

ディスコグラフィアー掲載

ディスコグラフィアー【2019No.155】(HP 掲載)

分類：CD

作曲家：Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

曲：String Quartet No. 1 in F Major, Op.18 No. 1 他

演奏：Cuarteto Casals

発売：harmonia mundi

No.：HMM902400

概要：

[カザルス四重奏団の演奏会](#)で求めてきた The Complete String Quartets Volume 1 のCDです。



収録曲：

String Quartet No. 1 in F Major, Op.18 No. 1 [25:56]

String Quartet No. 3 in D Major, Op.18 No. 3 [22:11]

String Quartet No. 4 in C minor, Op.18 No. 4 [21:53]

Piano Sonata No. 9 Op.14 No. 1 (arr. for string quartet by Beethoven, Hess 34) [12:23]

String Quartet No. 7 in F Major, Op.59 No.1 'Rasumovsky' No. 1 [37:56]

String Quartet No. 12 in E flat Major, Op.127 [34:33]

String Quartet No. 16 in F Major, Op.135 [25:59]

演奏：Cuarteto Casals

録音時期：2015~2017

録音場所：Teldex Studio, Berlin

ネット上で得られた解説は以下のとおりです。

If you receive a new three disc set in a proposed complete cycle of the Beethoven string quartets you tend to automatically think it to be a set containing one of the periods, either early, middle or late, of his quartet compositional career, but no, not here. Here the Cuarteto Casals adopt a totally different and fresh approach in the way that they include quartets from each period, along with a rarity, the composers own arrangement of his Piano Sonata No. 9 Op.14 No.1 for string quartet. The result is both intriguing and eye-opening, not only does it allow the listener to listen to quartets to assess Beethoven's journey as a composer of string quartets, it also lets you sample how the Cuarteto Casals perform the various and distinct stages of the great man's quartet writing, and thus helping you decide whether you would invest in later volumes.

Coming off a highly successful concert tour in which, to celebrate their twentieth anniversary, the Cuarteto Casals performed the complete string quartets over a series of six evening concerts in various international venues, since then they have gone into the studio to record the complete quartets, with the final two sets being released in 2019 and 2020 just in time for the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth. This set starts strongly with an excellent interpretation of the first three opus 18 quartets, the first of which has probably the most memorable opening of any first quartet. Here the Cuarteto Casals have a bold and vibrant approach, their attack in the opening of No.1 is engaging and certainly and draws you in to their performance which has an air of a live performance. The intensity of their performance continues throughout the three Op.18, with the Allegro final movement of the C minor Quartet as engaging as the opening of this disc.

The second disc opens with an intriguing work, Beethoven's own transcription of his popular Piano Sonata No.9, in which he transposed the key signature from E Major to F Major. This is not a slavish arrangement, as Beethoven altered some passages, deleting some completely, whilst adding some little touches so that the music suits the sonority of the strings more. The result is a quartet which stylistically in keeping with the Op.18, it was published in 1802, a year after his Op.18, if slightly more relaxed. This is followed by a wonderful performance of the String Quartet No.7 in F Major, Op.59 No.1 'Rasumovsky' No. 1, and the contrast is tangible. It was composed at the same period as the Piano Concerto No.4, with the development of his compositional style clearly in evidence, with the Rasumovsky's breaking away from the classical nature of the Op.18 with their more symphonic character, something that the Cuarteto Casals expertly brings to

the fore, especially when contrasted with the transcription of the Piano Sonata, here the revolutionary character of the middle period string quartets jumps off the disc.

The final disc brings us two examples of Beethoven's late period string quartets, the String Quartet No.12 in E flat Major, Op.127 and the String Quartet No.16 in F Major, Op.135, and here again the intensity of the music and the performance is engaging. The late quartets contain, for me, some of Beethoven's most virtuosic music, sections that stretch the abilities of even the best quartet, as well as sections of aching beauty, and I am glad to say that the Cuarteto Casals prove themselves equal to most of what Beethoven throws at them. I say 'most' on purpose, because if I have one criticism of their performance, it is in their performance of his apotheosis of the art form, the Op.135. Whilst the Cuarteto Casals give a very strong performance of this work, I find there to be a degree of humour in some of Beethoven's writing and that this is exploited more by other quartets, such as the Tokyo String Quartet's 2014 release which is again on Harmonia Mundi (HMU 807641.48). This is not a major criticism of the Cuarteto Casals' interpretation of the Quartet, and it is good to have one that plays down the humour, I just like the humour accentuated more.

This is a wonderful example of the Cuarteto Casals' ensemble playing, which is strong and detailed throughout. They have a real sense of togetherness, as well as one of enjoyment and love for the music. Even taking in to account my slight criticism of their performance of the Op.135, this remains a very strong contender, after all, we all have favourite recordings of the individual quartets, and perhaps this is why I have so many complete cycles of the quartets, with all offering their strong and weak points. This is however, a very promising start to a complete quartet cycle, the Cuarteto Casals, if they keep this level of intensity up, will certainly be up there with the best, if not vying for the top spot. This is a series that I will certainly be investing in as the subsequent volumes are released.

The Harmonia Mundi engineers have worked wonders, as this set has not only a wonderful sense of acoustic but also a clear and detailed recording. The recording is backed up with excellent booklet notes by Jean-Paul Montagnier as well as by the Cuarteto Casals violist, Jonathan Brown, who gives a performer's insight into the music.

Stuart Sillitoe

ピアノソナタからの編曲を除き、ベートーベンの初期から中期にかけての弦楽四重奏の演奏を集めたものです。演奏会で聴いた美音は、CD再生ではやや後退していますが、すっきりした透明度の高い弦の響きが心地よく感じられます。

演奏スタイルは、演奏会の印象そのままに4人の緻密な演奏の受け渡しが感じ取れます。すべての曲とその楽章について、それぞれの味わいを活かした演奏が聴けますが、この四重奏団は、過度に緊張を強いることなく、いかにも重厚な演奏をしている様子を見せつけることもなく、現代的なスマートな演奏と言えます。

以上