

REINECKE Piano Trios: No. 1 in D, op. 38; **No. 2 in c**, op. 230. **Serenades: in C**, op. 126/1; **in a**, op. 126/2. **BEETHOVEN Triple Concerto** (arr. Reinecke for piano trio) • Hyperion Tr • CPO 555 476-2 (Download: 123:54) Reviewed from a WAV download: 44.1 kHz/16-bit

What are the odds? As recently as 45:2, Daniel Morrison reviewed a Naxos release containing the first ever recording of Carl Reinecke's Piano Trio No. 1 in D Major; and here we are, six months later, with a second recording of the same work. To add to the coincidence, the Naxos disc also included Reinecke's piano trio arrangement of Beethoven's Triple Concerto. This new CPO release goes Naxos three better by offering the same two works in a two-disc set that additionally includes Reinecke's Piano Trio No. 2 and his two serenades scored for piano trio. It would appear that this time it's the Piano Trio No. 2 that's receiving its world premiere recording, though I wouldn't swear to that, or to my reasonable certainty, after having searched the listings, that the two serenades are also recorded here for the first time.

In his review, Morrison assumed that Reinecke had composed more than one piano trio, since the trio on the Naxos disc was designated No. 1, but Morrison stated that he wasn't able to locate a complete listing of Reinecke's compositions and wasn't sure how many piano trios the composer actually wrote. Hopefully, this helps: A complete listing of Reinecke's works—all 288 opus numbers of them—can be found at imslp.org/wiki/List_of_works_by_Carl_Reinecke, and in addition to the two numbered piano trios included in the present two-disc set, listed collectively under op. 159 are *Three Easy Piano Trios*. Moreover, though designated "serenades," the two op. 126 numbers, for all practical purposes, are also piano trios scored for violin, cello, and piano. Mind you, I'm not complaining, but the absence of the *Three Easy Piano Trios* from the present set does nullify CPO's claim to its being Carl Reinecke's "Complete Piano Trios." In the interest of clarification, it should also be noted that Reinecke composed a number of other works that carry the titles "trio" and "serenade, but they're scored for different combinations of instruments.

Carl Reinecke lived long and prospered. When he was born in 1824, Beethoven and Schubert were still alive, and when he died in 1910, he had outlived not only Brahms but virtually the entire gallery of Romantic-period composers. As a student, Reinecke availed himself of the best musical education money could buy, studying in Leipzig with Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Liszt, and befriending the former two. As a concert pianist, Reinecke toured extensively throughout Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, and in 1851 he was hired to teach at the conservatory in Cologne.

His most important and long-lasting appointment, however, came in 1860, when he was hand-picked to succeed Julius Rietz as director of Leipzig's Gewandhaus,

and to become professor of composition at its conservatory and conductor of its famous orchestra. After 35 years, Reinecke stepped down as conductor of the orchestra to be succeeded by Arthur Nikisch, but Reinecke continued to teach until 1902. An incomplete list of his students who went on to make names for themselves includes, alphabetically, Albéniz, Bruch, Max Fiedler, Grieg, Janáček, Sinding, Stanford, Svendsen, and Felix Weingartner.

As noted above, Reinecke's own catalog of works is large and extensive. If you take into account that many of the 288 opus numbers are actually sets or collections of individual pieces, the total count of Reinecke's compositions easily rises to 500 or more. Among them are symphonies, concertos, chamber works of all flavors, five operas (three of them for children), and solo piano pieces galore. But by far the most space in Reinecke's catalog is taken up by vocal works (songs for voice and piano and works for men's, women's, and mixed choruses). And yet, Reinecke has achieved perhaps the unique distinction among composers of having written so much while being remembered for so little. Unless you count his Flute Sonata in E Minor, op. 167, nicknamed "Undine," which shows up now and then on flute recitals—and even that appears in concert and on record with the frequency of blue moons—I can't recall ever encountering a Reinecke symphony, concerto, or string quartet on a concert program. Fortunately, recordings of his symphonies, concertos, and major chamber works have come to the rescue and have managed to keep Reinecke and his music from vanishing completely into oblivion.

It's hard to know why Reinecke is thought so poorly of, for his ear for melody and harmony, and his knack for scoring in his instrumental and orchestral works, are undeniable. Yes, it's true that Schumann was Reinecke's main Muse and the teacher who seems to have exerted the strongest influence on him. And that, in the eyes and ears of many, made Reinecke guilty of being backward-looking and a staunch conservative holdout. Some critics went so far as to disparage his music as yesterday's news while the stories were still above the fold. Brahms spoke ill of Reinecke— "his talent is very, very small"—while others who felt similarly towards Brahms had to admit that Reinecke's conservatism made Brahms's music sound like that of a wild-eyed radical.

All of that said, many composers wrote in a style that was out of date for their time, and yet, their music still thrills us today. I think Raymond Tuttle hit upon the truth in a review of two of Reinecke's symphonies in 44:3, in which he wrote, "If they [Reinecke's works] lack anything, it is only the divine spark." In different words, I believe I expressed a similar sentiment in a review of the composer's cello sonatas in 35:5, in which I said, "Sometimes music is just music. It doesn't have to storm the heavens or plumb the depths to give pleasure and even succor." To a greater or lesser degree, we are all susceptible to the "Great Works Syndrome," which, over the centuries, has relegated composers and their music to Limbo for lacking the "divine spark."

A visit to these trio works by Reinecke is a visit to that Limbo, and it turns out that it's not at all a bad place to be. The music is filled with lovely melodies, melting harmonies, tearful slow movements, and occasionally surprising turns of phrase.

