

Louise Farrenc – Wind Sextet Trios (2017)

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Niedziela, 03 Marzec 2019 15:35 -

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Sextet for piano and wind quintet in C minor, Op.40 (27:23) 1-1 *Allegro* 13:34 1-2 *Andante Sostenuto* 6:22 1-3 *Allegro Vivace* 7:27

Trio for clarinet, cello and piano in E flat, Op.44 (22:14)

2-1 *Andante - Allegro moderato* 10:22 2-2 *Adagio* 0:57 2-3 *Adagio* 4:20 2-4 *Allegro* 6:35

Trio for flute, cello and piano In E Minor, Op.45 (26:05)

2-5 *Allegro deciso -più moderato ed espressivo* 10:01 2-6 *Andante* 5:44 2-7 *Scherzo* 5:04 2-8 *Finale* 5:16

Opera Ensemble: Bassoon – Eliseo Smordoni Cello – Andrea Bergamelli Clarinet – Angelo De Angelis Flute – Carlo Enrico Macalli Horn – Alessio Bernardi Oboe – Luca Vignali Piano – Linda Di Carlo

My knowledge of the music of the Parisian composer Louise Farrenc is regrettably little, in fact it is limited to a symphony, a couple of overtures and some piano music, all on two CPO discs, although what I have heard I enjoy, this is music of style and panache, and I have always wondered whether it would be better known if it was by Louis rather than Louise. She was born Jeanne-Louise Dumont in to an artistic family, with both her father and brother being renowned sculptors. She showed early promise as a pianist, so much so that she was sent to Hummel and Moscheles for lessons, leading to her becoming a virtuoso pianist. She showed an aptitude for composing and was eventually to receive lessons from Anton Reicha; although it might have been that as a woman she was unable to attend his classes at the conservatoire and was probably therefore a private student. The piano was her first love and most of her early compositions were for the instrument, with some of her pieces receiving praise from the likes of Schumann.

Farrenc composed a fair number of chamber works, thirteen or so, with all but the Nonet containing the piano. This is true of the three works included on this two CD set, with the first disc being taken up by the Sextet, in C minor, which could be said to be a work for piano and wind quintet. Here the piano is dominant; it is almost like a mini concerto for piano and winds.

There is bold writing for the piano whilst the wind writing is well figured and attractive. The writing shows mastery not just of the piano but of the wind section to.

The second disc is take up with two trios with those presented here being in reality the final two of a series of four, although the previous two are for the standard piano trio makeup of violin, cello and piano. Here the balance of the instruments show no difficulty for Farrenc, with both being well crafted pieces. That being said, I find myself being drawn to the Trio for flute, cello & piano in E minor, I find it the more attractive of the two with some wonderful writing for the flute.

In all three works presented here Farrenc shows she is a dedicated follower of the Romantic Movement, her music is bold and on occasion progressive. My only problem with this set is that it seems short measure; surely with only 82 minutes of music between both discs there was time and space to include some ore of her wonderful music.

The performance is excellent from both the pianist, Linda di Carlo, who drives the music on, and the OperaEnsemble. There is a feeling of togetherness and enjoyment throughout their performance, which only enforces my call for more. The booklet documentation is good as is the recorded sound. A recording to savour and enjoy one which at this price should win Farrenc more admirers. ---Stuart Sillitoe, musicweb-international.com

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