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The Brentano String Quartet shows why it belongs to the top class

The players ennoble the beautiful sound of their musical instruments through outstanding ensemble playing. Homogeneity seems to be the power source of this ensemble; the constant adjustment of the balance, the tried and tested alternation of back and forth result in a dynamic that has little to do with volume. The tone remains velvety soft, but when it suits, as in the finale, the musicians add a little sharpness, just enough to allow Mendelssohn's brilliance to be enjoyed unadulterated.

Starkenburger Echo | Bensheim | Christian Knatz | 16. Oktober 2024

The American Brentano Quartet, a string quartet formation in a class of its own, made a guest appearance at the Haus der Musik. First of all, the perfection of their playing is unrivalled. All lines in the movement structure are meticulously worked out, the four musicians act with a completely unpretentious, sympathetically allure-free musical sovereignty. The trademark, the speciality of the ensemble sound is its delicacy: even fiery tutti passages sound perfectly transparent, never brutal.

Krone | Innsbruck | Franz Gratl | Oktober 12th, 2024

Most noticeable was the pace, which enabled the lines to feel expansive but never overindulgent. This meant that a whole range of colours and textures could be brought to the fore both within and across the individual lines, with the attention to detail feeling quite breathtaking. There was something particularly notable about the way in which the utmost delicacy could be applied to even the most vibrant of phrases.

Music OMH | Wigmore Hall | Sam Smith | January 23th, 2024

The Brentano played with pristine intonation and just the right amount of intensity, and their playing of the melodies was absolutely beautiful. The Très lent was exceptional. Never afraid to take risks, first violinist Mark Steinberg played with a whisper-soft piano, and yet there was still room for texture beneath his lines: how is it that he plays with such tenderness, so softly, and yet with such pristine articulation? The final movement was packed with turbulent energy but never at the expense of melodic clarity or rhythmic integrity.

The Strad | Leah Holligsworth

My best concert advice is never to pass up an opportunity to hear the Brentano Quartet.... The slow movement [of Beethoven's op. 132] was breathtaking and perfectly proportioned: 'exquisite' fails to do justice. The quartet ended with balance, intelligence of phrasing, and a rich depth of beauty that comes from only the greatest of artists.

The Strad | New York | Leah Hollingsworth

Brentano String Quartet

Press reviews | April 2024

Balance and intonation reach an almost unearthly level of perfection, yet there's nothing inhuman about these American musicians. And their intimate embrace is marvellous: it's as though each player is inhabiting each others' skin... a splendid quartet.

The Times | London | Geoff Brown

A remarkable capacity for magical ensemble playing... effervescent.

The Washington Post

A hair-raising level of focus and intensity... Whew!

Toronto Star

The American ensemble, by now well established in the international pantheon, offers performances both fiercely intelligent and expressively pristine.

New Yorker

A performance such as this, which combines grandeur of utterance with meticulous attention to dynamics and rhythmic vivacity, is the sort of which legendary chamber music experiences are made....Among younger American quartets, the Brentano here claimed pride of place.

Financial Times | London | Allan Ulrich