



The RIAS Amadeus Quartet Recordings - Modernism

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Audiophile Audition May 29, 2015
(Gary Lemco - 2015.05.29)



The performance [...] has been conscientious, intense, and sonorously engaging.

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BBC Music Magazine July 2016 (Julian Haylock - 2016.07.01)



Captured variously between 1950 and 1956, the Amadeus compensate for the occasional rough edge with gripping musical intensity in Britten's and Tippett's Second Quartets and Bartók's Fourth and Sixth.

Crescendo Magazine Le 21 septembre 2015 (Bernard Postiau - 2015.09.21)



Une facette méconnue du Quatuor Amadeus

En résumé, un complément indispensable à la connaissance de cet ensemble majeur dans l'interprétation du quatuor à cordes au 20ème siècle.

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Die Presse 02.04.2015 (Wilhelm Sinkovicz - 2015.04.02)

Die Presse

Amadeus Quartett: „Modernism“

Eine Offenbarung: So musikalisch kann man Werke von Britten und Tippett spielen!

Eine Offenbarung: So musikalisch kann man diese Werke bei aller analytischen Durchdringung spielen!

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Gramophone July 2015 (Rob Cowan - 2015.07.01)

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Amadeus disc premieres

One of my fondest concert memories from the late 1960s is of hearing the Amadeus Quartet in recital at a north London school playing Bartok's Fourth Quartet, a work that on first acquaintance thrilled me to the core, though my first record of the work – a very different sort of performance – was by the original Fine Arts Quartet (Saga LP, Music & Arts CD). Sadly the Amadeus never recorded a Bartok cycle so the appearance in the fourth volume of Audite's collection of the quartet's 'RIAS recordings' of the Fourth and Sixth Quartets, both recorded a good decade before I saw that Hampstead performance, is particularly valuable.

The second CD opens with Matyas Seiber's Third Quartet, Quartetto lirico, which is noticeably influenced by Bartok, the Sixth Quartet especially, and the Amadeus play it marvellously well. The opening minute or so of Bartok's Fourth sounds a little uncertain: the pizzicato Scherzo is rather measured and the wildcat finale lacks the sort of animal vigour that the Juilliards, the Veghs and indeed the Fine Arts brought to it. The performance's highlight is Martin Lovett's passionately rhapsodic cello solo in the slow third movement. The Sixth's first movement is at times rhythmically ambiguous, as if the players were just a few short steps short of mastering its form, whereas they're nearer the target in the dry, even OTT humour that fills the two middle movements. Best by far is the closing Mesto, music filled with profound sadness, a sadness that the quartet members, or the three of them who had been exiled from Europe, will have felt as deeply as the composer himself. Ironically it's the all-British first disc that finds them truly in their element, the Second Quartets of Britten and Tippett, music they seem to connect with intuitively. Both performances are memorably expressive.

Kulimu 41. Jg. 2015 Heft 1/2 (bs - 2015.10.01)



Intensive Spannungen gehen einher mit exquisiter Homogenität. Nie die große Phrase aus den Augen verlierend, wird das Vorwärtsdrängen der Musik und die dynamisch feurige Dramatik in ihren Interpretationen besonders spürbar. [...] Die Wiederbelebung dieser alten Aufnahmen, die in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Deutschlandradio Kultur entstanden, sind ein absolutes Muss für jeden Musikliebhaber und jede Plattensammlung.

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Musica N° 270 ottobre 2015 (Stefano Pagliantini - 2015.10.01)



[...] anche qui l'adesione al verbo della modernità è così intimamente vera e sentita da porre queste esecuzioni come un unicum tra le interpretazioni dei lavori bartókiani. A confermare l'eccellenza della realizzazione la qualità generalmente alta della registrazione e la cura delle note che accompagnano i due CD.

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Record Geijutsu 08/2015 (- 2015.08.01)



Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

WDR 3 TonArt 22.05.2015, 15.05 - 17.45 Uhr (Wibke Gerking - 2015.05.22)



Das faszinierende an der Aufnahme ist, dass uns das Amadeus-Quartett hier einmal nicht als Anwälte von Mozart und Beethoven begegnet, sondern als Zeugen ihrer eigenen Zeit. Sie spielen das, was gerade angesagt war um sie herum, im London der 50er Jahre

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www.artalinna.com 16 août 2015 (Jean-Charles Hoffelé - 2015.08.16)



Les modernistes

[...] ouvre une porte inconnue dans l'histoire d'une formation légendaire.

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www.classical.net 11.08.2015 (José Luis Bermúdez - 2015.08.11)



This set is the fourth in a six volume series with 25 CDs in total. The recordings all come from studio performances recorded in the post-war period by the RIAS radio station. RIAS stands for Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor (Broadcasting in the American Sector). The engineers at Audite have remastered the original studio tapes to produce first-rate sound quality. The Tippet recording is slightly worse quality than the others, but still perfectly acceptable. And, as is typical for Audite, the liner notes (by Rüdiger Albrecht) are detailed and informative. This is an exceptionally well-produced set, highly recommended for historical and musical value.

