



déjà-rêvé

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EAN: 4022143978134



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[Fanfare](#) (2024.09.01)

This is a recording more interesting in concept than in execution. The German piano duo of brother and sister Sophie and Vincent Neeb have been playing together for over a decade. Both are technically accomplished pianists, and they interact well with each other. Unfortunately, their playing seems almost unvaryingly aggressive. Their arrangement for two pianos of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 without orchestra might be effective except that their sharp-edged playing often turns harsh, shortchanging the music's warmth.

Johannes X. Schachtner (b. 1985) is a German composer and arranger whose appealing *Bach. Choral.Exerzitien* presents transformations of seven Bach chorales for two pianos and percussion; it is the longest piece here. These are colorful, sensitive renderings that treat the originals with great respect. The music is mostly quiet, embracing a wide range of colors, from the delicate to the dramatic. This is the only recording I am aware of, so I have no alternative available for comparison.

Schachtner contributes the arrangement of Debussy's *Jeux* for two pianos and percussion, which also exploits a wide range of percussion instruments. I think the arrangement is tasteful and imaginative, but the performance, particularly by Klavierduo Neeb, misses the playfulness of the score. There is too little flexibility and a lack of color from the pianos.

Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Monologues for Two Pianos* serves as the inspiration for the entire program, as Zimmermann quotes Debussy's *Jeux*, Bach chorales, and bits of the Mozart concerto in his piece. Zimmermann's pointillistic writing also would benefit from a softer and more varied touch. Listening to Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky on DG reveals the coloristic opportunities available in the music.

Good recorded sound and informative program notes complete the package. I would have liked to be able to summon greater enthusiasm for this disc, but the monochromatic and overly aggressive playing made that difficult.

DÉJÀ-RÊVÉ: Dialogues Across Time • Klavierduo Neeb; Christian Benning*, Patrick Stapleton* (perc) • AUDITE 97.813 (74:58)
DEBUSSY *Jeux*. **MOZART** Piano Concerto No. 21 in C, K 467; Movement 1. **JOHANNES X. SCHACHTNER** *Bach.Choral.Exerzitien*. **BERND ALOIS ZIMMERMANN** *Monologues for Two Pianos*

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