

## CD REVIEW 104

### **TRIO ANIMA MUNDI Romantic piano trios.**

Divine Art dda 25102

Two CDS for the price of one (83.46)

Rochelle Ughetti (violin), Miranda Brockman (cello)

Kenji Fujimura (piano)

HURLSTONE Piano Trio in G

MIRIAM HYDE Fantasy Trio

MAX D'OLLONE Piano Trio A minor

WIREN Piano Trio no 1 Op 6

As to chamber music this has to be the CD of the year and, perhaps, many years to come. It is a delightful double disc of unusual piano trios, beautifully played and very well recorded.



This trio hail from Melbourne and were formed in 2008 and have presented an annual subscription concert series ever since. They have been described as a trio of vitality, charm and aplomb. So be it, but that welcome accolade is inadequate in itself.

They have a wide repertoire and this, in itself, is highly commendable and sets them apart. Composers include Elfrida, Andrea, Babajanian, Bernstein, Dubois, Farranc, Ferdinand, Goetz, James Hobson, Juon, Komanetsky, Turina and Walton. They also play the standard repertoire.

The British composer William Hurlstone lived from 1876 to 1906 and studied with Stanford at the Royal College of Music. Hurlstone wrote a piano concerto and a piano sonata, a trio for clarinet, bassoon and piano, among other things.

His music is of high quality but achieved no fame. He died of bronchial asthma.

This Piano Trio is in four movements, allegro moderato in 3/4 time, an andante in E, molto vivace in 6/4 time in G, and an Allegro commodo in common time which hovers between B flat and G minor.

This excellent ensemble avoids playing the first movement as a waltz or like a Palm Court Orchestra. Its simplicity is disarming and there is a welcome simplicity. The slow movement is gentle but not weak and the third movement is both humorous and cheerful and the finale sometimes sparkles.

It may not be great music but I know a lot of music that is said to be great but is not as good as this.

Miriam Hyde was an Australian composer who lived from 1913 to 2005. Her work may be well-known in Australia but not elsewhere. This trio is an attractive unassuming piece played with affection and devotion.

Max d'Ollone lived from 1875 to 1959. He won the Prix de Rome in 1897 for his cantata *Fredegone* and composed operas, ballets, cantatas, lyric dramas and comedy ones as well. He taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1922 and one of his students was the Swiss composer, Willy Burkhard.

D'Ollone's Trio is in four movements, allegro non troppo e ben deciso, which is sometimes passionate, an adagio in 12/8 with chords of tenths in the left hand. There are some succulent harmonies but the piano part lacks variety in the adagio and, perhaps, the movement is a little too long. The scherzo is mainly in E and is fun although the momentum is lost. The finale is also in 6/8 with some effective modulations.

Despite its shortcomings, it is wonderfully played. This is a top flight ensemble and they are to be highly commended on their repertoire.

The first of Dag Wiren's two piano trios completes this recital. He was born in 1905 and died in 1986. He has five symphonies and five string quartets to his name, three concertos for violin, cello and piano respectively, stage works and nine film scores dating from 1942 to 1961.

The worrying thing about his music is its lack of development, such as you get in Schubert, and, sometimes, his music is brief as if he has run out of ideas. This is evident in this score. The first two movements are very good with an excellent piano part but convention sets in with the third movement, a fughetta at one minute 12 seconds, and a passacaglia.

That aside, the playing is sumptuous; the texture superb; the balance impeccable and we are in the presence of three amazing musicians. They are not out to be showman but to be faithful to the music which they are.



This is the chamber music disc of the year. You will lose out if you do not buy it.

I cannot recommend it highly enough. Nor, I suggest, can anyone else.

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