

Elgar - String Quartet In E Minor & Piano Quintet In A Minor (2019)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 28 October 2019 16:09 -

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Quartet, Op. 83 in E minor 1 *Allegro moderato* 9:17 2 *Piacevole* 10:48 3 *Finale. Allegro molto* 9:04
Quintet, Op. 84 in A minor 4 *Moderato* 13:46 5
Adagio 13:01 6 *Andante* 10:40

Cello – Jacqueline Thomas Grand Piano – Martin Roscoe (tracks: 4, 5, 6) Viola – Paul Cassidy Violin – Daniel Rowland, Ian Belton

The three great chamber works, the String Quartet, Piano Quintet, and Violin Sonata, were among the very last works that Elgar wrote, composed during an intensive and productive period in 1918 and 1919 whilst living at Brinkwells in Sussex, and under the twin shadows of the horrors of the Great War and the terminal illness of his wife, Alice.

The String Quartet was dedicated to the original Brodsky Quartet (the name subsequently taken by the current group when they arrived as students at the Royal Northern College of Music) and was championed by this new Brodsky Quartet from the off, sitting alongside Delius's Quartet on their debut recording (1984). It has remained a cornerstone of their repertoire ever since.

The Brodsky Quartet took the opportunity of the centenary year of both works to perform the String Quartet alongside the Piano Quintet with their frequent co-performer Martin Roscoe, and this recording is a result of that commemoration. ---Notes, chandos.net

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Edward Elgar's String Quartet in E minor, Op. 83, and Piano Quintet in A minor, Op. 84, together with the Violin Sonata in E minor, Op. 82, written at about the same time, are rarely played. They were written after Elgar fled London during World War I, and they reflect a certain unease which can be difficult for performers to pin down. These two chamber works are, however, unabashedly lyrical; the influence on Elgar here comes more from Tchaikovsky than from Wagner. Sample the *Piacevole*, the second movement of the String Quartet, memorably characterized by Elgar's wife (at whose funeral it was played) as "captured sunshine." The Brodsky Quartet takes this remarkable movement at an unusually slow tempo, revealing its emotional depth, but not sinking into the lugubrious. The Piano Quintet is a broader work, but here too the Brodsky finds an inward quality, with pianist Martin Roscoe doing uncannily well in the passages where the piano seems to hover slightly eerily in the background. Chandos does fabulous engineering work at Potton Hall, a space likely quite similar to the one for which Elgar imagined the work as he was composing it. Highly recommended. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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