



03/14 (5)

Iwan Müller (1786-1854)
Concertos for Clarinet and
Orchestra No. 3, 4, 5, 6
Duo concertante

Friederike Roth and Johannes
Gmeinder, clarinet (Duo)
Philharm. Orchester des
Staatstheaters Cottbus
Evan Christ, conductor

Hybrid-SACD

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RECORDING

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Inventive Instrumentalist

Friederike Roth, the energetic clarinetist of the Berolina Ensemble of musical explorers, has again made a new discovery. With reinforcements from the Orchestra of the Brandenburg State Theatre in Cottbus, she surprises us with four clarinet concertos by Iwan Müller (Iwan Müller), who was second to none in his contributions to the development of the clarinet during the early years of the nineteenth century. His *clarinette omnitonique* first enabling chromatic playing on more than four octaves was greeted with enthusiasm by contemporary virtuosos in Europe's music capitals. To highlight the advantages of his invention, he wrote a number of solo concertos and in this way demonstrated not only his forward-looking spirit of invention but also a fine intuition for highly effective music of the highest quality and with a popular flair.

Versatile Virtuoso

Like many genial inventors, Müller was ahead of his times; it was not until almost thirty years later that the chromatic clarinet was approved by a commission at the Paris Conservatory. Unfortunately, however, the commission decided in favor of a model by another applicant. Müller's factory went bankrupt, and he had to continue to concertize as a virtuoso – fortunately for us – with works of his own composition. He did not closely adhere to the classical instrumental concerto; instead, he was fascinated by the Italian opera – the perfect musical vehicle for displaying his instrument's astonishing versatility suggesting the special qualities of the human voice.

Original Orchestrations

Iwan Müller, born to German parents, first registered his musical presence at the court of the tsars in St. Petersburg. The Concerto in A minor of melancholy character and with brooding Slavic passages underscores this fact. The festive Fifth Concerto includes timpani and trumpets, and its highly original treatment of the woodwinds already anticipates the romanticism of a Carl Maria von Weber. In the Sixth Concerto Müller pulls off a formal stroke of genius: many years would pass before any composer – the great Franz Liszt himself – would venture to employ a similar thematic combination of the three movements to form a dramatic whole.

Vibrant Ventures

The Duo Concertante has always enjoyed great popularity. Here Johannes Gmeinder is Friederike Roth's marvelous duo partner. The Rossini-like charm of this musical gem is conveyed to the best in the spirited accompaniment of the Cottbus musicians led by the General Music Director Evan Christ. And in MDG's three-dimensional 2+2+2 sound, listeners will soon find themselves immersed in the vibrant atmosphere prevailing during the recording sessions for this SACD new discovery.