

Hans-Christian Schweiker



Johannes Brahms: The Complete Piano Trios

Johannes Brahms

2SACD aud 91.668

Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk MDR Kulturradio, Take 5 - 08. April 2013 (- 2013.04.08)



Glücklicherweise ist das Trio Testore ein Ensemble, das wie ein Organismus zu agieren vermag. Das ist gerade bei so emotional aufgeladener Musik keineswegs eine leichte Übung. [Sie] kultivieren hier einen Trioklang, der selten geworden ist: Tiefempfunden und auf einer Welle schwimmend, mit gemeinsamem Atem, gerade auch in den langsamen Sätzen. Kammermusik der wirklich erlesenen Art.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

International Record Review May 2013 (Nigel Simeone - 2013.05.01)



It's good to have two new sets of the Brahms Piano Trios, and though both are described as 'The Complete Piano Trios', the contents of each one is different. The Trio Testore set includes the early and the revised versions of the B major Trio, Op. 8, along with the two other trios for piano, violin and cello. The Smetana Trio includes only the revision of Op. 8, but its Supraphon set adds the trios with horn and clarinet. Only one recent set know brings all of these together: the Gould Piano Trio includes both versions of Op. 8, the Trios, Opp. 87 and 101 and the Horn and Clarinet Trios; it even adds the spurious (but beautiful) A major Piano Trio in an invaluable box of three discs.

Let me try to summarize the qualities of the two new sets. The first thing to say about the Trio Testore set is that it has been exceptionally well recorded by Audite: a really natural sound caught in an ideal acoustic. But while this ensemble's collective sonority is often beautiful, there is a tendency to micro-manage the expressiveness of the music: this is highly nuanced playing and, while flexibility is certainly an admirable trait in Brahms performances, I find these players prone to over-shape phrases: they are apparently reluctant to let the music speak for itself. The Trio Testore is also inclined to take its time in places: the first movement of the B major Trio – especially in its original version – is arguably a little too expansive for its own good in this performance. Having said that, there is much to enjoy in the playing: it's heartfelt, sophisticated, affectionate and polished. The snag – to my ears at least – is that it all feels a little too self-conscious, and this can rob the music of some of its tensile strength in, for example, the first movement of the C major Trio. Collectors looking for new recordings of these works might respond more positively than I did to the Trio Testore's elegantly sculpted approach, so I'd certainly suggest having a listen: this is an imaginative ensemble captured in superb sound.

The Smetana Trio is a different matter. This is a very fine set marked by passionate, big-hearted and exciting playing. It has none of what – to me – is the rather fussy overexpressiveness of the Trio Testore,

but it is red-blooded and eloquent. Among other things, I like the quite swift 'Andante con moto' second movement of the C major Trio (more than a minute quicker than the Trio Testore and a little swifter than the Goulds) and all the way through I greatly enjoyed the controlled energy and warmth of these performances. I know I'll return to them many times in the future: these players have a wonderful sense of musical line and a collective sense of musical direction that is powerful and engrossing.

So is either of these new releases a Brahms trio cycle to own? While I've my doubts about the Trio Testore, I'd say a most definite 'yes' in the case of the Smetana Trio: there is spontaneous engagement with the music and such a heroic sweep to the playing. Moreover, the clarinet and horn soloists are extremely fine as well (Ludmila Peterková's clarinet playing in the Op. 114 Trio is absolutely magical), and all five performances are of very high quality. The recording is a little boxy compared with Audite's sound but it's eminently acceptable and the musical rewards are compelling.

The Smetana Trio is thus at or near the top of my short-list of relatively recent recordings of these glorious works, but so, too, are the discs by the Gould Piano Trio – available in a three-disc set at a special price that includes both incarnations of Op. 8 and the A major Trio as well as all the works in the Supraphon set. Comparing the performances of these two ensembles makes me very glad to have both: the Smetana Trio is sometimes more muscular, a little more grainy and – unsurprisingly – more Central European in its approach, while the Goulds have a transparency and liveness that are vastly appealing. I've not discussed classic accounts by the likes of the Beaux Arts Trio (Decca), the Stern-Rose-Istomin Trio (Sony) or the Trio di Trieste (DG), all of which belong in a comprehensive collection of Brahms chamber music on record. So, too, do the younger generation of Brahmsians, now so impressively represented by the Gould Piano Trio and the Smetana Trio.

