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11/17-(4)

Robert Fuchs (1847-1927)
Complete String Quartets
op. 58, 62, 71 & 106

Minguet Quartet

2 CDs at the price of 1

MDG 603 2050-2

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Chamber Intellect

When orchestras became larger and larger, instrumentations more and more refined, and sound impressions louder and louder, Robert Fuchs composed . . . string quartets. Working in what is certainly the most intellectual musical genre, he had ears for intimate personal statements, while the music business had eyes mostly for showy spectacles. The Minguet Quartet, now a sought-after ensemble, once rescued Fuchs's four quartets from decades of neglect when it was as aspiring young formation; the newly released special edition even today makes for true listening pleasure.

Grand Master

For Fuchs very much had a story to tell. It was not without reason that avant-gardists were his pupils: Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, and Hugo Wolff were among his students as well as Alexander von Zemlinsky, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and Franz Schreker. The fact that Fuchs left experimentation to his pupils demonstrates this master's true greatness.

Musical Gallery

And even his contemporaries recognized that he was a master: For example, the *Neue Musikalische Presse* wrote, "He deserves an outstanding place in a gallery of the Viennese musicians of our times." Fuchs was then at the height of his career and had gained renown above all with his finely emotional serenades. He was acclaimed primarily for his generous melodic lines – which are especially beautiful in the adagio of the third quartet.

Viennese Tone

The Minguet Quartet perfectly captures the Viennese tone of these wrongly forgotten compositions. Fuchs's clear formal language and lavish wealth of motifs are in the best hands with these four Cologne musicians. So we see that it is also a good thing if somebody does not follow all the fashionable trends; we can truly be thankful for all the great beauty contained in these quartets!