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04/09-(5)

Title:
Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835-1921)
Piano Quartets

Musicians:
Mozart Piano Quartet

1 Hybrid-SACD

Order Number:
MDG 943 1519-6

UPC-Code:



222[®]
RECORDING

Quartet Catalogue

The official list of the compositions of Camille Saint-Saëns contains only one piano quartet, but he actually contributed three works to the repertoire of this chamber genre. Apart from the well-known op. 41, this recording by the Mozart Piano Quartet also presents a quartet composed by Saint-Saëns while a student in the middle of the nineteenth century but not published until 1992 and the *Barcarolle* op. 108, which he set as a piano quartet only the second time around.

Natural Talent

Camille Saint-Saëns revealed his great musical talent while still a young boy; he began composing at the age of seven and was admitted to the Paris Conservatory at thirteen, graduating with distinction in the fields of organ and composition at the age of nineteen. Instrumental music was his great love. He committed himself to this genre as an outstanding pianist and dedicated most of his compositions to it – which initially checked his career because the French public of the time preferred vocal music and German (!) classical composers. The situation first changed in 1870-71, when French national pride led to the founding of the Société Nationale de Musique, which from then on lent its support to chamber music of French authorship.

Practical Considerations

The first quartet, unpublished during the composer's lifetime, is structured in the traditional three movements. An extensive first movement is followed by a sumptuous middle part of song character and a light-footed, virtuoso concluding movement. Twenty years later, when Saint-Saëns composed his highly effective op. 41, he drew on developments in German chamber music and wrote four motivically interconnected movements. The *Barcarolle*

op. 108 was composed in 1898 as a quartet for violin, violoncello, harmonium, and piano. Eleven years later Saint-Saëns substituted a viola for the harmonium so that the piece's former rare instrumentation "would not condemn it to oblivion."

Rising Stars

The Mozart Piano Quartet rose to the uppermost echelon of the international music world within the shortest time after 2000. This success is hardly surprising since its members are four international soloists as well as the winners and finalists of many international competitions: Paul Rivinius (piano), Mark Gothoni (violin), Hartmut Rohde (viola), and Peter Hörr (violoncello). Their interest in new repertoire makes them a dream match for MDG. And the verdict of the press: "With audible passion" (*Crescendo*); "With enthusiastic advocacy" (*Gramophone*); "Full of passion" (*classicrotodayfrance*).

Mel Bonis: Piano Quartets
MDG 643 1424-2

Ludwig van Beethoven
Eroica op. 55 (arr. by F. Ries), Piano Quartet op.16
MDG 643 1454-2

Antonin Dvorak
Piano Quartets op. 23 and 87
MDG 643 1176-2

Richard Strauss
Piano Quartet op. 13, Ständchen, Festmarsch,
Liebesliedchen, Arabischer Tanz
MDG 643 1355-2

