
The Fitzwilliam String Quartet

Selected Reviews

“...The Fitzwilliam Quartet, whom I admire very much.

Thank you for a superlative performance of my thirteenth quartet.”

D. Shostakovich in a personal letter on his String Quartet No. 13, York University (1972)

Bruckner Quintet. Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham. Djanogly Recital Hall, November 2011

“a revelation”, “performed with a flexible lyricism that has become a rare thing in Bruckner performance”, “Lucy Russell again presented the opening theme with full expression (exactly as marked ‘ausdrucksvoll’), and it was lovely to hear the second viola, James Boyd’s, brief imitative comment cast a slightly different light on the motive. Alan George introduced the second theme very beautifully indeed, with a wonderfully restrained tenderness which gave space for its more forthright repetition an octave lower by Heather Tuach’s always eloquent cello playing. The quiet closing pages of this movement were a testament to capabilities of the gut strings, the commitment of the players, and the profundity of Bruckner’s inspiration.”

- Ken Ward, The Bruckner Journal

“How well their gut strings evoke the urban and rural Austria of his period should be just as evident from their CD as it was in the Djanogly Recital Hall.” - **Peter Palmer, thisisnottingham.co.uk**

Concert, Iffley Music Festival, May 2011

“The quartet revealed a bright, muscular, and assertive sound as it embarked on one section of Haydn’s Seven Last Words.”, “The Fitzwilliams sound particularly well when playing quiet, reflective passages.”, “And indeed the Fitzwilliam’s performance emphasised the fact that there is a great deal more to this composer [Vaughan Williams] than hymn tunes and The Lark Ascending.”, “the Fitzwilliams delivered a commanding account of Schubert’s Death and the Maiden quartet. They produced the orchestral sound that Schubert wanted, with their playing running all the way from the yearning quality of the opening, to delicate variations in the second movement, to stormy power. The performance set the seal on an unusual and memorable concert.” - **Giles Woodforde, The Oxford Times**

Haydn Divertimento in C Op. 1, String Quartets Op. 71 No. 2 & Op. 77 No. 2, Diversions DDV 24151

“An imaginative programme which places an early work alongside two mature masterpieces. The spontaneity of Haydn’s musical invention is particularly well served by the energetic playing of the Fitzwilliam Quartet.”

- Erik Levi, BBC Music Magazine February 2011

“The sound quality is natural and well balanced throughout. I certainly recommend this CD as an example of how one can play period instruments and still sound involved and charming. If this is the beginning of a complete Haydn quartet series on Diversions, there may indeed be a goodly market for it down the road.” - **Lynn René Bayley, Fanfare Magazine**

“What [Haydn] does, harmonically, with the little five-note tag in the development of Op 77’s first movement is miraculous, and I felt the Fitzwilliam might have taken it a fraction slower, to relish its riches. But the set as a whole is one to rejoice in.”

- Sunday Times, 12th December 2010

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Brahms Clarinet Quintet, Mozart Clarinet Quintet mvt, Linn Records SACD CKD 278

"...a triumph: the most revelatory version of the [Brahms Clarinet Quintet] I've heard in years; animated, dynamic, passionate.... I have no hesitation in naming this the new benchmark" – **BBC Music Magazine**

Franck String Quartet, Decca 028947684633

"A magnificent performance [of the Franck Quartet], superbly triumphing over the technical challenge with totally dedicated, passionately convincing playing; one of the finest chamber music records of the 1980s." – **Penguin Guide to Compact Discs**

Haydn Seven Last Words from the Cross, Linn Records CKD 153

"A chaste, inward reading [of the Seven Last Words], deeply musical and thoughtfully articulated.....I'll stick with this beautifully balanced new recording." – **The Gramophone**

"In this new recording [of The Seven Last Words] the members [of the FSQ] succeed fabulously well. This disc is an unmitigated delight...one of unrelenting beauty." – **Musical Heritage (USA)**

"The Fitzwilliam quartet, on period instruments, give a superb performance of these marvellous pieces, conveying all the passion and poignancy in the music." – **Early Music News**

Haydn String Quartets Opp.1/6, 71/2, 77/2, Dunelm Records, DRD0172

"Careful attention to dynamics, with outstanding playing by all members, also contributed to one of the most joyful and spiritually uplifting CDs that I have ever heard: moving profundity and sublime jollity through Haydn's glorious music."

– **Ian Milnes**

Rubbra Quartet No. 2, Wigmore Hall

"A powerful and emotionally committed performance of Rubbra's Quartet No.2....a sublime stream of thought beautifully laid to rest by the Fitzwilliam in the tranquil Adagio coda." – **The Independent**

Concert, Grahamstown, National Arts Festival, South Africa

"Touches like these are what give the Fitzwilliam, for whom bold programming and superb playing are equal music, the edge over most other quartets in the world. The standing ovation, which a packed house gave them was not only for their integrated sound and fine ensemble, it was clearly also for the revelation of new worlds in old works." – **Cue**

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Concert, incl. Tchaikovsky String Quartet No. 3, Agora, St Petersburg

"The playing of the music was absolutely immaculate, with its subtle feeling of style and deep penetration into its content. The intensity with which they played shone through, and musicians and audience alike were caught up in a common extravaganza. The culmination of this evening [Tchaikovsky No.3], in the former flat of Modest Tchaikovsky, was performed so faithfully, "in Russian", by the British musicians. I very much hope that the Fitzwilliam Quartet will be a permanent guest of St. Petersburg."

– **Alexander Kantorov, St Petersburg Times**

Schubert String Quintet, York Early Music Festival

"The enthralling rendition, with Moray Welsh, of Schubert's Quintet in C was one of the highlights of the 1998 festival."

– **Early Music Today**

Concert, Doncaster Art Gallery

"The Fitzwilliam is a world-class quartet, and recently graced the Museum with playing of breathtaking precision, outstanding concentration, marvellous style and authority. They afforded astonishing variety of mood and period covering 300 years – do we have a more versatile quartet? A gorgeous musical experience." – **Philip Scowcroft, Doncaster Free Press**

Shostakovich String Quartet No. 4, Borodin String Quartet No. 2, Wigmore Hall

"The Fitzwilliam in its reincarnated state, with Lucy Russell as leader, captured the soul of the music [Shostakovich No.4] in their absorption with every gesture and shading. Borodin's Quartet No.2 was played with similar passion and an effortlessly rich collective tone." – **The Strad**

Delius String Quartet, Bradford University

"This was the best performance of the Delius Quartet I have ever heard." – **Eric Fenby**