<http://theclassicalreviewer.blogspot.de> Tuesday, 30 April 2013 (- 2013.04.30)



An irresistible new release from Audite featuring the Trio Testore in recordings of Brahms complete Piano Trios that include the original version of his Op. 8

It is the Trio Testore that made me hear afresh the three main trios in performances where they play their hearts out. They have been given a sensationally good recording, so detailed and natural. With the Testores including a recording of the original version of Op.8 this new release is irresistible.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

WDR 3 WDR 3 TonArt, 22.05.2013: 15.05 - 17.45 Uhr (Jörg Lengersdorf - 2013.05.22)



Trio Testore spielt Brahms Klaviertrios

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klassik.com 16.05.2013 (Dr. Stefan Drees - 2013.05.16)
source: <http://magazin.klassik.com/reviews/revie...>



Mit großem Gespür

Brahms, Johannes - Klaviertrios op. 8, 87 & 101

Mit großem Gespür für die dramaturgische Wirkung entsprechender Passagen erklingen etwa die vom Komponisten im Nachhinein eliminierten Zitate aus Liedern Franz Schuberts aus dem Kontext der sie umschließenden Brahms'schen Musik hervor, klanglich als Enklaven des stillen Eingedenkens markiert, die für den Augenblick ihres Erklingens die Zeit aufzuheben scheinen. Und besonders hier wird die CD zu einem großen, empfehlenswerten Hörabenteuer.

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[Gesellschaft Freunde der Künste](#) 03.05.2013 (GFDK - 2013.05.03)



Musik/Festival: Einzigartige Momente mit dem Trio Testore erleben - Live beim Kammermusikfestival Mai-Klassik & auf CD

Das Trio Testore hat in seiner Gesamtaufnahme der Brahms Klaviertrios beide Fassungen des Trios H-Dur op. 8 eingespielt: Die Urfassung und die 35 Jahre später überarbeitete Version, die in weiten Teilen einer Neukomposition gleich kommt.

Zur Zeit der Revision des ersten Trios schrieb Brahms zwei weitere, neue Trios gegensätzlicher Art. Die Musiker arbeiten durch überzeugende Tempowahl und plastische Gestaltung die großen Bögen, den „Atem“ der Kompositionen heraus. Aus der Gesamtschau der Werke ergibt sich ein beispielhafter Eindruck von Brahms' kompositorischer Entwicklung.

Wir lieben klassische Musik

Das Trio Testore wurde im Jahr 2000 von Franziska Pietsch (Violine), Hans-Christian Schweiker (Violoncello) und Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker (Klavier) gegründet. Das Ensemble hat sich auf nationalen und internationalen Konzertpodien einen Namen gemacht. Zum 10-jährigen Jubiläum rief das Trio Testore 2011 das jährlich stattfindende Kammermusikfestival Mai-Klassik ins Leben.

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 3-2013 Juni/Juli (Isabel Fedrizzi - 2013.06.01)



Ein Muss im CD-Regal

Doch schon ein erstes Lauschen eröffnet, dass das Trio Testore eine unbedingt hörensweite Interpretation dieser vielgespielten Werke bietet: sehr emotional, ohne abgehoben zu sein, mit betont feinsinnigen dynamischen Abstufungen und – das Lob gilt insbesondere der Pianistin Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker – mit so vielen kleinen, feinen Differenzierungen, dass sich bei jedem Hören wieder neue Facetten erschließen.

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Buxtehuder Tageblatt B 27 - Nr. 173 (Sonabend, 27. Juli 2013) (Jürgen Gahre - 2013.07.27)

VERLAG
KUNSTHAUS
STUTTGART **TAGEBLATT**
Lesen ist ein Vergnügen

Die Highlights auf einen Blick

Von Giuseppe Verdis „Il Corsaro“ bis zu den „Biographischen Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven“

Die Streicher des Trio Testore haben einen wundervoll homogenen, dunkelsamtenen Klang, [...] so leidenschaftlich und klangschön vorgetragen

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Fanfare September 2013 (Richard A. Kaplan - 2013.09.01)

fanfare

Trio Testore—named for the family of 18th-Century instrument-makers who produced the violin and cello played by members Franziska Pietsch and Hans-Christian Schweiker—makes what I think is the best decision regarding what constitutes the “complete” piano trios of Brahms: they include both versions of op. 8, and skip the dubiously authentic (and insipid) Trio in A that has sometimes been attributed to him.

As I mentioned in a recent review (see Fanfare 36:5), the Trio in B Major, op. 8 has a unique history: upon its republication 35 years after the original version was completed, Brahms not so much revised as completely rewrote the piece. What’s more, he allowed the first version to remain in print—surprisingly, given his practice of destroying works that didn’t meet his exacting standards—so we can hear not only his first thoughts, but also exactly where the changes occur in the revision. It makes for a revealing study of an astoundingly disciplined musical mind; not only did he jettison pages of music, but in every case made exactly the right decision regarding what to change and what to allow to remain. The result is that following the sweeping opening theme, which is retained almost unchanged, the entire first movement is new, but in the Scherzo only the coda is altered; the Adagio gets a new middle section and loses a somewhat bizarre departure in mid-reprise; and, the last movement, like the first, is completely rewritten after the opening theme. The 1854 version is valuable not because it is intrinsically as good as the revision—it’s not even close—but because of what the comparison tells us about Brahms’s ability to retain what’s musically compelling and rethink what is not.

A quick personal anecdote, finally, about the B-Major: the first time I heard it live, I was struck by the link between the Scherzo and the Adagio—the high F over low B that ends the former and begins the latter—and was incredulous that I’d never noticed this connection before. Then I realized that this was where you turned over the LP.

