Hagen Quartet - Beethoven, Mozart, Webern



Streichquartett Nr. 8 e-moll op. 59 Nr. 2 "Rasumowsky-Quartett 2" 1 1. Allegro 2 2. Molto adagio 3 3. Allegretto 4 4. Finale: Presto

Streichquartett Nr. 16 Es-Dur KV 428 (421b) "4. Haydn-Quartett"

5 1. Allegro non troppo 6 2. Andante con moto 7 3. Menuetto: Allegretto - Trio 8 4. Allegro vivace

Sätze für Streichquartett op. 5 Nr. 1-5

9 Nr. 1: Heftig bewegt 10 Nr. 2: Sehr langsam 11 Nr. 3: Sehr bewegt 12 Nr. 4:

Sehr langsam 13 Nr. 5: In zarter Bewegung

Bagatellen für Streichquartett op. 9 Nr. 1-6

14 Nr. 1: Mäßig 15 Nr. 2: Leicht bewegt 16 Nr. 3: Ziemlich fließend 17 Nr. 4: Sehr langsam 18 Nr. 5: Äußerst langsam 19 Nr. 6: Fließend

Lukas Hagen, violin Rainer Schmidt, violin Veronika Hagen, viola Clemens Hagen, violoncello

The program looks like what was conventional in the 1970s and 1980s: Beethoven, Mozart, and the obligatory entry from the early 20th century, in this case Webern. But what you get from Germany's Hagen Quartet, here celebrating its 30th anniversary, is anything but conventional. The group members state that their aim is "to illustrate such things as pauses, fermati, dissonances, and certain extreme emotional phenomena as vividly as possible." Indeed, this is a set of hyper-expressive performances. For an example, look no further than the finale of Mozart's String Quartet in E flat major, K. 428, where the quartet blows through the rhythmic regularity of the opening phrases on the way to a total roller coaster ride of unexpected phrasing and constantly shifting treatments of the piece's already humorous and often intentionally deceptive pattern of silences and consequent-antecedent pairs. The extraordinarily un-dancelike minuet is likewise on the far edges of an ordinary conception of the work. The intense Beethoven String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59/2, is paradoxically not quite so extreme, but the beautifully reverent Molto Adagio movement is one of the highlights of the disc. The nicely matched pair of early atonal (and not twelve-tone) Webern works for guartet makes a perfect conclusion, with the tension of the extreme contrasts of the Five Movements for String Quartet, Op. 5, seeming to explode into the little bits that constitute the Bagatelles for string

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quartet, Op. 9, pieces just a minute or so long. Your mileage certainly may vary with this often idiosyncratic disc, but the Myrios label's super audio sound is superb, and one thing's for sure: it's never boring. ---James Manheim, Rovi

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