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Danel Quartet

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Quatuor Danel

Mieczysław Weinberg String Quartets Vol. 5 Quatuor Danel

“The Quatuor Danel is wonderful - nothing is bloated or overplayed, and not once did my ears prick up at a flaw in ensemble or intonation.” – AMERICAN RECORDS GUIDE

The Quatuor Danel was founded in 1991 and has been at the forefront of the international music scene ever since, with important concert performances worldwide and a row of ground breaking CD recordings winning many important international awards.

The ensemble is famous for their bold, concentrated interpretations of the string quartet cycles of Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Shostakovich, and Weinberg. Their lively and fresh vision on the traditional quartet repertoire has delivered them subsequent praise from public and press. The other part of their force lies in the collaboration with major contemporary composers such as Rihm, Lachenmann, Gubaidulina, Harvey, Dusapin and the stars of a younger generation including Jörg Widmann and Bruno Mantovani.

“Having previously delivered a highly praised Shostakovich cycle, it's hardly surprising that the Quatuor Danel demonstrate such an instinctive understanding of Mieczyslaw Weinberg's idiom, not to mention an impressive capacity to extract the maximum degree of tonal and dynamic variety from the music” – BBC Music Magazine *****

Russian composers have a special place in the Quatuor Danel's repertoire. They have championed all string quartets by Shostakovich and recorded the complete cycle for Fuga Libera in 2005. This box-set was recently re-issued and still counts as one of the benchmark interpretations of Shostakovich' quartets. Over the past three years the Quatuor Danel has recorded the almost unknown quartet oeuvre of Mieczyslaw Weinberg, the neglected contemporary of Shostakovich, for CD-label CPO. The quartet will continue to break a lance for this breathtakingly beautiful repertoire coming seasons.

“Weinberg wrote 17 quartets. All are worth hearing, most are very good indeed, and few are supreme achievements. As a group they make up what is certainly one of the most distinguished quartet cycles of the 20th century” - Mark Lehman on Weinberg's string quartets

When reviewing their first volumes I was impressed with the Quatuor Danel's preparation and absorption in Weinberg's idiom as much as I was with the music itself. There has been no fall-off in quality: these five quartets also offer a fascinating glimpse into Weinberg's output, the sound is beautiful and the Danel's playing is a model for any aspiring string quartet.” – GRAMOPHONE

At the very heart of the Quatuor Danel's work lies their ambassadorship for young musicians in general and string quartets in particular. Teaching and master classes are a fundamental part of their activities. The quartet has been artist-in-residence at the University of Manchester since 2005, working closely with the students, but also with musicologists Barry Cooper and David Fanning.

The quartet's current concert diary will take them to the major concert halls in Brussels, Amsterdam, Moscow, Paris, London, Madrid, Vienna, Berlin, Beijing, Tokyo and New York, but they are also comfortable when playing in lesser known intimate venues. Quatuor Danel is a regular guest at festivals such as Kuhmo, Cork, Schleswig-Holstein, Bregenz, Montpellier, Ars Musica and Musica Mundi.

Upcoming recording projects of the Quatuor Danel will consist of the three Tchaikovsky quartets, the Quartet and Piano Quintet by Franck and a longer term project with all string quartets by Haydn and late Beethoven.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE QUATUOR DANIEL ON MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG

Our first meeting with the name Mieczyslaw Weinberg was in 1994. We were still a very young quartet, and we had just studied with the great Borodin Quartet and members of the Beethoven Quartet. We had performed the complete cycle of Shostakovich quartets for the very first time. Suddenly we were surrounded by all these exceptional people who had a very intimate relationship with Russian music. Several of them, among others Irina Shostakovich and Valentin Berlinsky persuaded us to have a look at Weinberg's music, specially of course his string quartets. We were expecting music of mediocre, maybe even poor quality. But we were in for a huge surprise: every new piece of music we put on our stands was a revelation.

“Anyone who cares about modern chamber music should hear Weinberg's quartets. The Quatuor Danel plays them with intensity, devotion, and lustrous tone”
– AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

The scores and parts were extremely difficult to get by and many of the quartets had to be copied by hand before we could start playing them. But we had the unique happiness to discover some of the greatest music of the 20th century. I think our Weinberg adventure will keep on feeling like a very strong artistic, musical, but also human experience throughout the rest of our careers. We felt like an archeologist who by chance discovers a complete new civilisation.

Between 2006 and 2009 we recorded all 17 quartets. It was intensely moving to hear these masterpieces coming back to life, one after the other. And some of them - the Aria and Capriccio and the stunning and magnificent String Quartet no 6 – actually sounded for the first time ever!

To share this beautiful music with the public remains our most important mission, more even than recording them. Like all classical music, Weinberg's quartets are strongest when experienced live. Every time we present the Weinberg string quartets, the feedback from the audience is the same: they feel privileged to hear this wonderful music for the first time. We are absolutely convinced that in a matter of years this music will get the place it deserves alongside the great masters of the string quartet of the 20th century.

“The Quatuor Danel are expert in this extremely difficult music. The Quatuor Danel first charging ahead with vigor, not a hair out of place, then sudden chameleon-like shifts of tempo and moods are managed with ease; so are the bittersweet songlike passages that Weinberg applies for haunting contrast.” – FANFARE

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