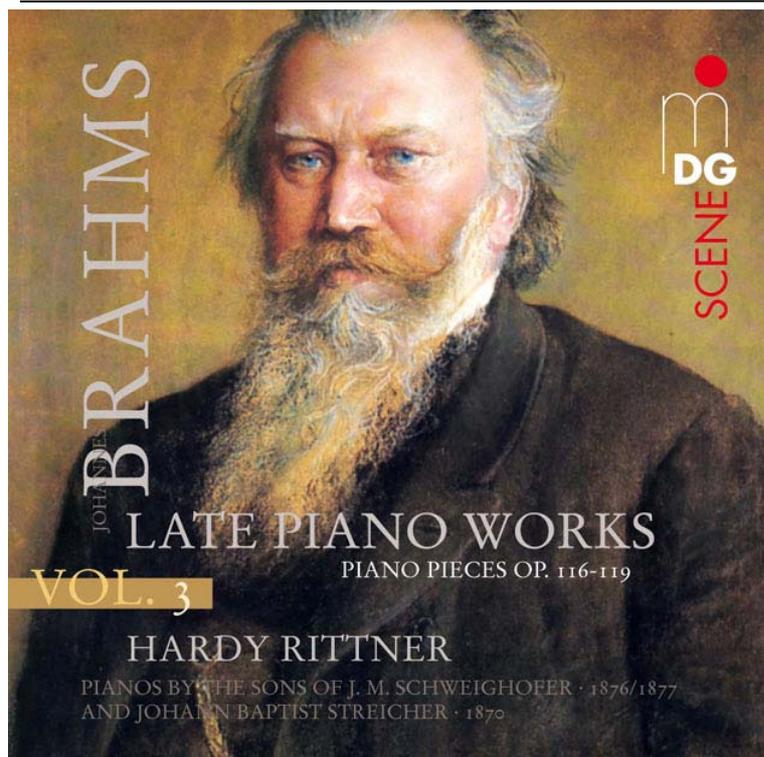


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05/11-(5)

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)  
Piano Works Vol. 3  
Late Piano Works op. 116 - 119

**Hardy Rittner, piano**  
(J. M. Schweighofer's Sons 1876/1877,  
Johann Baptist Streicher & Son 1870)

1 Hybrid-SACD

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RECORDING

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#### Audio Sensation

Hardy Rittner has done what no other pianist before him has ever done before: he has recorded Brahms with tonal and musical perfection on original instruments from the composer's time. The instrumental hurdles toward producing a rendering that would match the modern sound precision familiar to us today apparently seemed to be too high. After two volumes with the composer's early oeuvre, his last two piano cycles from 1892-93 now follow on a grand piano by Johann Baptist Streicher from 1870 and on a grand piano by Johann Michael Schweighofer's Sons from 1876-77. Hardy Rittner conjures up extraordinary sound worlds with a master's natural ease on instruments from the Hecher Collection of Vienna – an audio sensation!

#### Brilliant Cycles

Brahms described the Intermezzo No. 1 from op. 119 as follows in a letter to Clara Schumann: "It is teeming with dissonances! Every measure and every note must sound like ritard, as if one wanted to imbibe melancholy out of each one of them." The piano sonata era was long over for Brahms when he began his late oeuvre. He now joined together intermezzi, caprices, rhapsodies, ballades, and romances to form four cycles that met with an enthusiastic response not only from his friend, the Bach scholar Philipp Spitta, who wrote that "the piano pieces" are "perhaps the most brilliant and profoundest music that I know by you."

#### Cosmic Dimensions

In his late oeuvre for solo piano Johannes Brahms did indeed gather together the whole cosmos of his music. The twenty works look to the past and to the future – very much to the liking of Arnold Schönberg, who even fifty years after the death of his fellow composer wrote of "Brahms the Progressive" in an essay.

#### Distinguished Echo

Vol. 1 brought Hardy Rittner the title of "Young Artist of the Year 2009" from Echo Klassik. For his Schönberg recordings – also for the first time on historical instruments – he received the Echo Klassik award for the Solo Recording of the Year 2010. The critics raved about this "benchmark recording" – a distinction also certainly applying to this sympathetic and in every respect splendidly produced new release.

#### Johannes Brahms Early Piano Music Vol. 1

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



#### Early Piano Music Vol. 2

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



#### Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951)

Complete Piano Music  
MDG 904 1593-6 (Hybrid-SACD)

