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11/09-(5)

Title:
Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951)
Complete Piano Music

Artist:
Hardy Rittner
Johann Baptist Streicher Piano (1870)
from the collection of Gert Hecher, Vienna
Steinway, D Grand Piano (1901)

1 Hybrid-SACD

Order Number:
MDG 904 1593-6

UPC-Code:



Piano Laureate

The Echo Klassik laureate Hardy Rittner now presents the complete piano works of Arnold Schönberg on historical instruments – and here hearing is marveling. Such a project idea is only logical, given the fact that Schönberg grew up in a late-romantic sound world. The two grand pianos heard on this recording are the composer's contemporaries: the "Streicher" from Gert Hecher's Vienna collection is from 1870, and the lovingly restored MDG "Steinway" was built in 1901. The ideal instrumentarium for the tracing of Schönberg's musical development over the course of three decades!

Great Emancipator

When Schönberg wrote his *Three Piano Pieces* in 1894, he was still an autodidact as a composer. Brahms and Wagner (!) were the twenty-year-old's two models. It is thus hardly surprising that the Brahms piano cycles published not too long before left their traces on Schönberg's early work. Fifteen years later the *Three Piano Pieces* op. 11 were of a very different stamp. Schönberg had by then found his way to a new compositional quality: traditional tonality dissolves, dissonance emancipates itself.

Radical Innovator

Schönberg's *Six Little Piano Pieces* op. 19 from 1911 are marked by radical brevity. Anton Webern was so impressed by this composition that he forthwith made it the standard by which to measure his own achievement. Schönberg himself instead set out in quest of a "new order" and in the *Five Piano Pieces*

op. 23 and the *Suite* op. 25 seems to have found it in the early twenties. Clear references to Bach – and not only such references – make the *Suite* a splendid exemplar of the neoclassical fashion of that time. In his mid-fifties Schönberg demonstrated with the *Piano Pieces* op. 33a and 33b that the traditional sonata mode of thought was not foreign even to a fiery innovator like him.

Master Musician

On this recording Hardy Rittner shows that he can deal just as expertly with the historical instrument's special challenges as he does with the perfection of a mature Steinway concert grand piano. Here sound worlds meet and are blended into a unity of consummate art.

Johannes Brahms

Early Piano Music Vol. 1

Sonata No. 2 op. 2; Variations op. 9, Ballades op. 10
MDG 604 1494-2 (CD)
MDG 904 1494-6 (Hybrid-SACD)

Early Piano Music Vol. 2

Sonatas op. 1 and 5
MDG 904 1538-6 (Hybrid-SACD)

