



Beethoven - Schubert

Music for String Trio



"I haven't any information about the provenance of these recordings, which despite an appearance in the USA in the early sixties have not been generally available in this country before, and can only guess that they coincided with public performances. They bear the traces of having been made fairly hastily. The sound is dry and hard and so close to the instruments, particularly to the violin, that one has the impression of microphones devouring it before an acoustic can intervene. Either that or it has been passed through some kind of drying agent to remove all reverberation..."

S.P., Gramophone, October 1976

"The trios come from a set which appeared here in October 1976. I did not enjoy it much, finding the sound dry and the playing forced, even edgy. But I think I may have under-estimated the quality of the playing. The recording never gives it a chance to sound well; and I may have been wrong to imply that it is heartless..."

S.P., Gramophone, October 1978

It is easy to underestimate the difference sound quality can make to the impression of a performance. An unsympathetic recording potentially condemns a performance before the musicians get past the first line, and it would appear this is the case here. It probably didn't help that the first British release of these recordings didn't arrive until the mid-1970s, nearly two decades after their recording sessions took place.

Maybe today, more than 60 years later, these lovely recordings of Jascha Heifetz, William Primrose and Gregor Piatigorsky can finally be rehabilitated. Six years ago we issued the Opus 9 set (*Pristine PACM094*), recorded, like the present collection, in sessions which took place in 1957 and 1960. As with the present set, the 1957 recordings were among the last of the mono era, whilst the two 1960 recordings here are both in true stereo.

Mistakes were still being made in the studio, even by 1960. In fact the Schubert *Trio No. 2* included here suffered from shockingly bad sound quality, with almost no warmth or bass and a nasty, harsh midrange which gave the entire recording a truly unpleasant tone throughout. The recording was made during the same sessions as the Beethoven *Serenade* at RCA's Hollywood studios in August 1960, and it's impossible to guess how the engineers managed to produce such different results from the same musicians at the same time.

Happily all three of these recordings have come up a treat with XR remastering correcting those harsh tones, warming up Piatigorsky's anaemic cello, and rounding out the sound of the ensemble. The addition of natural reverberation from the Sala Petrassi at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome further serves to enhance the sound of these fine players and ameliorate the shortcomings of those original recordings.

Andrew Rose

heifetz primrose piatigorsky

beethoven string trio no. 1 · serenade

schubert string trio no. 2

studio recordings, 1957/60



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BEETHOVEN String Trio No. 1; SERENADE - SCHUBERT String Trio No. 2
HEIFETZ - PRIMROSE - PIATIGORSKY

beethovenschubert

heifetz primrose piatigorsky

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PACM 107

XR Remastered by
Andrew Rose

Recorded: RCA Studios,
Hollywood USA (1-9)
Radio Recorders, Hollywood
USA (10-15)

Cover artwork based on a
photograph (L-R) of Primrose,
Heifetz, Piatigorsky

Total duration: 76:16

BEETHOVEN Serenade for String Trio in D, Op. 8

1. 1st mvt. - Marcia. Allegro; Adagio (6:31)
2. 2nd mvt. - Minuet. Allegretto (2:04)
3. 3rd mvt. - Adagio (4:30)
4. 4th mvt. - Allegretto alla polacca (2:56)
5. 5th mvt. - Tema con variazioni. Andante quasi allegretto (8:41)

Recorded 15/22 August 1960, presented in Stereo

SCHUBERT String Trio No. 2 in B flat, D.581

6. 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (4:43)
7. 2nd mvt. - Andante (4:26)
8. 3rd mvt. - Menuetto. Allegretto - Trio (3:19)
9. 4th mvt. - Rondo. Allegretto (4:25)

Recorded 16/22 August 1960, presented in Stereo

BEETHOVEN String Trio No. 1 in E flat, Op. 3

10. 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (8:21)
11. 2nd mvt. - Andante (6:04)
12. 3rd mvt. - Minuet. Allegretto - Trio (3:33)
13. 4th mvt. - Adagio (7:30)
14. 5th mvt. - Minuet. Moderato (3:05)
15. 6th mvt. - Finale. Allegro (6:08)

Recorded 28/29 March 1957, presented in Ambient Stereo

Jascha Heifetz, violin
William Primrose, viola
Gregor Piatigorsky, cello

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BEETHOVEN String Trio No. 1; SERENADE - SCHUBERT String Trio No. 2
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