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## The Atlantis Trio & Ensemble Play Romantic Favorites

Robert Schumann: Piano Quintet in E $\flat$ , Op. 44; Franz Schubert: "Die Forelle", D. 550; Piano Quintet in A, Op. [posth.] 114, D. 667, "The Trout"; The Atlantis Trio & Ensemble: Penelope Crawford, piano (Graf, Vienna, 1835); Jaap Schröder, violin, Etienne Abelin, viola; Peter Bucknell, viola; Enid Sutherland, cello; Anne Trout, double base; Max van Egmond, baritone; [Musica Omnia](#) MO 0212, ©2007, 76:48, \$11.99.

Felix Mendelssohn: Piano Trio in d, Op. 49, Piano Sextet in D, Op. [posth.] 110; The Atlantis Trio & Ensemble: Penelope Crawford, piano (Graf, Vienna, 1835); Jaap Schröder, violin; Peter Bucknell, viola; Daniel Foster, viola; Enid Sutherland, cello; Anne Trout, double bass; [Musica Omnia](#) MO 0205, ©2006, 61:05, \$11.99.

These works are all chestnuts of the repertoire, recorded dozens, scores, and for the Trout, perhaps even hundreds of times. The Sextet, perhaps the least well-known of the group because it is overshadowed by the Octet for Strings, Op. 20, was actually a youthful work, composed when Mendelssohn was 15, but never published by him; the deceptively high Opus number was assigned to it posthumously by his publisher. In circumstances like this, a reviewer must begin by asking: "What does yet another recording of these works have to offer?" "What makes these recordings different from or better than any number of others, some of which also feature early instruments or reproductions thereof?" An example of the latter is Archibudelli's fine 1998 recording of the Trout with Jos van Immerseel playing an early 19th century Tröndlin from Leipzig, but with a Viennese action (SONY SK63361).

The answers to these questions are several. These performances are historically aware, stripped of all sensuously romanticized, sometimes extravagant playing. They are energetic and full-bodied, yet crisp and precise, full of expression and passion without any throbbing vibrato in the strings. They seem light and airy, as if all ponderous weight has been lifted from them, yet they are in no way lightweight. These performers are among the world's most renowned and best in their field, who have spent many years studying and exploring the history of performance practices and are at the top of their form – a decade has indeed made a difference in this field as well as in the progress of recording technology. There is the pleasing warm, mellow sound of the gut strings. Then there is the fortepiano, one of the finest sounding this writer has ever heard on a recording, and Crawford makes it veritably sing. The performance space/recording venue seems perfectly suited to the music; the sound is full but there is no reverberation. The sound quality is superb.

The booklets are as fine products as the CDs themselves. The Mendelssohn's essay is by R. Larry Todd, Professor of Music at Duke University, whose 2003 biography of Mendelssohn was named best biography for that year by the American Association of Publishers. The essays in the Schumann/Schubert are by Susan Youens, Professor of Music at the University of Notre Dame. That for the Schubert, entitled: "Die Forelle. From Lied to Quintet," is particularly enlightening, and having the Lied sung by Max van Egmond with the same pianist on the same instrument before the Trout is played gives added illustrative and illuminating listening pleasure. A photo of the fortepiano's keyboard graces the back cover of the latter; one of the Atlantis Trio that of the former. Covers of both feature appropriate works of art contemporary to the music, black and white details of which are scattered throughout their pages. Both include the same note about the piano and bios of the performers. They are classy and scholarly productions that complement rather than hype the musical performances.

Very highly recommended. Both recordings are truly superior and provide immense listening pleasure. Even if you personally already own a dozen other recordings of the Trout, you ought to buy this one.

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