To cut to the chase: this set is one of the most beautiful recordings of Brahms chamber music I’ve heard in a long time. After hearing any number of run-of-the-mill readings of various chamber works over the past weeks and months, it was clear as early as the first theme of the B-Major that this was going to be anything but a routine run-through. Phrasings are carefully and lovingly thought-out and intensely expressive; the musicians’ deep commitment shows in their unanimity of conception. In contrast with interpretations that sound as though on autopilot, these readings are consistently eventful without being arbitrary. Only the habit of slowing at cadences took some getting used to, but this helps the listener hear the musical structure. The balances between the strings and pianist Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker are perfect. Ensemble and intonation are spot-on. Exposition repeats in the two versions of op. 8 are taken. As for the recording, on the CD layer it’s as lifelike a chamber recording as I’ve heard; the multi-channel layer adds ambience without taking away from immediacy.

It should by now come as no surprise that this set is going directly onto my Want List. Urgently

recommended!

Pizzicato N° 235 - 9/2013 (ge - 2013.09.01)



Brahms reloaded

Warum bloß hat Johannes Brahms sein 1. Klaviertrio einer Neubearbeitung unterzogen? Das Trio Testore liefert uns die Antwort in der Gegenüberstellung der heutigen allgemein gültigen Fassung von 1889 und des ersten Versuchs von 1854. Letztendlich haben wir es aber mit zwei unterschiedlichen Werken zu tun, da Brahms das Trio – bis auf wenige Ausnahmen – quasi völlig neu komponiert hat. Es ist jedoch nicht der Vergleich beider Trios, das diese Einspielung zu einem Erlebnis macht. Das Trio Testore – mit der ehemaligen OPL-Geigerin Franziska Pietsch – spielt mit Mut zur Dramatik, ohne übertriebenen Gestus, ohne Hang zur Selbstdarstellung. Die scharfen Kontraste zwischen zupackender Gestaltungskraft, kantigen Bogenstrichen und lyrischem Schmelz, die Fähigkeit, den Zuhörer mit stets neuen Akzenten und Einsichten zu überraschen, prägen diese Brahms-Lektüre. Das äußerst kommunikative Spiel der drei Musiker lässt nicht gleichgültig. 'Aimez-Vous Brahms?' – das Trio Testore beantwortet diese Frage aus tiefster Überzeugung mit Ja.

Fono Forum Oktober 2013 (Christoph Vratz - 2013.10.01)



Gewichtig, herb

Es bleibt eine Geschmacksfrage: Welches Trio ist das bessere, op. 8 oder op. 8? Johannes Brahms hat sein frühes H-Dur-Klaviertrio rund dreieinhalb Jahrzehnte nach seiner Entstehung noch einmal bearbeitet, ihm aber keine neue oder ergänzende Opus-Nummer gegeben. Das Trio Testore hat nun im Rahmen seiner Gesamteinspielung beide Fassungen aufgenommen, und der Hörer kann frei entscheiden, welche Version ihm als die gelungenere erscheint. Der "Con brio"-Vorgabe des Komponisten jedenfalls scheint das im Jahr 2000 gegründete Ensemble in beiden Fassungen ein wenig zu misstrauen, denn das Allegro im Kopfsatz nehmen sie beide Male verhalten, den Brio-Charakter dosieren sie, besonders im Vergleich zum Finale, auf ein Maß, das den ungestümen Geist des jungen Brahms merklich zurücknimmt. Das kann man sicher so machen, wirkt aber etwas befremdend. Im ersten Satz der beiden anderen Trios erweisen sich die drei Musiker als ungleich drängendere, energischere Interpreten, das klingt teilweise flammend archaisch, im Forte treffend insistierend. Es gibt keinen Satz auf dieser Doppel-SACD, wo der Hörer den Eindruck hat, als wollte das Trio Testore durch schnelle Tempi für sich einnehmen. Was ihm exzellent gelingt, ist die Art des Zusammenspiels. Jeder Musiker weiß, wann er nach vorn preschen, wie er sich ein- und wo er sich unterordnen muss. Die langsamen Sätze gelingen betont gesanglich, den Trios geht allerdings ein wenig von ihrer Skurrilität, von ihrer Geisterhaftigkeit verloren. Das Brahms-Bild des Trio Testore ist gewichtig, herb, inbrünstig, melodisch, glühend. Es ist durchsichtig, nie eilig, teilweise bedächtig, aber immer karikaturenfrei. Aufnahmetechnisch ist diese Produktion ein Klangereignis!

Vorherrschend ist die Lust der Musiker an einer präzisen Klangformulierung, dessen Farbpalette kaum Wünsche offen lässt. Wo angebracht, ergänzt sich in der Interpretation Opulenz mit dem Bestreben nach sorgsam Austariertem und bringt in der Summe eine sehr respektable Einspielung dieser Meisterwerke der Triogattung.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

American Record Guide September 2013 (Paul L. Althouse - 2013.09.01)



This release of the Brahms piano trios is enhanced by the inclusion of both versions of his Opus 8, a great work that (along with the Schubert B-flat) I would nominate as Best Trio Ever. It was an early work (1854, when the composer was 21), but he revised it late in life (1889), basically by tightening it up and shortening it by about 11 minutes. We know Brahms was almost annoyingly self-critical, destroying sketches and works that didn't meet his standard, and this is the best example we have of Brahms the self-editor. The thematic material is pretty much the same, but if you know the later version, you will hear in the earlier version lots of different solutions (and a number of digressions that Brahms later removed). As I wrote some years back, I don't think anyone would listen to the two and feel the earlier version was stronger. On the other hand, weak Brahms is still better than pretty much anyone else, so the piece and the comparison are fascinating.

