

Woelfl - String Quartets Op. 4 & Op. 10 (2012)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 05 August 2018 16:17 -

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String Quartet in c minor op 4/3 1.*Allegro* 07:46 2.*Menuetto. Allegretto* 04:36 3.*Adagio ma non troppo* 07:34 4.*Finale. Presto* 05:57 String Quartet in G Major op 10/4
5.*Allegro* 07:24 6.*Menuetto. Allegro* 03:41 7.*Andante* 05:09 8.*Prestissimo* 04:15 String Quartet in C Major op 10/1
9.*Allegro moderato* 07:35 10.*Andante* 08:10 11.*Menuetto. Allegro* 04:06 12.*Allegro* 05:25 Bonus
13.*String Quartet Movement* 02:13
Quatuor Mosaïques: Erich Höbarth, Andrea Bischof - violin Anita Mitterer - viola Christophe Coin - cello

Four instruments by the Viennese luthier Franz Geissenhof (1753–1821) are featured on this recording by the Austrian-French Quatuor Mosaïques, formed by four musicians of Nikolaus Harnoncourt's *Concentus musicus Wien*. The result of this recording of three string quartets by Mozart's protégé Joseph Woelfl (1773–1812) is fresh and lively, nothing straight from a museum. ---paladino.at

This month in *Weird Marketing*: the cover of this album tells us that the musical instruments were made by Franz Geissenhof, in huge capital letters, and in much smaller letters tells us that the music is composed by Joseph Woelfl and performed by the Quatuor Mosaïques. If you are a historical instrument enthusiast and enjoy learning about such things, just wishlist the CD now: there's a terrific booklet essay about Franz Geissenhof, his workshop, and the provenance of the four instruments used on this recording, along with how they differ from the work of Geissenhof's competitors. There are also multiple colour photos of each.

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If you're more interested in the music and performances, read on. Joseph Woelfl, whose name is spelled that way even in the German essay so it must not be Wölfl, was a contemporary of Beethoven and Weber who was taught by Leopold Mozart and Michael Haydn - the wrong Mozart and Haydn, one might think. Wolfgang Mozart wrote Woelfl a recommendation which landed him a job, and Woelfl became a touring piano virtuoso and composer. These string quartets are receiving their first recordings.

Honestly, they aren't special. Woelfl plugged occasionally interesting or emotionally weighty tunes into the standard-issue classical forms, and his writing for the four players never becomes particularly engaging or remarkable. Unlike Beethoven, he never transcends his roots at the piano. The first quartet presented here is in C minor, and the opening theme promises a brooding emotional journey, but signs of Woelfl's lack of imagination abound, starting with the way the second subject is introduced: not with transitional material, but simply a big pause. The C major quartet is similarly disjointed - almost downright awkward.

Mostly I was interested in this recording because I'm always keen to hear the Quatuor Mosaïques. They might be the world's leading period-instrument quartet, and it's always a pleasure to hear them. They certainly do a good job here, and the production is first-class in every particular: well-documented, well-recorded, well-played. It's also more interesting in theory than in practice. Everything's good but the music. ---Brian Reinhart, musicweb-international.com

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