

MASTERING EQUIPMENT

Digital: Antelope Audio Eclipse 384

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with
JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer
Sontec MEP-250EX Parametric EQ

Cables: Purist Audio Design, Siltech, Speltz Anti-Cables

VPI Classic Turntable w/ Benz Wood Cartridge
Emotive Audio Custom Phone pre-amp

Power Sources: We use a PS Audio P10 Power Plant
and Power Plant 300

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,
Speltz Anti-Cables

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner
using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's and Archival Gold DVD's

Facts about this Recording Recorded by RCA

Op. 25 released 1961

Producer John Pfeiffer / Engineer John Crawford

Op. 60 released 1964

Producer John Pfeiffer / Engineer John Crawford

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape

Festival Quartet BRAHMS

Piano Quartet in G Minor, No.1 Op.25

Piano Quartet In C Minor, No.3 Op. 60

The individual members of the Festival Quartet make for a musical history virtually as rich as the selections they performed. Pianist Victor Babin (1908-1972) and his wife Vitya Vronsky made a piano-duo team Newsweek Magazine once described as "the most brilliant two-piano team of our generation." Both had been pupils of Artur Schnabel, and both befriended Serge Rachmaninov, whose music they championed. In 1961 Victor Babin became the Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music, and he and wife Vronsky served on the faculty. Violist William Primrose (1904-1982), a pupil of the legendary Eugene Ysaye, became an international soloist after he resigned from the NBC Symphony in 1941. He commissioned the Bartok Viola Concerto, and he made the first commercial recording of the Berlioz Harold in Italie Symphony. A long-time collaborator of Jascha Heifetz, Primrose taught at the University of Southern California, the Juilliard School, and the Eastman School of Music. Szymon Goldberg (1909-1993), after playing in the Dresden Philharmonic, became both a soloist and a member of the trio led by Paul Hindemith with Emanuel Feuermann. A gifted conductor as well as an outstanding violinist, Goldberg taught at Yale University, the Juilliard School, and the Curtis Institute of Music. Nikolai Graudan (1896-1964) succeeded Gregor Piatagorsky as a leader of the cello section of the Berlin Philharmonic under Furtwaengler. He later played for the Minneapolis Symphony and taught at Aspen and the Music Academy of the West, Santa Barbara.

Brahms created his G Minor Piano Quartet between 1857-1861. The work was premiered in Vienna in 1862 – exactly one year after Clara Schumann's 1861 inaugural performance of it in Hamburg - by the Hellmesberger Quartet, at which Hellmesberger stated, "This is Beethoven's heir." Donald Tovey called the first movement Allegro "one of the most original and impressive tragic compositions since the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony." The Allegro movement has four distinct themes, but Brahms manipulates the sonata-allegro form to suit his own devices, inspiring one critic to label it "an offence against the laws of style." The Intermezzo is in ternary form, with muted violin. The cello part becomes particularly rich, especially in the trio section. The Andante con moto features a potent march, which interrupts the main melody, a melancholy theme in octaves.

The last movement, Rondo alla Zingarese, imitates Haydn's "Gypsy" Trio and recalls the days Brahms assisted violinist Eduard Remenyi. A brilliant tour de force, the rondo – interspersed with romantic episodes - actually picks up more speed in its final appearance, all the musicians' requiring after-burners. Brahms seems to have begun work on his Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 60 as early as 1855 while he resided with the Schumann household. Since Schumann's own life reached a tragic crisis, Brahms put these musical thoughts away, considering revising the score around 1868. He described the spirit of the music in dire terms: "Imagine a man for whom nothing is left, and who wishes to put an end to himself." Brahms virtually equated himself as the protagonist of Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther, who denied love and vocation, commits suicide. Originally cast in C-sharp Minor, the piece was recast by Brahms into C Minor, adding a scherzo and new finale. He said the work is "half-old and half-new, and the whole thing isn't worth much!" The opening Allegro non troppo presents a hybrid form of sonata-allegro and variation. The piano opens with dark tones answered by the three strings, with a falling half step as a leitmotif. The piano presents the second theme with four variations. The development becomes quite obsessive, with the two-note figure's insistence having become rather unnerving. Late in the first movement, the beauty of Primrose's viola tone makes an extraordinary moment. The Scherzo proves just as restive in 6/8, quite propulsive and leading to a brief episode for strings, *espressivo*, that serves as a trio section. The Andante may have been meant as a love song expressly for Clara Schumann. First cello and piano converse, then later the violin and viola join in. Only some brief syncopations interrupt the flow of the melody, with the piano's returning over pizzicato strings to bring the movement to a subdued close. The last movement remains fixed in dark C Minor, virtually until the final two chords in C Major. The sense of *sturm und drang* has become oppressive, despite a secondary theme that suggests a chorale. Brahms will suddenly wrench the music into C Major at the coda, but the ominous urgency of the music remains with us despite the composer's need for air and sunlight.

Festival Quartet

BRAHMS

Piano Quartet in G Minor, No.1 Op.25

1. Allegro

2. Intermezzo: Allegro

3. Andante con moto

4. Rondo alla Zingarese: Presto

Piano Quartet In C Minor, No. 3 Op. 60

5. Allegro non troppo

6. Scherzo. Allegro

7. Andante

8. Finale. Allegro comodo

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.

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