The Trio Testore gets its name from the family of violin makers. The violin here was made by Carlo Antonio Testore in 1751, the cello by Carlo Giuseppe Testore in 1711. The group's violinist, Franziska Pietsch was most recently concertmaster of the Luxembourg Philharmonic, and both pianist Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker and cellist Hans-Christian Schweiker teach at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne; the group was founded in 2000.

From the first phrase of the Opus 8 I had a pretty good idea of what was coming. The theme, played by piano, is rendered with lots of subtle shadings and tugs at the rhythm, so I expected a warm, romantic reading. This approach is fine by me so long as the attention to little details does not sound episodic and thus obscure the big picture. And the music does not get caught up in sight-seeing; it has enough muscle and backbone to keep the movements coherent and interesting. I did notice on occasion, though, that while pianist Kim-Schweiker and cellist Schweiker seemed on the same expressive page, violinist Pietsch sometimes played in a less inflected style. At any rate this is very fine playing.

The last trio (C minor, Opus 101) has lots of fire and excitement, as does the scherzo from the second trio (C major, Opus 87) The slow movement from Opus 8, one of the loveliest in all of Brahms, is beautifully done, but I would appreciate a more sympathetic violinist in a few spots.

Bottom line? In recent years I've been drawn back to the Borodin Trio: deliberate tempos, depth and complexity in their interpretations. The Trio Testore is more flowing and a little less dark in sound. I guess I like the Testore a bit better, and the inclusion of the early Opus 8 makes this a winner.

Saarbrücker Zeitung 14.10.2013 (uhu - 2013.10.14)



Ergreifend schön: Trio Testore spielt Brahms' Klaviertrios

Verdientermaßen hat sich das Trio Testore mit dieser Aufnahme der Klaviertrios von Brahms im Sturm in die vorderen internationalen Reihen gespielt. Vibratoreich, durchaus schwelgerisch, aber nicht ausufernd musizierend, lässt das Ensemble jene innere Glut schwelen, die dieser Musik gebürt – bis hin zu Momenten ergreifender Melancholie.

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La Muzik Oktober 2013 (- 2013.10.01)

Record Label Showdown

Chinesische Rezension siehe PDF!

[Musica](#) numero 250 - ottobre 2013 (Bernardo Pieri - 2013.10.01)



A questa ricca tradizione appartiene il Brahms del Trio Testore, solido, strutturalmente impeccabile, vario nei colori, riproduzione perfetta della scrupolosa tavolozza brahmsiana, calibratissimo nei tempi sempre giusti.

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Crescendo Magazine Le 20 octobre 2013 (François Mardirossian - 2013.10.20)



Les quatre trios pour piano et cordes de Brahms

Das Trio Testore (welches seinen Namen dem Erbauer der beiden Streichinstrumente verdankt) präsentiert hiermit eine ungekürzte, mehr als vollständige Fassung. Wegen der Interpretation der Trios behaupte ich mit Nachdruck, dass die vorliegende Aufnahme als eine der Besten Gesamteinspielungen dieses Genres bleiben wird.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Aufnahme von Brahms-Trio erlaubt Blick in die Komponistenwerkstatt

Brahms Klaviertrio Opus 8 in zwei Varianten – dieses musikalische Erlebnis vereint das Trio Testore auf zwei Tonträgern. Eine Einspielung auf höchstem Niveau.

Die Einspielung mit dem Trio Testore steht auf höchstem Niveau. [...] Auch aufnahmetechnisch ist die SACD exzellent.

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Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung Donnerstag, 20. Februar 2014 (Martin Schrahn - 1999.11.30)

WAZ

Brahms-Trios – so sanft wie aufbegehend

Das Trio Testore legt eine Neuauflage der Werke vor, mit denen der Meister – wie er es so oft tat – kritisch umging

Das Trio Testore hat die drei (vier) Werke eingespielt, alles Bruchige, Schroffe betonend, ohne die sanfte, intensive, aufbegehende Lyrik des Romantikers außer Acht zu lassen.

