



Camille Saint-Saëns: Piano Quintet & String Quartet No. 1

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This has been another bumper-crop year of new releases from which I could easily have selected twice the allowed number of entries for my 2017 Want List. It's the weeding-out that's always hard. Or, as Brahms is reputed to have once said, "Composing is easy; it's letting the superfluous notes slip under the table." I wouldn't characterize any of my runners-up as superfluous. In fact, I think they deserve honorable mention, even if they did get cut from the final list of five.

Here are the also-rans, why I initially considered them, and why I reluctantly ended up eliminating them:

[...] It certainly can't be said that Saint-Saëns is an obscure or neglected composer, but his chamber works in particular haven't fared all that well on record. And that is why a new release on Audite by the Quartetto di Cremona playing Saint-Saëns's Piano Quintet in A Minor and String Quartet in E Minor in exhilarating performances earns a place on my 2017 Want List for some of the best chamber music-making I've heard this year.