's creative life, with two decades separating the A minor Quintet, Op. 18 of 1826 from its mature successor in B minor, Op. 87, composed in 1845.

These expert and sophisticated new performances bring the Mandelring Quartet's survey of Mendelssohn's string chamber music to its close, with the same qualities of passionate and authoritative playing that distinguished previous issues in this series (Volumes I and 3 were reviewed in July / August 2012 and January 2014 respectively). The players are joined by the violist Gunter Teuffel, who is a respected chamber musician in his own right as well as being principal viola of the SWR Radiosinfonieorchester Stuttgart.

Those following this series will probably want to obtain this recording anyway, but listeners still unfamiliar

with the Mandelrings' playing will find plenty to enjoy in these dedicated and attractive performances. The early Op. 18 Quintet, written in the composer's seventeenth year, shares much of the prodigal inventiveness and originality of Mendelssohn's other youthful works. Not quite as dazzling as the Octet, the Quintet nevertheless displays a remarkable assurance and formal mastery, and the Mandelrings play it with panache and commitment in this vibrantly wide-ranging SACD recording.

The later Op. 87 Quintet, however, seems to have had a more troubled gestation. Ignaz Moscheles described how the finale in particular unsettled the composer, who revised it several times, explaining that 'Mendelssohn purports that the last piece isn't good'. It may well prove that the finale is perhaps too lightweight to counterpoise the more sonorously reflective tone of the other movements, but whatever the case, Mendelssohn saw to it that the piece was not issued during his lifetime.

However, on the basis of this spirited and insightful new account, his concerns would seem largely unfounded, and the Mandelrings play the work fondly and attentively. But while this new disc of the String Quintets eclipses Hyperion's slightly edgy recording (now reissued on the budget Helios label) from the Raphael Ensemble, there's not a great deal to choose between these accounts in performance terms. Both offer well-judged, absorbing playing that lacks nothing technically, but Audite's SACD sonics bring a spatial depth and realism combined with huge dynamic range not matched by the Helios CD.

There remains another strong contender here, in the form of the Newton Classics coupling featuring the cellist Anner Bylsma's period-performance group, L'Archibudelli. Playing on gut strings, and using bows and instrumental set-ups which closely resemble those of Mendelssohn's era, L' Archibudelli's accounts have a lighter touch and a naturally expressive warmth which proves especially pleasing in the slow movements. What you don't get to the same degree, though, is the pungency of attack and sustaining power that modern practices afford, and the whole effect seems just a little undernourished by comparison with the excellent Mandelring accounts.

For the sake of completeness, Audite has found room here for two of the four posthumously issued pieces for string quartet, published as Mendelssohn's Op. 81 in 1849, the 'Capriccio' and 'Fugue'. If the latter seems to resemble a formally erudite contrapuntal study, the verve and brilliance of the former ensures that the Mandelring's Mendelssohn traversal reaches an exciting and assured conclusion. This has been a happy adventure from the start and this series must now be rated as a prime option of choice in these works. Michael Struck-Schloen's engaging booklet notes make out just as compelling a case for these marginalized works as the performances themselves. Recommended.

Musica numero 257 - giugno 2014 (Massimo Viazzo - 2014.06.01)



l'ensemble tedesco sfoggia solidità e sicurezza tecnica

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[Música y Educación](#) 01.01.2015 (- 2015.01.01)

Música y Educación

Cuarto volumen de la obra de cámara de Mendelssohn que el Cuarteto Mandelring...

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Muzyka21 6 (179) – czerwiec 2015 – rok XVI (Łukasz Kaczmarek - 2015.06.01)



Taką interpretację oferuje nam właśnie zespół Mandelring Quartet. Omawiając dwa pierwsze woluminy serii zwracałem uwagę na dużą klasę artystyczną zespołu, wysoki poziom wykonania i takie jego cechy, jak niezwykła emocjonalność, dramatyzm. I nic się nie zmieniło. Zespół stara się przedstawić kompozycje Mendelssohna w możliwie najbardziej pasjonujący sposób. W grze muzyków po prostu słychać szczerzy zachwyt, który udziela się i słuchaczowi.

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Record Geijutsu 10/2014 (- 2014.10.01)



Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

The Guardian Thursday 24 April 2014 (Andrew Clements - 2014.04.24)

theguardian

Mendelssohn: String Quintets Nos 1 & 2, etc review – an over-serious take lacking exuberance

Mendelssohn: String Quintets Nos 1 & 2, etc review – an over-serious take lacking exuberance

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The Strad October 2014 (Julian Haylock - 2014.10.01)

the Strad

A recording that brings out the neo-Classical side of the composer's character

These are precision-engineered performances, which delight in the composer's Mozartian deftness and structural seamlessness rather than indulge his propensity for Romantic emotional narrative. They create the ideal sound world – transparent, lighttextured, immaculately balanced, nimbly articulated – and sustain remarkably pure intonation and precise ensemble throughout.

