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01/18-(4)

George Onslow (1784-1853)

Quintet op. 81

Sextet op. 30

Ma'alot Quintet

Markus Becker, piano

Nabil Shehata, double bass

1 Hybrid-SACD

222[®]
RECORDING

MDG 903 2012-6

UPC-Code:



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High Society

Already during his lifetime George Onslow was known as the "French Beethoven." This extraordinary distinction earned above all for his manifold chamber music does not do complete justice to his special rank. On this SACD Markus Becker teams up with the Ma'alot Quintet for a closer look at Onslow's virtuoso side. Functioning as virtuoso concertos for the salon, both the Wind Quintet op. 81 and the Sextet op. 30 fully satisfied the discriminating taste of Parisian high society.

French Revolution

George Onslow was five years old when the French Revolution began and completely disrupted the life of his noble family with British roots. The young Onslow spent the next two decades traveling throughout Europe, received instruction from Dussek in Hamburg, Cramer in London, and finally from the famous Antonín Reicha in Paris after his return to France. This rich and varied experience is reflected in Onslow's extremely individual personal style making him, next to Berlioz, certainly the most important French composer of his times.

German Technology

Onslow began his occupation with wind instruments relatively late. The flute and other members of the wind family first inspired his interest when innovations like the ring-keyed technique developed by the inventive Theobald Böhm enormously expanded the range of possibilities for their use. Especially the late wind quintet op. 81 shows a wide scope: as for the

musical substance Onslow puts the airy, serenade-like genre on the same level as the alleged graver chamber music for strings.

Fine Resolution

In this respect the Sextet op. 30 is a singular exception and even a double one: certainly more out of business considerations than for artistic reasons, Onslow also published the salon concerto in a version with string quintet. The Ma'alot Quintet and Markus Becker present the wind version with captivating verve. The fine resolution of the instrumental colors and the room sound registered with filigree precision of course come across especially well on this SACD's 3-D multichannel reproduction. However, the stereo version also conveys a vivid impression of why it was that this work even twenty years after its composition ranked as one of the most popular pieces in the Parisian salons.

Gioacchino Rossini: Harmoniemusik

La Cenerentola, Tancredi

MDG 345 1583-2

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

A Midsummer Night's Dream op. 61

Quartet op. 44, 3; Nocturno op. 24

MDG 345 1766-2

Ludwig van Beethoven

Harmoniemusik

MDG 345 1476-2