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Badische Zeitung Samstag, 01. März 2014 (J.A. - 2014.03.01)

Badische  Zeitung

CD: KLASSIK: Brahms als Tänzer

Von der renommierten Mailänder Geigenbauer-Dynastie stammt der Ensemblename: Das im Jahr 2000 gegründete Trio Testore präsentiert auf den beiden SACDs das komplette Klaviertrio-Schaffen von Johannes Brahms. Und wie die Ausführenden dies tun! Der Klang ist wunderbar homogen und atmend, erreicht auch mal – wir sind schließlich bei Brahms – fast orchestrale Dimensionen. Erfreulich, dass man Gelegenheit bekommt, beide Lesarten des H-Dur-Trios op. 8 zu vergleichen: die frühe, bisweilen redselige Erstversion (deren Längen nicht immer nur himmlisch sind) von 1854 und die konzise Endfassung von 1889. Mit romantischer Emphase wird farbig musiziert. Franziska Pietschs Violine verströmt viel Intensität. So profunde wie differenzierte Ausdruckskunst bietet der Kölner Celloprofessor Hans-Christian Schweiker. Feinfühlig offenbart Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker Klavierpräsenz. Beglückende, Herz und Hirn verbindende und stilistisch treffliche Brahms-Expertisen sind da gelungen. Auch in den Genres von Tanz und Volkston.

I've wasted too much ink in these pages trashing the original 1854 version of Brahms's B-Major Trio to go on about it again. I'm just relieved that the Trio Testore's decision to include it didn't come at the expense of excluding the revised final version, something that one or two other ensembles, inconceivably, have done, though I can't tell you which ones they were because those recordings met with a horribly disfiguring, unnatural demise. The Testore might have been better advised, however, to include the Piano Trio in A Major attributed to Brahms instead; it may not be authentic, but it makes for a better listen than the first version of the B-Major Trio.

This entry will be brief because the Brahms piano trios are very well represented on disc, and they've been exhaustively covered in numerous past reviews. The Trio Testore is new to me and nearly so, it seems, to records, though a single-disc Audite album, containing a performance of Shostakovich's E-Minor Trio, op. 67, plus what is assumed to be the same performance of Brahms's Piano Trio No. 2 that's included in this two-disc set, is available as a download only.

So, being unfamiliar with the group, naturally, I checked out its official website. How's this for publicity hype? At least since the publication of the complete recording of piano trios by Brahms (SACD Audite), which caused a sensation around the world, the TRIO TESTORE, known for the intensity and originality of its interpretations, has become a household name in the music world. Why yes, the ensemble's Brahms trios made international headlines, Twitter was all a-tweet, and just yesterday the Trio Testore was the topic of conversation around countless dinner tables.

Despite the Italian name it has taken for itself after the Testore family of 18th-century string instrument makers the Trio Testore is of German pedigree. Violinist Franziska Pietsch hails from Berlin, studied with the famed Dorothy DeLay in New York, won a number of competitions, and has soloed with several renowned orchestras and conductors. She plays a 1751 Carlo Antonio Testore violin. Cellist Hans-Christian Schweiker currently calls Cologne home, has partnered with members of the Amadeus Quartet, and has concertized widely throughout Europe. He plays a 1711 Carlo Giuseppe Testore cello. The instruments are set up and strung to modern standards. Pianist Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker, presumably Hans-Christian's wife, made her debut at 13 with the Royal Philharmonic of Pusan, then traveled to Germany, where she studied at the Cologne University of Music, and has since made an international career for herself.

I really wanted to love these performances, especially since this is the first and only complete survey of the Brahms trios I know of on SACD. The Storioni Trio of Amsterdam recorded the first and second trios for PentaTone, but thus far hasn't followed through with the third.

Unfortunately, the Trio Testore's interpretive approach left me feeling queasy. Great swells on notes, no doubt meant to dramatize their emotional significance, are followed by sudden ebbs, lending a feeling of waves rising and falling. Complementing the dynamic crests and troughs are the rhythmic surging and slackening that expand and contract the shapes of the phrases. Tempos are consistently on the slow side, and violinist Pietsch is of a mind that the shortest distance between two notes is a portamento. All of this, I'm sure, is carried out with the best of intentions; Brahms, after all, can't be trusted to express his true emotions without serious intervention, not to mention a good deal of slippery slithering and sliding around.

If you judge the Trio Testore strictly on the merits of its technical execution, no criticism can be lodged. But there's more to performing music than playing the notes in tune. I wouldn't go quite so far as to say about the Trio Testore something I once...

[Fanfare](#) 30.10.2013 (Richard A. Kaplan - 2013.10.30)

fanfare

We have Trio Testore's stunning new account of the Brahms trios, music-making that is vibrant and expressive.

Scherzo marzo 2014 (Juan García-Rico - 2014.03.01)

sch~~er~~zo

Versiones Ardorosas

Ardorosa, ardiente y también delicada, esponjosa, mimada y, en definitiva, bellísima versión.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Record Geijutsu April 2013 (- 2013.04.01)



japanische Rezension siehe PDF



Piano Trios by Rachmaninov (Trio élégiaque, No. 1) & Tchaikovsky (Op. 50)

Sergei Rachmaninoff | Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

SACD aud 92.691

www.pizzicato.lu 22/08/2014 (Remy Franck - 2014.08.22)



Nachhaltige Bestätigung

Mit seiner fulminanten Brahms-CD hat das Trio Testore sich selber die Latte sehr hochgelegt und dementsprechende Erwartungen geweckt, denen es mit dieser Rachmaninov-Tchaikovsky-Einspielung vollauf gerecht wird.