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www.concertonet.com 09/15/2015 (Gilles d'Heyres - 2015.09.15)



Audite a déniché une perle en même temps qu'un inédit dans la discographie du pianiste américain, emporté trop jeune par la leucémie. Le geste est foudroyant, la technique monumentale, l'inspiration riche en trouvailles. Une version très personnelle [...] ce portrait d'un génie du clavier, foudroyé en plein vol.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.concertonet.com 04/15/2016 (CL - 2016.04.15)



Le «modernisme» du Quatuor Amadeus

Techniquement à l'aise, ils sondent les profondeurs et libèrent avec une force contenue les regrets, les ironies, les détresses, les fulgurances et les rages. L'ensemble bénéficie d'une prise de son claire, d'une belle présence lumineuse. Vivement recommandé.

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www.new-classics.co.uk 04.10.2016 (- 2016.10.04)
 source: <http://www.new-classics.co.uk/html/chamb...>

new classics

Celebrated for their performances of the Viennese Classics, the Amadeus Quartet dominated the British chamber music scene for over 40 years and was one of the most respected ensembles of the twentieth century. The Quartet championed the music of their contemporaries, and for the radio they recorded string quartets written by the major English composers of their time, Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett. The Hungarian composer Mátyás Seiber introduced the Amadeus Quartet to the works of his fellow countryman Béla Bartók. By recording Henry Purcell's string fantasias, they followed references between Britten and the cradle of English chamber music. For volume IV in the RIAS Amadeus Quartet Recordings series the ensemble plays twentieth century Hungarian and English works. The Baroque composer Henry Purcell is also represented - as a reference point for Benjamin Britten's Second String Quartet. This edition substantially broadens the view of the Amadeus Quartet and demonstrates the inquisitiveness and assuredness with which Norbert Brainin and his three colleagues explored the music of their contemporaries. Under the direction of Michael Tippett, a group of young composers, including Mátyás Seiber and Peter Racine Fricker, wrote new string quartets for the Amadeus Quartet. Apart from Michael Tippett, it was first and foremost Benjamin Britten who, around 1950, established his reputation as Britain's most renowned composer. His Second String Quartet was conceived as a reminiscence of Henry Purcell, a progenitor of English music, for the 250th anniversary of his death. Two of Purcell's string fantasias and a chaconne, on which Britten had based his work, have therefore been included in this edition, and are released for the first time in the Amadeus Quartet's interpretation. The Hungarian composer Mátyás Seiber - who, like the members of the Amadeus Quartet, had to emigrate to Britain after the Nazis had seized power in Germany - wrote his Quartetto lirico in the spirit of the Viennese School, particularly that of Alban Berg. He also championed the string quartets of Béla Bartók, whose Fourth and Sixth Quartets are also available for the first time as performances by the Amadeus Quartet. Audite's excellent series of RIAS Amadeus Quartet Recordings is scheduled to include six volumes, exclusively presenting performances released for the first time on CD. As always, the ensemble's performances on this two-disc set of recordings from 1950-1956 demonstrate superb musicianship as well as the Amadeus Quartet's customary warmth and exuberance.

www.pizzicato.lu 09/06/2015 (Guy Engels - 2015.06.09)

pizzicato
 Remy Franck's Blog about Classical Music

Ausnahmekönner

Nach der Aufarbeitung der Wiener Klassik (Mozart, Beethoven und Schubert) widmet sich die jüngste Veröffentlichung historischer Aufnahmen des 'Amadeus Quartett' dem britischen und ungarischen Repertoire des 20. Jahrhunderts. Auf CD 1 sind jeweils das 2. Quartett von Britten und Tippett eingespielt sowie drei Werke von Henry Purcell.

CD 2 beinhaltet das 'Quartetto lirico' von Matyas Seiber und die Quartett 4 und 6 von Bela Bartok. Wir befinden uns in Zeiten des Umbruchs nach zwei Weltkriegen, die die Menschheit komplett aus dem Gleichgewicht geworfen und die Suche nach neuen kulturellen Referenzen und Orientierungen unabdingbar gemacht hat.

Sämtliche eingespielten Kompositionen sind Zeugnisse dieser Suche, die dennoch nie ganz ohne Referenzen an die klassisch-romantische Tradition – bei Britten sogar an die Barockzeit – auskommt.

Das 'Amadeus Quartett' deutet diese Nachklänge zerbrochener Welten mit fesselnder musikalischer Tiefe

– manchmal scharfzüngig, vorwiegend jedoch zart, mit fiebriger Intensität (z.B. das wunderbare Cello-Solo im 4. Bartok-Quartett). Zieht man zudem die Aufnahmebedingungen in Betracht – ein quasi Live-Mitschnitt ohne die Möglichkeit kosmetischer Nachbesserungen – liefern diese hervorragend überarbeiteten Studio-Aufnahmen aus den 50er Jahren einen weiteren Beweis der Ausnahmestellung des Amadeus Quartett.

Gripping performances of unusual musical insight and depth.



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