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CORTOT-THOBAUD-CASALS *Mendelssohn & Schumann Trios*

Pristine
XR

HISTORIC REVIEW

Again the Great Three—Cortot, Thibaud, and Casals—and, alas, Uncle Red Label and all. H.M.V., 1209-12, costs 34s., for the Schumann Trio in D minor, Op. 63 (first movement, three sides; second, one; other two movements, one record each). There is grand meat in the first movement, in which the *appassionato* is finally brought out, not merely laid on. Try the last half-inch of the first side for a draught of the purest romanticism—that lamentable commodity which, a few determined persons assure us, with ludicrous lack of effect, is going . . . going. . . I find the strings sometimes a bit too keen for my taste. Hear how they work joyfully, like Titans, in the second movement, a great hurdler, in which strings and piano have an attractive rhythmic scheme between them. The piano dims in the third movement accompaniment to the fiddle. That opening is an unusual one, piquing curiosity as to what is coming after. A very rich, calm piece it is—the inward eye of Schumann. This movement, by the way, runs straight on into the last, a big, broad swinger, full of heart and devices for beguiling the way. The whole work is on a high level, with few drops—some of the best of Schumann's writing for a few instruments; but I feel that in this strongly-nerved recording, the strings, whether by reason of natural vigour or the microphone's interference, are a bit too strong for the piano.

W. R-A., *The Gramophone*, April 1930

Producer's Note

By the time of these recordings, Cortot, Thibaud and Casals had been playing together as a trio for around twenty years, and at a time when chamber music was considered by some as a bit of a joke they were clearly regarded as anything but. Each, of course, was a well-established solo musician in his own right, but I think it's fair to say they were one of the first superstar trios of the age of sound recording. The development of recorded chamber music had been aided by the formation in the late acoustic era of the National Gramophonic Society by the publisher of The Gramophone, and this clearly spurred the major record companies into following suit (the NGS fizzled out in 1931 as a result of seeming no longer necessary for precisely this reason).

Although microphone and electrical recording technology, introduced in the summer of 1925, was still very much in its infancy when these two recordings were made, it's quite astonishing to hear the fidelity and detail captured in both the 1927 Mendelssohn and the 1928 Schumann. XR remastering has, here, done great service to the tonal qualities of all instruments, with the cello and piano being particularly well-served. At the same time, Capstan pitch stabilisation processing has brought a real solidity to the recording. Surface noise was less of an issue with the Mendelssohn than the Schumann, where the slightly increased frequency range of the recording clashed at times with surface swish, though this has been largely dealt with. The results are particularly splendid!

Andrew Rose

Cortot - Thibaud - Casals

MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor
SCHUMANN Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor

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HMV studio recordings, 1927 & 1928

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MEDELSOHN PIANO TRIO NO. 1 - SCHUMANN PIANO TRIO NO. 1
CORTOT - THIBAUD - CASALS

CORTOT - THIBAUD - CASALS

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XR remastering by Andrew Rose

MEDELSOHN Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49

- 1 1st mvt. - Molto allegro ed agitato (9:04)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andante con moto tranquillo (7:15)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo - Leggiero e vivace (4:02)
- 4 4th mvt. - Rondo - Allegro vivace - Presto (8:40)

Recorded Large Queen's Hall, London, 20 & 21 June, 1927
Matrix Nos. CR.1385-2, 1936-2, 1387-1, 1389-1, 1390-2, 1391-3, 1392-2, 1393-1
First issued as HMV 78s DB.1072-75

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Cortot, Thibaud
and Casals

Total duration: 59:30

SCHUMANN Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 63

- 5 1st mvt. - Mit Energie und Leidenschaft (12:24)
- 6 2nd mvt. - Lebhaft, doch nich zu rasch (4:22)
- 7 3rd mvt. - Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung (6:18)
- 8 4th mvt. - Mit Feuer (7:25)

Recorded Studo C, Small Queen's Hall, London, 15 & 18 October and 3 November, 1928
Matrix Nos. Cc.14740-2, 14741-1, 14742-1, 14743-1, 14744-3, 14756-1, 14757-1, 14758-3
First issued as HMV 78s DB.1209-12

Alfred Cortot *piano*
Jacques Thibaud *violin*
Pablo Casals *cello*

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