Anton Bruckner - String Quintet; Intermezzo; Rondo; String Quartet (1994)

1. String Quintet In F Major: I Gemassigt 2. String Quintet In F Major: II Scherzo. Schnell - Trio. Langsamer 3. String Quintet In F Major: III Adagio 4. String Quintet In F Major: IV Finale. Lebhaft bewegt 5. Intermezzo In D Minor: Moderato - Trio. Langsamer 6. Rondo In C Minor For String Quartet 7. String Quartet In C Minor: I Allegro moderato 8. String Quartet In C Minor: II Andante 9. String Quartet In C Minor: III Scherzo. Presto - Trio 10. String Quartet In C Minor: IV Rondo. Schnell Vera Beths (Violin) Anner Bylsma (Cello) Lisa Rautenberg (Violin) Jürgen Kussmaul (Viola) Guus Jeukendrup (Viola)

Bruckner's early string quartet is more a composition exercise than a full-fledged work of art, but the quintet is something else entirely: a chamber music masterpiece to rank with the great symphonies in expressive intensity and sheer musical grandeur. Indeed, there are a few places where Bruckner seems to demand an almost orchestral volume of tone, and the slow movement has been successful performed (and recorded) by a full string orchestra. The Intermezzo is none other than an alternative scherzo for the quintet, composed because the original players at the premier found Bruckner's first thoughts too difficult. Well, the members of L'Archibudelli certainly don't find the music too difficult--you won't find better performances anywhere. --David Hurwitz, amazon.com

"Bruckner is long, he takes time", says Anner Bylsma in an interview on page 16; not exactly controversial, but it is important in understanding his, and his ensemble's approach to the Quintet. The first movement in particular is more spacious than any other version I can remember. But there is more to it than tempo. Nowadays there seems to be a widespread idea that slowness equals profundity—that all you have to do in Bruckner is hold back the beat and cultivate a suitably opulent sound. What matters here is the subtlety of phrasing and fineness of

the shading, giving vitality and inner intensity to patterns that can easily sound repetitive, especially at this speed. And until this performance I hadn't realized how much of the Quintet is marked p, pp or ppp; L'Archibudelli show how magically suggestive so many of the quiet passages can be and how important it is to respect those dynamic gradings.
...L'Archibudelli...make the work as a whole sound as unified and sublimely purposeful as the best of the symphonies. The adjustments of tempo in the finale feel effortlessly logical... For its structural revelations—and sheer musicality—I'd put L'Archibudelli's version even higher than the fine Alberni version on CRD... The spaciousness of the Sony sound suits the Quintet especially well... --- Stephen Johnson, Gramophone [3/1995], arkivmusic.com

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