CD REVIEW 97

BEETHOVEN

Piano Trios volume one

Piano Trio in G op 1 no 2; Piano Trio in D The Ghost Op 70 no 1; V ariations on an original theme in E flat Op 44; Allegretto in B flat WoO39. Gould Piano Trio (Lucy Gould (violin) Alice Neary (cello) Benjamin Frith (piano) Somm Celeste SOMMCD09114.

When one hears a disc like this, one is reminded yet again that of all composers, Beethoven is the greatest of them all!

I loved this disc and the performances.



This is a recording of a live concert at St George's, Bristol and the first disc in a project to record all Beethoven's works for piano trio.

There are a few comments which I want to deal with quickly. The violin at the beginning is sometimes a little shrill particularly on the G at the end of a bar before it plays a chord which may be a recording fault. The cello is sometimes a little distant and that also may be a recording fault.

One of the great things about Beethoven is his originality and surprises and, in this, he is like Haydn. All great music must be original.

The G major Trio has an opening slow introduction of two minutes and then launches into a real allegro full of wit and high spirits and played with great aplomb. The first movement repeat is not made. But, what a joy this is and Beethoven like Haydn could write a real allegro. Edwardian composers could not. The finale is ecstatic and infectious full of ideas and played with real enjoyment which enraptures the listener.

Beethoven is the greatest of us all.

It is a pity that some works are given nicknames. The Ghost does not suggest anything to me no more that the Moonlight suggests moonlight on the lake. The slow movement of Op 70 no 1 does not conjure up eeriness to me but is an example of how well Beethoven can set a scene, abstract though it be.

The lyrical music is played with a deep beauty and the finale simply fizzes and, please note, the concentration is on the music not showing off. Benjamin Frith is at the piano, not Lang Lang.

Totally enjoyable.

The Variations Op 44 are splendid and worthy of promotion. Their neglect is criminal and for those who think Beethoven is 'heavy' enjoy the Allegretto in B flat, a work of warmth.



This trio is very good and 'home grown.' We don't have to depend on the Americans and central Europeans. All three players are soloists in their own right but they do work well together.

Another amazing thing is that Beethoven does not turn these trios in to piano concertos unlike Granados and Tchaikovsky and Frith is to be further commendation for being part of a team ... and a very good team as well.

Choice!

Highly recommended and, yes, Beethoven is the greatest of us all, as this excellent CD confirms.

Thank you Siva Oke and the Gould Piano Trio.

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