Bela Bartok - 6 String Quartets



CD 1

String Quartet No.1, Sz. 40

1. Lento
2. Poco a poco accelerando all'allegretto
3. Introduzione – Allegro – Allegro vivace

String Quartet No.3, Sz. 85

4. Prima parte – Moderato
5. Secunda parte – Allegro
6. Recapitulazione della prima parte – Moderato

String Quartet No.5, Sz. 102

7. Allegro
8. Allegro molto
9. Scherzo. Alla bulgarese – Trio
10. Andante
11. Finlae. Allegro vivace – Presto

CD 2

String Quartet No.2, Sz. 67

1. Moderato
2. Allegro molto capriccioso
3. Lento

String Quartet No.4, Sz. 91

4. Allegro
5. Prestissimo con sordino
6. Non troppo lento
7. Allegretto pizzicato
8. Allegro molto

String Quartet No.6, Sz. 114

9. Messo – Piu mosso, pesante – Vivace
10. Mesto – Marcia

11. Mesto – Burletta – Moderato
12. Mesto

Takacs Quartet:
Edward Dusinberre, Roger Tapping, Károly Schranz, András Fejér

Daring in virtuosity, vigorous in interpretation, and spellbinding in effect, the Takács Quartet has recorded one of the truly great sets of Bartók's monumental String Quartets (6), seldom matched and surely never surpassed. In hearing this stellar ensemble play, one is struck not so much by Bartók's unusual musical details or his myriad technical devices -- the quartets are practically a bible of advanced string techniques -- but instead, the listener is treated to "big-picture" interpretations that emphasize the shape of the movements and their relations to each other as coherent musical structures. The Takács Quartet's overarching, holistic interpretations are aided by the set's division: disc one features the odd-numbered quartets, and the even-numbered works are on disc two, so the awkward break between movements that normally results from a sequential arrangement is avoided. With explosive energy, genuine Hungarian passion, and astonishing propulsion, the musicians also play with an ear to intelligibility, and manage to make even the thorniest and densest of the quartets -- Nos. 3 and 4 -- sound utterly natural, transparently structured, and deeply communicative. London's exceptional reproduction captures the ensemble with delicious resonance; while this takes some of the bite off the harshest dissonances, it adds a perceptible luster to Bartók's palette and is preferable to the aridity of some recordings. --- Blair Sanderson, allmusic.com

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