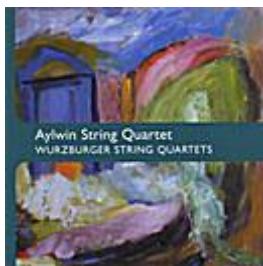


Mp3 Aylwin String Quartet - Wurzbürger String Quartets



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Contemporary classical string quartet music that bends the imagination. 11 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Chamber Music, CLASSICAL: Contemporary Details: Walter Wurzbürger fled from Nazi Germany and via Australia he eventually arrived with his family in London, settling in Kingston. Here he founded the Kingston Symphony Orchestra and taught at both Kingston Polytechnic and Morley College. He continued composing throughout his life and these three quartets span over a thirty year period. "I find it always hard (and perhaps unnecessary) to say anything in words about my music. If the music has not said anything then I fear words will not contribute very much. Words do not explain what lies behind the notes, namely the entire make up of the composers personality, his aspirations, fear, terrors, but also his joys and happiness. All this will, if he has succeeded, have been expressed in his music but can only be described by the music itself." Walter Wurzbürger, 1989 Walter Wurzbürger (1914-1995) Walter Wurzbürger is one of a number of musicians of the 20th Century whose lives have been shaped by exile: in his case, fleeing from Nazi Germany, and re-establishing himself first in France, then Australia, and finally in England. His life was dedicated to music: as performer, composer, arranger and as conductor, he lived through the social and musical changes of the 20th Century, and his life and musical development reveal much about that century. By the time of his death in 1995, he had written over 60 completed works, for a wide variety of ensembles, including 5 string quartets, a piano concerto, a violin concerto, a number of chamber works, studies and songs and a sequence of works for solo piano. The three quartets recorded here represent the complete historical range of Walter Wurzburgers composing career: from 1944 while serving in the Australian army; to the serial compositions of his main period of composition (stretching from the Darmstadt years of the early 1960s through to the late 1980s); and finally into his late period, where many works took on a neo-classical edge, with elements on tonality

coexisting with remnants of serial method. Walter Wurzburger was born in Frankfurt on 21 April 1914, the second son of Siegfried and Gertrude. His parents were both professional music teachers, and his father was organist (and occasional composer) for the Frankfurt Synagogue. Walter composed his first piece in 1925 : apparently it was greeted with amusement by the family; subsequently, in his teens, he studied music at Dr. Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt and Frankfurt University, where he was taught by Bernhard Sekles and Mtys Seiber. He left Germany in 1933 at the advent of the Nazi regime and based himself in France as a jazz and classical performer and arranger. In 1939, on the eve of war, he took a series of engagements in Singapore and the far east. In 1940, along with other aliens, he was interned in Singapore and then Australia, where he served in the Army in a non-combat role. In 1946, he studied for a music degree at Melbourne University and later joined the music faculty; in these years in Australia he had a number of compositions performed. In 1950, he made a first return to Europe, touring the post-war landscape with his brother Danny. He visited London in 1951, and forgot to go back to Australia. In 1952, he resumed composition studies with Seiber, and studied clarinet with Frederick Thurston and Bassoon with Richard Newton. From 1954, he worked as a telephone operator, and played jazz and composed in his hard-earned spare time. In the early 1960s, he attended the Darmstadt Summer school for three consecutive summers. In 1966 he married Hannah Gibianska and in 1967 his twin daughters Ruth and Madeleine were born. Based in the Kingston-upon-Thames area, he taught music at Morley College, Tiffin Boys School and Kingston Polytechnic. After studying conducting with Guy Woolfenden, in 1974 he founded the Kingston Philharmonia, a very adventurous local amateur orchestra, and was its conductor from 1974-1991. He continued to compose and revise earlier works until the end of his life, and had a number of his works performed. String Quartet No 5 (1990) The last quartet he composed, starts with explicit serial material and techniques, though with a lyrical quality emerging from the phrases. The first movement uses one of Walters favourite structural devices: a 4/4 crotchet beat metamorphoses into a sprightly 3/8 quaver pulse. The fast-moving scherzo that follows is chromatic, but rooted in tonality, perhaps more influenced by Hindemith than serialism. The expansive adagio starts with a self-consciously archaic classical melodic phrase firmly in a minor key. If on paper it looks like something close to Bach (a composer Walter was often drawn to in later works), it sounds lush and Romantic. The finale returns to the tough angularity of the first movement. String Quartet No 4 (1987) This quartet was first performed in July 1989 by the Hanson String Quartet at a Society for the Promotion of New Music

