

Robert Schumann - Piano Quintet Op. 44 • Piano Quartet Op. 47 (1996)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Piano Quintet in E flat, Op.44 - 1. Allegro brillante* 8:56
2. *Piano Quintet in E flat, Op.44 - 2. In modo d'una marcia (Un poco largamente)* 8:54
3. *Piano Quintet in E flat, Op.44 - 3. Scherzo (Molto vivace)* 4:48
4. *Piano Quintet in E flat, Op.44 - 4. Allegro, ma non troppo* 7:24
5. *Piano Quartet in E flat, Op.47 - 1. Sostenuto assai - Allegro ma non troppo* 8:45
6. *Piano Quartet in E flat, Op.47 - 2. Scherzo (Molto vivace)* 3:38
7. *Piano Quartet in E flat, Op.47 - 3. Andante cantabile* 7:12
8. *Piano Quartet in E flat, Op.47 - 4. Finale (Vivace)* 7:45

Emerson String Quartet
Menahem Pressler (Piano)

Schumann's Piano Quintet is one of the world's (and my) favorite pieces of chamber music. But the less-outgoing Piano Quartet eventually reveals its secrets, too, and it's another wonderful piece. These are fascinating performances. Menahem Pressler, on leave from the Beaux Arts Trio, blends his Old World charm with the New World energy of the Emerson Quartet. The result is a near-ideal balance of power and grace, and there is even some old-fashioned portamento (sliding between notes) to be heard in the strings. It's hard to think of anyone whose taste extends beyond the Baroque era who won't be pleased and moved by this disc. --Leslie Gerber

This is a magnificent collaboration between pianist Menachem Pressler and the Emerson String Quartet; an exceptional synthesis between his Old World graceful playing and the Emerson's New World brashness. Pressler shows his usual warm, introspective playing, which fans of the Beaux Arts Trio have come to expect. Meanwhile, the Emerson String Quartet plays with much empathy and lyricism in both scores. I doubt I have heard a better collaboration between a pianist and a string quartet; certainly there's none that's been as exquisitely recorded as this

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CD. Those looking for a definitive performance of these Schumann scores should look no further. —John Kwok

“Technically speaking the Emerson String Quartet are unimpeachable, with meticulous internal balance and intonation sustained at all times, remarkable tonal matching between the instruments and precision phrasing and dynamics. There is a beguiling transparency about their sound-world that allows every voice to register with the kind of resonance-free clarity . . . ”
International Record Review, London, July 2008

The Emerson String Quartet was formed at the Juilliard School in 1976. It takes its name from the great American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882). Eugene Drucker and Philip Setzer have shared the responsibilities of first and second violin since the Quartet’s inception, with Lawrence Dutton becoming the ESQ violist in 1977, and David Finckel becoming the ensemble’s cellist in 1979. Ever since the quartet’s first appearances at the Vermont Music Festival in 1977 it has been acclaimed for its insightful performances, dynamic artistry and technical mastery, winning numerous awards, including the prestigious Naumburg Award (USA) for Chamber Music in 1978, eight Grammy awards, and three Gramophone awards.

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