



Johannes Brahms: The Complete Chamber Music for Clarinet

aud 91.662

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Superb in All Respects

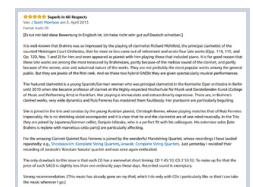
It is well-known that Brahms was so impressed by the playing of clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, the principal clarinetist of the vaunted Meiningen Court Orchestra, that he more or less came out of retirement and wrote four late works (Opp. 114, 115, and Op. 120, Nos. 1 and 2) for him and even appeared as pianist with him playing those that included piano. It is for good reason that these late works are among the most treasured by Brahmsians, partly because of the mellow sound of the clarinet, and partly because of the serene, wise and autumnal nature of the works. They are not probably the most popular works among the general public. But they are jewels of the first rank. And on these two hybrid-SACDs they are given spectacularly musical performances.

The featured clarinetist is a young Spanish/German woman who was principal clarinetist in the Komische Oper orchestra in Berlin until 2010 when she became professor of clarinet at the highly respected Hochschule für Musik und Darstellenden Kunst (College of Music and Performing Arts) in Frankfurt. Her playing is immaculate and extraordinarily expressive. There are, in Brahms's clarinet works, very wide dynamics and Ruiz Ferreres has mastered them faultlessly. Her pianissimi are particularly beguiling.

She is joined in the trio and sonatas by the young Austrian pianist, Christoph Berner, whose playing matches that of Ruiz Ferreres impeccably. He is no shrinking violet accompanist and it is clear that he and the clarinetist are of one mind musically. In the Trio they are joined by Japanese/German cellist, Danjulo Ishizaka, who is a perfect fit with his colleagues. His extensive solos [late Brahms is replete with marvelous cello parts] are particularly affecting.

For the amazing Clarinet Quintet Ruiz Ferreres is joined by the wonderful Mandelring Quartet, whose recordings I have lauded repeatedly: e.g., Shostakovich: Complete String Quartets, Janacek: Complete String Quartets. Just yesterday I revisited their recording of Janáček's 'Kreutzer Sonata' quartet and was once again enthralled.

The only drawback to this issue is that each CD has a somewhat short timing: CD 1 45:10; CD 2 55:32. To make up for that the price of each SACD is slightly less than one ordinarily pays these days. Recorded sound is exemplary.



Strong recommendation. (This music has already gone on my iPod, which I do only with CDs I particularly like so that I can take the music wherever I go.)

★★★★★ **Superb in All Respects**

Von [J Scott Morrison](#) am 5. April 2013

Format: Audio CD

[Es tut mir leid diese Bewertung in Englisch ist. Ich habe nicht sehr gut auf Deutsch schreiben.]

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