Composers forum held in the Royal Northern College of Music. The composer wrote the following programme note for its first performance : The two chords built up in the opening bars between them make up a basic series which is then exploited three more times in various transpositions before other mirror versions are applied. An interesting contrapuntal interplay develops, which is extended, reduced and reused. The opening flourish re-appears three times as a landmark throughout the movement: a form emerges, be it a sonata (of a sort) or a rondo. A curiosity is the quotation (only very short) from Beethovens Choral Symphony, from the end of the finale when the choir is bowing out with schner Gotterfunken, here transposed a tone down (FDGC). No apologies. And since we are talking about quotations, a lovely one presented itself towards the end of the first movement, and would not go away: Shostakovichs monogram, here transposed by an augmented fourth. There are of course quotations, influences and there is plain plagiarism: of the latter crime I hope I am not guilty, but influences there must be galore. Very often I cannot put my finger on them, but they hover somewhere in the background. Berlioz springs to mind somewhere in the first movement, and Stravinsky and Bartok in the second. But also Shostakovich, and, of all people, Khachaturian. No denying the influence of Hindemith and of the Schoenberg school, two opposite poles if there ever were any. In the second movement you could imagine if anyone wants to imagine anything all sorts of grotesque nightbirds and insects fluttering about, eventually organising themselves into an army of sinister creatures. It is only a thought. The last movement is jolly, energetic and somewhat abrasive. String Quartet No 2 (1944) Walter, in later life wondered whether his early works were worth hearing but listeners at the first modern performances of this quartet (given by the Aylwin Ensemble in 2000) were left in no doubt of its interest. It is an approachable work whose style tells of its time: though it is perhaps surprisingly English in character for a work composed by a German Jew living for the time being in Australia. The first movement follows a Beethovenian slow introduction with a fugal 3/8 which ends with some lively passagework for the first violin. The slow movement, taking its shape if not its tonality again from classical models, contrasts polyphony with homophony. A quirky menuet and contrastingly melodic trio follow; then the finale offsets a march-like theme with intricate interplay between all four players. Aylwin String Quartet The Aylwin String Quartet is a distillation of the "Aylwin Ensemble" which was founded in 1996. These four founder members of the group, Richard Aylwin, Ruth Hudson, Amanda Denley and Graham Bradshaw, who are all either current or past members of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, were keen to establish an outlet for

their own creative ideas within this more intimate framework. With a desire to complement the mainstream classical quartet repertoire with the more unusual, they have always had a strong interest in contemporary music and still occasionally enlarge the group with guest artists in order to achieve a more flexible programming. Their repertoire ranges from Purcell to Stravinsky and beyond. In 2000 The Aylwin String Quartet gave a concert supported by the Wurzburger Society, performing his 2nd and 5th Quartets, and in 2004 they appeared at the Bellapais Music Festival in North Cyprus. The Quartet have performed the Bliss Oboe Quintet with Richard Simpson, principal oboe of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and in the summer of 2006 they were invited to play a rarely heard Mozart Piano Concerto with the pianist Huw Watkins, as arranged in quintet form by Mozart himself, at Castle Howard as part of the Ryedale Festival. The Quartet has performed on a yearly basis for the "Music at St James" season in Manchester since 1994 and Richard Aylwin, having directed the inaugural concert of the series in 1988, has been commissioned to compose a work for string quartet, oboe and synthesizer to celebrate their 20th anniversary concert in 2008. The Quartet members have had an association with the orchestra "Philharmonic at UH" for several years, acting as soloists, leader and principals, and have also participated as a quartet in various workshops involving student composers within the Music Centre of the University of Hertfordshire. People who are interested in should consider this download.

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