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[Vårt Land](#) Tirsdag 20. Januar 2015 (Olav Egil Aune - 2015.01.20)

vårtland

Romantikkens svar på krystall

Strykekvartettene: Mendelssohn hadde vår i hodet. Vår og melankoli

Romantikkens svar på krystall

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[Vorarlberger Nachrichten](#) Samstag/Sonntag, 21./22. Juni 2014 (Fritz Jurmann - 2014.06.21)

VORARLBERGER
NACHRICHTEN

CD-Tipps zur Schubertiade

Gunter Teufel an der zweiten Viola fügt sich nahtlos ins Quartett, das heuer als eines der führenden Quartette seiner Generation voll Stolz sein 30-jähriges Bestehen feiert: in packenden Interpretationen mit einem Höchstmaß an Charme und Klarheit.

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www.amazon.de 13. April 2014 (Charlotte Voss - 2014.04.13)
source: <https://www.amazon.de/product-reviews/B0...>

Vielschichtig, fesselnd, professionelle Klangqualität, renommiertes Quartett

Vielschichtige Klangfarben werden bei dieser Aufnahme erlebbar. Die Qualität ist im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes berauschend. Das renommierte Mandelring Quartett mit Gunter Teuffel macht seinem Namen alle Ehre. Ich kann diese Aufnahme wirklich sehr empfehlen.

www.pizzicato.lu 27/06/2014 (- 2014.06.27)



Ein Kraftwerk

Noch lange nach der letzten Note ist der Adrenalin-Spiegel hoch. Mit berstender Energie reißen uns das Mandelring Quartett und Günter Teuffel mit in einen Strudel von Emotionen, die sie unverblümt und kompromisslos ausleben.

Hier ist kein Platz für pathetisch-romantisches Gehabe, das Innenleben der Partituren wird geradezu schonungslos aufgedeckt. Dies gelingt nur dank der totalen Hingabe der fünf Musiker, dank ihres unverbrüchlichen Einvernehmens in musikalischen Fragen und einer stupenden Quintett-Virtuosität.

Nur selten hat man Kammermusik von der ersten Note an so zupackend, innerlich aufgewühlt erlebt, so rhetorisch fesselnd als hätte man eben einen Energieriegel verschluckt. Ein krönender Abschluss dieser epochalen Mendelssohn-Integrale.

With a totally committed and highly energetic playing, the Mandelring Quartet and Günter Teuffel achieve a gripping and shaking performance. A fabulous last disc for an epochal Mendelssohn series.

www.pizzicato.lu 31/03/2014 (Remy Franck - 2014.03.31)



Mendelssohns Reden

Die vierte Folge der gesamten Kammermusik von Felix Mendelssohn mit dem Mandelring Quartett ist die würdige Nachfolgerin der drei ersten Volumes. Die beiden Quintette (mit Gunter Teuffel auf der Bratsche) und die 4 Stücke für Streichquartett op. 81 bieten wiederum ein bestens ausgewogenes, perfekt durchleuchtetes, aber immer auch intensives und daher packendes Spiel. Die geradezu soghaften Sätze 1 und 3 des Opus 18 sowie die Ecksätze des Opus 87 sind dafür gute Beispiele. Auch die Bedeutsamkeit, welche die langsamen Sätze erlangen, zeigen, wie sehr sich die Musiker diesen Mendelssohn einverleibt haben, wie sehr er durch sie zum Sprechen, mehr noch, zum Reden kommt.

Die Klarheit des Klangbilds, wo kein Instrument das andere in den Klangschatten stellt, ist ein weiterer Vorzug einer singulären musikalischen Spitzenproduktion.

This 4th volume confirms our impressions from earlier releases: Mandelring's Mendelssohn is musically and technically outstanding. Through this quartet, the composer becomes one really great orator.

www.SA-CD.net August 30, 2014 (Polly Nomial - 2014.08.30)



A fitting conclusion to the Mandelring's Mendelssohn cycle

Audite's engineering team, as ever, serve the music and the Mandelring's impeccably well. A very believable sense of positioning and presence comes across.
Very strongly recommended (along with the other issues of this superb cycle).

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