Das Programm vereint zwei untypische Klaviertrios, die im Grunde Gedenkmusiken sind. Rachmaninows erstes Trio élégiaque hat keinen bestimmten Adressaten. Tchaikovsky hat sein Klaviertrio mit Variationensatz seinem langjährigen Förderer und Weggefährten Nikolai Rubinstein gewidmet – 'à la mémoire d'un grand artiste'. Beiden Werken ist die melancholische Grundstimmung gemein, die das Trio Testore mit packender Intensität wiedergibt, ohne übermäßig pathetisch zu werden und in die Karikatur abzugleiten. Schon der schwebende, nahezu mysteriöse Einstieg ins Rachmaninov-Trio läßt die tiefe Emotionalität erahnen, die uns erwartet. Während uns bei Rachmaninov die lyrisch-nachfühlende gesangliche Ausgestaltung des Hauptthemas fesselt, ist es bei Tchaikovsky die poetische Melancholie.

Das Trio Testore musiziert auf kammermusikalisch höchstem Niveau. Es ist ein organisches Musizieren, intensiv im Ausdruck und klar in der Gestaltung auch kleinster musikalischer Elemente, ein Musizieren, das den Zuhörer mit einbindet, auch wenn die letzte Note schon lange verklungen ist.

The technically outstanding Trio Testore plays the two basically melancholic compositions with packing intensity without being caricatural.

[Gesellschaft Freunde der Künste](http://www.gesellschaft-freunde-der-kuenste.de) 01.09.2014 (- 2014.09.01)



Mit seiner CD beleuchtet das Trio Testore die Seite russischer Kammermusik: Tschaikowskis und Rachmaninoffs

Nach der erfolgreichen Veröffentlichung der Brahms-Klaviertrios legt audite nun eine weitere SACD mit dem Trio Testore vor. Sie beleuchtet eine besondere Seite russischer Kammermusik: Tschaikowskys und Rachmaninoffs Werke für Klaviertrio sind als Widmungs- und Gedenkstücke konzipiert.

Pjotr Tschaikowski komponierte sein einziges Klaviertrio im Gedenken an Nikolai Rubinstein, seinen Förderer und Freund. Mit dem anspruchsvollen Klavierpart erwies er dessen pianistischer Brillanz die Ehre, baute sie jedoch in den kommunikativen Zusammenhang mit zwei gleichberechtigten Partnern ein: Sinnbildlich erhält der Virtuose von ihnen Resonanz, Unterstützung und Anregung.

Wir lieben Musik... weil sie uns glücklich macht

Sergej Rachmaninow nahm sich das zweisätzige Werk und seinen elegischen Grundzug zum Vorbild, als er 17-jährig sein erstes Klaviertrio komponierte. Darin prägte er bereits wesentliche Elemente seines Stils, seiner Art der melodischen Erfindung und der Entfaltung weiter Zusammenhänge aus.

Die Widmungsgeschichte der Werke bestimmt ihre individuelle Form und ihren persönlichen, leidenschaftlichen Ton. Sie stehen damit beispielhaft für eine Tradition, die weit ins 20. Jahrhundert hinein wirkte.

**Gramophone Gramophone Awards Issue,
September 2014 (Geoffrey Norris - 2014.09.01)**

GRAMOPHONE
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By the time Rachmaninov wrote his first Trio élégiaque, Tchaikovsky had already established the in memoriam mood that was to be echoed in other, later piano trios by Russian composers, Arensky and Shostakovich among them. His A minor Trio of 1881 was dedicated 'to the memory of a great artist', Nikolay Rubinstein. There is no known reason why Rachmaninov should have written an elegiac trio in 1892 at the age of 18 – unlike the second one of the following year, which was composed in direct response to the death of Tchaikovsky.

Trio Testore tackle the earlier of the Rachmaninov trios, cast in a single movement, with a mix of tenderness and raw emotion. It is not a masterwork; but with the sensibility that these players reveal, it comes across with touching sincerity and, for all that the piano is the dominant force, with a dramatic intensity to the string lines as well. Trio Testore's range of expression is similarly apt to the temperament of the Tchaikovsky Trio. Although he had earlier voiced antipathy towards the piano trio medium, Tchaikovsky found an emotional and textural balance here that the Testore tap purposefully and with considerable power and impetus in the broad span of the first movement. The ebb and flow of angst is well judged and the variations of the second movement are deftly characterised, with the keen interplay of instruments creating a fabric of variegated colour that counters any misgivings Tchaikovsky might have harboured about the piano trio's tonal potential.

