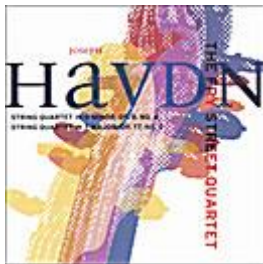


Mp3 The Fry Street Quartet - Haydn String Quartets Op. 9, No. 4 And Op. 77, No. 2



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A pairing of two beautiful string quartets by Haydn, played elegantly and brilliantly by the Fry Street Quartet. 8 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional, EASY LISTENING: Background Music Details: In this disc the Fry Street Quartet performs works by Joseph Haydn. The Op. 9, no. 4 demonstrates perhaps his first great work for the genre, and the Op. 77, no. 2 is his last masterpiece for the medium of the string quartet, completed after his encounters with Mozart and Beethoven. Read the review below copied from SA-CD for more about this recording. Review: Haydn: String Quartets Op. 9 No. 4 Op. 77 No. 2 - Fry Street Quartet Review by Beagle March 9, 2006 (9 of 9 found this review helpful) Performance: Sonics (S): As I opined in the discussion section, the Fry Street* Quartet + IsoMike SACDs don't need reviews, other than a deSelbian "O brave new world! Wonderful, wonderful, and again most wonderful". But convention requires more. THE SOUND There's a strong consensus opinion here: the sound is breath-taking. My review is of the stereo layer, but note Darwin's "The center imaging is convincing despite being 4.0". You can hear a pin drop, and so you listen in hushed silence. It is a slight exaggeration, but I feel as if I could trace the outline of the instruments in the air. It is not an exaggeration to say that one hears the finest nuance of pianissimo bowing and those split-second adjustments of tone which go to create 'ensemble'. One would hear the 'okay, let's go...' breath signals of primarius to crew, had not the Frys graciously chosen to communicate with looks rather than snorts (check out the killer-looks in the liner notes of the Fry Debut CD!). What one does hear is exquisitely bowed strings, which brings me to... THE MUSICIANSHIP These recordings would be remarkable even with so-so musicianship, but the extreme IsoMike fidelity would place a terrifying spotlight on any mediocrity. Fear not, the FSQ is a most fortunate combination of talents. Mere talent is cheap in major urban centres; what

is most fortunate here is that Jessica, Rebecca, Russell and Anne are like-minded and compatible geniuses**. I very much like the balanced egos of first- and second-fiddle, and I have a hunch that the cellist is a major player in musical decisions. Given the inherent inaudibility of the modern viola, I must applaud Russel for his success in pushing his reticent instrument into hearing range. I especially like the twin illusions they create of (1) seeming faster than a competitive recording when in fact they are playing slower, and (2) seeming more leisurely when in fact they are cutting minutes off the record time***. How do they do it? Appropriately there is a light touch to the Haydn, but there is no lack of force in the Stravinsky and Rorem of Modern Voices, disc-2. Mea culpa: I can only blame myself for not having encountered this foursome's exquisite musicianship earlier, but I just wasn't anywhere near in '01, when they wowed them at Carnegie. If recognition keeps pace with musicianship, then move over Takacs, look out Prazk. THE MUSIC My pet peeves are backwards-orders and disparate-pairings of works on discs, but I can't complain about the two Haydn pieces paired here, nor the two Beethoven pieces paired on disc-1 of Modern Voices****. In both cases, the chosen quartets serve as genuine milestones in the musical trajectory of the composer. For Haydn and his friends, quartets were a private alternative to the public symphonies, but if you look closely I think you might see the foundations of The Great Romantic Symphonies being laid out in these works (e.g. Bruckner). One can embrace or discard later composers, but Haydn lies so close to the jugular of western music, he is inescapable. The Haydn disc starts with a significant member of "the first true quartets": the first in a minor key (op. 9 was also the first 'set of six', all in different keys). Late in life, F.J. asked his publishers to renumber his quartets, starting with op. 9 as "opus one", saying that op. 9 and 17 were "the first true quartets" he'd written, thus dismissing the real op. 1 and op. 2 and op. 3 (which he claimed to have written, but didn't write). Although still technically titled a "Divertimento", op. 9/4 is surprisingly 'advanced', when viewed from our post-Beethoven point in time. It sounds like Beethoven might have written it: brooding and heart-felt 'Sturm und Drang'. It may be that really good composers never sit well in one musical era; behold Haydn, obsequious sycophant in court all day, troubled Romantic genius by night. The disc closes with Haydn's last completed quartet, op. 77/2. Not a 'famous' quartet (e.g. Sun, Emperor, Lark, Ritter, Frog...) but a masterful statement of mature musical thought. If themes were tossed off a penny a dozen in earlier years, single themes now are savoured and turned about and viewed from all aspects. And the overall structure possesses symmetries suggestive of the gigantic arches Bartk would later build. Architecture aside, it's grand music, 'regal' might

not be a false adjective. Thank you Ray Kimber, thank you FSQ, and thank you Papa Joe.

_____ * "Fry Street is a little street in Chicago where our quartet was born in 1997. The street was about 20 yards long, and it was not on our street map, so we claimed it for our own...". ** A post-debut change of primarius has done them no harm. *** Haydn Op. 9/4: Kodly Qtt 18:17 vs FSQ 16:20. **** Opp 18/5 and 132, reviewed Mar 14.

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