

Matthias Rácz – Bassoon Sonata & Quartets

[Ars Produktion](#) ARS 38 194

Stereo/Multichannel Hybrid

Classical - Chamber

Mozart: Sonata for Bassoon & Cello, K. 292

Devienne: 3 Bassoon quartets, Op. 73

Matthias Rácz (bassoon)

Members of the Merel Quartet

Review by Adrian Quanjer –

January 15, 2016

ARS-Produktion is the young musician's best friend, so it would seem to me. Time and again I have argued that there is so much more talent around than we are made to believe by some. It is true: known artists sell better than no-names. But how often aren't we pleasantly surprised by hitherto unknown young musicians or lesser known ensembles giving their best to wide acclaim. ARS-Produktion is in this field a kind of Sherlock Holmes, sniffing out the market; bringing us exciting new talent. And if that wasn't good enough: with excellent recorded sound in high resolution.

This disk is a case in point. I had never heard before of the Merel Quartett, of which Alfred Brendel said: "In an age rich in string quartets of remarkable quality, the Merel Quartett is, in my opinion one of the very best". Is it my ignorance, or are we too much focused on a small number of, admittedly, well playing, though persuasively promoted groups, and henceforth frequently cited by the media? I think ARS-Produktion is doing the musical world in general and the Hi-Res community in particular a great favour by bringing the excellent Merel's to our attention.

Three of the four members (violin, alto and cello) support bassoonist, Matthias Rácz, in a recital of lesser known chamber music for bassoon and strings. Mozart's duet for Bassoon and cello KV 292, finds itself often as filler on bassoon recitals and concertos. Here it is given pole position setting, literally, the intimate tone of this disk. The other three pieces are the only bassoon quartets (Op. 73/1-3) the 'French Mozart', François Devienne, composed. Devienne may be better known in France than elsewhere, but I can assure readers that his compositions are always 'likeable' and well-constructed.

This is his fourth SACD album for ARS-Produktion, and in spite of his relative young age,

Rácz is widely appreciated as a versatile and competent bassoonist. His credentials are furthermore firmly established by becoming, already the age of 21, principal bassoonist at the 'Gürzenich Orchestra' and holding, from 2003 onward, the same position at Zurich's 'Tonhalle Orchestra' and Abado's hand-picked 'Lucerne Festival Orchestra'. His tone is clear, well-formed and with a pleasantly measured amount of 'mockery'.

The quality of the recording is such that none of the players can afford the slightest mistake, and they don't. But the great charm is that it does not result in stress and rigidity; their play is always 'looser', to use a German expression that can best be (freely) translated as 'loosely'. It creates an atmosphere of joy; almost euphorically so. What more praise can one give?

The programme choice is evident and will give much pleasure 'to friends of the bassoon' and curious music lovers, who want to leave the beaten track, alike.

The surround sound is rather outspoken and may not be to everyone's taste. By placing the surround speakers abreast, or even a little further up front, the soundstage becomes lively and very realistic.

Blangy-le Château
Normandy, France

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Performance: *****

Sonics (Stereo):*****

Sonics (Multichannel):*****