Classical CD Choice October 12, 2014 (Barry Forshaw - 2014.10.12)



In order to tame the very close piano sound of the Audite recording, the violin and cello here sound distinctly muted. Nevertheless, the performance here is exemplary, finding all the nuances of the composer's highly individual sound world.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 6-2014 Dezember / Januar (Hans-Dieter Grünefeld - 2014.12.01)



Im Gedenken

Hier [...] lässt das Trio Testore emotionale Kraft heraus, spannt die melodischen Bögen in versierter Abstimmung der instrumentalen Strukturprogression, dabei auf Nuancen der Timbres achtend. So ist eine programmatisch sinnvolle Kombination melancholisch-produktiver Memoriale entstanden, die musikhistorische Kontexte bewusst macht.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

<http://theclassicalreviewer.blogspot.de> Sunday, 14 December 2014
(Bruce Reader - 2014.12.14)



Authoritative performances of Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio in A minor and Rachmaninov's Trio élégiaque No. 1 from Trio Testore on a new release from Audite

This is as fine a performance of the Tchaikovsky Trio that you'll ever find with these players putting their hearts and souls into the music. The engineers provide a fine recording in the acoustic of the Jesus-Christus-Kirche, Berlin-Dahlem, Germany the venue for so many fine recordings. There are informative notes.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.classicalcdreview.com 11.11.2014 (Robert Benson - 2014.11.11)



Both works are played superbly, and Audite's recording team has captured their sound to perfection.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Scherzo N° 304 - febrero 2015 (Josep Pascual - 2015.02.01)



Los intérpretes que lo conforman resuelven sin demasiados problemas la exigente escritura de ambas obras y todo resulta muy claro, nada brumoso, de un camerismo genuino, en el que cada intérprete tiene su parte de protagonismo a la vez que cada cual sabe ceder el suyo a quien corresponda según el momento. Han estudiado las obras con calma y seriedad, es evidente, y su trabajo es ejemplar.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

hifi & records 2/2015 (Uwe Steiner - 2015.04.01)



Das Trio Testore musiziert aus einem Guss, kammermusikalisch geschlossen und ausgewogen. Dabei reizt es die dynamischen und artikulatorischen Kontraste beinahe noch stärker als die drei Jahre alte, stärker solistisch profilierte CD mit Gidon Kremer, Giedrė Dirvanauskaitė und Khatia Bunashvili (ECM). Audites Produktion punktet zudem mit homogenen und satteren Klangfarben.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Fanfare 26.03.2015 (Jerry Dubbins - 2015.03.26)

fanfare

My first encounter with the Trio Testore was fairly recent. In 37:2, I reviewed the group's two-disc set of Brahms's piano trios and hated it for all the expressive conceits, slowish tempos, and rhythmic instability. Richard Kaplan, on the other hand, who reviewed the set in the same issue, loved it. In fact, he loved it so much that he put it at the top of his 2013 Want List.

Sometimes I wonder what readers must make of these diametrically opposing views. It's like the philosophical paradox of the card that reads on one side, "The statement on the other side of this card is true," and on the flip side, "The statement on the other side of this card is false." I think in such situations what it comes down to is not so much about the specifics of what each reviewer says, as it is about which reviewer the reader tends to personally like and trust more. Obviously, Kaplan and I hear Brahms differently.

The heart-on-sleeve emotionalism of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff is perhaps more tolerant of the Trio Testore's inclination towards Romantic effusiveness and excess, but, as with the group's Brahms, the players take considerable liberties with the score as they push and pull tempos about, stretch notes for expressive effect, pour on portamento—even between adjacent notes, with little regard for how cloying it can be—and most troubling of all, rewrite the printed notes to suit their own purposes.

It was quite shocking, for example, to hear and see what violinist Franziska Pietsch does in measure eight of the Tchaikovsky. In the second half of the bar, the composer wrote the notes E, F, E, D, E, all in one beat, in a rhythm of a 16th note, two 32nd notes, and two 16th notes. When played as notated, it's a written-out, in rhythm, turn: da-deedle-ah-da. But Ms. Pietsch knows better. Instead, she plays D, C, D, E, and evens out the rhythm to sound like basically four 16th notes: da-da-da-da. The pity of it is that she is either blithely or willfully ignorant of the fact that four bars earlier, starting on a B in the tenor clef, the cello has exactly the same note and rhythmic pattern Tchaikovsky wrote for the violin. And by the way, cellist Han-Christian Schweiker plays it correctly as written. Does Pietsch not understand that her part is supposed to echo the cello?

It's that sort of playing fast and loose with the score that really turns me off to Trio Testore. It's what I heard in the ensemble's Brahms and, taken to even further extremes, it's what I hear in these Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff readings. I would invite colleague Kaplan to listen to these performances while following the scores, and tell me if this release doesn't alter his earlier opinion of the Trio Testore.

For this same coupling of works, I'd recommend the Kempf Trio on BIS for performances that deliver plenty of Russian brooding and emotional intensity, while managing to preserve the composers' integrity and the musicians' self-respect.

www.ClassicsToday.com 08/2014 (Jed Distler - 2014.08.01)



A Desirable Rachmaninov/Tchaikovsky Coupling

Some may find violinist Franziska Pietsch's vibrato excessive, yet it's never cloying. For a Rachmaninov G minor and Tchaikovsky Op. 50 trio coupling, you cannot do better.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

[American Record Guide](#) April 2015 (Greg Pagel - 2015.04.01)



The notes to many of my Tchaikovsky chamber music discs begin by saying Tchaikovsky was not very interested in chamber music. Well, he may not have written much of it, but what exists is great! In fact, for someone like me, who likes chamber music more than orchestral music, his three quartets and this trio more than do the job when I'm looking for a Tchaikovsky "fix".

Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio was dedicated to the pianist and composer Nikolai Rubinstein. Tchaikovsky had long intended to write something to show Rubinstein's gift for playing with other musicians, but Rubinstein's premature death, which touched Tchaikovsky deeply, meant that he could only compose a work in memory of him.

Both of these readings are excellent. The Cho and Testore Trios both do a fine job with the first movement, bringing tenderness and sensitivity to the work's sad moments, energy to powerful parts. With the Cho the piano sounds thin when playing alone, but the balance is good when the whole ensemble plays.

Most of the work is composed of a Theme and Variations, and it is here that one can point out differences in the two interpretations. Both have their strengths and weaknesses. In the Theme, which opens with a piano solo, the Testore plays with simple sweetness. Cho's piano again sounds thin. Variation I, which gives the melody to the strings, sounds better played by the Cho, and their delivery of variation V is magically toy-like. I like Testore's fugue in variation VIII better than the Cho's, which feels too bogged down. At their best, the Cho Trio sounds really brilliant, but I think they get hung up on details. Both groups play the Finale beautifully. In the end, it's really a toss-up between the two. I enjoy both more than the Moscow Trio (Sept/Oct 2013).

As for the remaining works, Testore includes Rachmaninoff's Trio 1. It is not known to whom, if anyone, the elegy was dedicated, unlike Trio 2, which was dedicated to Tchaikovsky, and was modeled after his trio.

The one played here is a very early work, not published until after Rachmaninoff's death. The notes to this release theorize that this work, too, was meant as an homage to Tchaikovsky, and points out several clear stylistic references. Whether or not this is true, it sounds very Russian, if not very much like mature Rachmaninoff. The Testore give it a very Russian interpretation, romantic and (after the gentle beginning) muscular.

I was extremely impressed with the other works offered by the Cho Trio. I've always enjoyed Ax-Ma-Perlman's Mendelssohn trios, but this is every bit as good. From its ghostly opening and moments of sublime lyricism to its many intense episodes, the ensemble displays remarkable expressive range. In III the constantly spinning figures dance and sparkle. Always there is playfulness and bite.

Like their Tchaikovsky, the Cho's Arensky surpasses the Moscow Trio's (included on that 2013 release). I was delighted by the humor and inventiveness of the work, especially the quirkiness of II. Cho's delivery is stunning! The passagework in the piano is brilliant. I even enjoyed their reading of Shostakovich's Trio 2, a work I don't care for, simply for their variety of color. If you like Shostakovich, you'll like this performance.

Fanfare May 2015 (Huntley Dent - 2015.05.01)

fanfare

The Tchaikovsky Piano Trio must be the most operatically effusive chamber work ever written. Its commanding piano part perfectly suits an outsize personality like Martha Argerich, who has recorded it magnificently (DG). You expect a claque in the balcony to explode with bravas. On the same label another world-striding pianist, Lang Lang, delivers a panoramic performance, and in both cases the celebrated violinist (Gideon Kremer, Vadim Repin) and cellist (Mischa Maisky times two) hardly needed to sneak off to a trainer for steroids, either. These are readings on the grand Romantic scale that the Tchaikovsky Trio demands.

In the spirit of the mouse that roared, the modestly celebrated Trio Testore, a German ensemble founded in 2000, presents the score just as grandly, daring any challengers. Pianist Hyun-Jung Kim-Schweiker has a sweeping technique and takes the lead role with as much personality as anyone I've ever encountered. Violinist Franziska Pietsch and cellist Hans-Christian Schweiker (the pianist's husband) play two beautifully matched 18th-century instruments made by the Testore family of Milan, hence the trio's name. These musicians are comfortable in emotional shades of purple, and the result is a top-flight reading.

This is all the more so because Audite's SACD sound, even when heard in two-channel stereo, is remarkably full, clear, and detailed. We are sitting inches away from the performers, and the balance is lifelike in every respect. The interpretation proceeds at first in broad gestures, but when we get to the work's second half, with its luscious theme and 12 variations, Trio Testore characterizes each section quite individually—the Tempo di valse of Variation 6 trips as light-heartedly as the Fuga of Variation 8 toils away earnestly and the Andante febrile of Variation 9 intimately sighs for lost love. Rachmaninoff's precocious Trio élégaique, which the 19-year-old wrote over four days in January 1892, is couched in his signature mood of voluptuous mourning. It makes for a lovely if not very original filler. In all, a delightful disc that inspires me to hear the Trio Testore's highly praised debut recording of the Brahms piano trios. They also head a spring festival in the west of Germany in Alsdorf, a once grim coal mining town now given over to the muses.

BBC Radio 3 23.08.2015, 9.00 am (Andrew Mc Gregor - 2014.08.23)



BROADCAST CD review

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