The opening "Marsch" movement of the Serenade in A Minor, op. 126/2, is especially imaginative and noteworthy in that regard. Moreover, without exception, Reinecke proves himself a master craftsman when it comes to customizing the fit and finish of his material to the three instruments he's writing for.

I was interested to read in the album note that the Triple Concerto was not the only one of Beethoven's works that Reinecke arranged for his own use in scaled-down performances. He also made arrangements of the Ninth Symphony, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, the C-Major Mass, and the Violin Concerto. Reinecke's admiration of Beethoven further led him to compose a cadenza for Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, to edit the violin and cello sonatas, and to publish a book on the piano sonatas. I can't say that I find Reinecke's arrangement of the Triple Concerto an entirely satisfying substitute for Beethoven's original orchestral version, but Reinecke's rationale shouldn't be ridiculed. Beethoven, himself, after all, described the work to his publisher as a piano trio with orchestra.

My exposure to the Hyperion Trio dates back to 2007 in a 30:6 review of a four-disc set by the ensemble on the Thorofon label, containing a selection of several mainstream piano trios by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms. I questioned some of the programming choices that were made, but I had nothing but praise for the Hyperion's players, which, at that time, were Oliver Kipp, violin; Katharina Troe, cello; and Hagen Schwarzrock, piano. Now, 15 years later, in 2022, the group's membership hasn't changed. Between then and now, the Hyperion Trio has opened our ears to a number of off-the-beaten-path piano trios by Robert Kahn, Joseph Marx, Rubin (not Karl) Goldmark, and Felix Woysch. And here the ensemble has applied its considerable talents to the piano trios of Carl Reinecke, another composer who ended up in a ditch by the side of the road.

I have to tell you that after listening to Reinecke's Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor—of which, as speculated above, this may be its first recording—I'm not so sure anymore that Reinecke lacked the "divine spark." This is a piano trio in the *Sturm und Drang* style that can compete, in my opinion, with the intense drama and passion of any Romantic piano trio of the period. The rest of the works on the program are engaging too, but the C-Minor Trio, a relatively late work in the composer's output, dating from 1895, is a stunner. And if I know my readers as I think I do, this a work guaranteed to appeal to those who love big, bold, and gorgeous Romantic chamber works. Very strongly recommended. **Jerry Dubins**

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Bio of the Hyperion Trio & Description of the Piano Trios double-CD

The Hyperion Trio, founded in 1999, has earned an outstanding international reputation over the past two decades, during which it has performed more than 250 works, including a number of world premieres, in its concert programs and independently designed concert cycles - always with the same three original

members! On its latest double album the trio turns to works for piano trio by Carl Reinecke transmitted to us for all the phases of this composer's life, from his beginnings to his old age. Although closeness to Schumann can clearly be heard in the early Piano Trio op. 38 of 1853, it is in every way a thoroughly independent composition both melodically and harmonically and was an important milestone for the succeeding generation of composers. In his two Serenades op. 126, composed twenty years after the first piano trio, great ambition is in evidence, despite the light tone of these works: the texture is more relaxed than it was in the first piano trio, and the thematic material is concise and forms the core for rich elaboration. The Piano Trio No. 2 op. 230, composed twenty years after the two serenades and no fewer than forty-two years after the first piano trio, places considerable demands on the interpreter, not only in the composition's structural and motivic aspects but also purely technically in the field of precision ensemble playing. The beautiful harmonic features of the work are enormous, and the tight contrapuntal structure reveals a composer most highly schooled in convention as well as powers of musical invention and ambition beyond the reach of a good many of his younger contemporaries. The original conclusion is formed by Reinecke's Piano Trio Version of Beethoven's Triple Concerto op. 56. While his arrangement preserves the orchestral breadth, it simultaneously brings out the chamber components of the original work.

Clarinet Music of Reinecke w/ Olivier Dartevelle

David Denton - from the Naxos Website

David's Review Corner, January 2007

Born in Germany in 1824 Carl Reinecke's music hangs into the concert repertoire by a thread, though thankfully inquisitive record labels offer a chance to catch up with some of his extensive output. After that build up I would love to say we here have some major discoveries, but like most of his output you admire his music rather than falling deeply in love. The very first work is a case in point, Reinecke more intent on blending the viola and clarinet in duet passages rather than the more interesting prospect of juxtaposing the very different sounds of the three instruments. The four Fantasy Pieces are a very different, full of happiness and life, recalling Mendelssohn in their transparency and lightness. The Sonata is an adaptation of the work for flute and piano, and though it is nice to have a new slant on the composer's most frequently played work, the heavier weight of the clarinet may not be quite in keeping with the original concept. The slow movement, however, is very beautiful in this creamy approach. Finally to the Introduction and Allegro appassionato, with the piano having the bulk of the 'appassionato' input. Reliable playing throughout, but the piano needed to have been placed far more forward for an ideal recorded balance. The disc comes as part of Naxos's Limited Edition and may best be found from your Internet supplier.

Amazon Reviews - Both 5*/5*

Reviewed in the United States on August 13, 2017

Reinecke follows Brahms less closely than those in Brahms' inner circle like Robert Fuchs or "Brahms-wannabe" von Herzberg. Although a friend of Brahms, Reinecke has his unique style quite different from Brahms - his music is considerably warmer and brighter than Brahms, whose music suffers occasional depression and resignation, and sometimes even worse, hysteria. Also, it tends to stay on the same key for much longer (in professional term, this is called modulation, and in this respect Fuchs probably outdoes Brahms, never to be bothered to sit on a single key for more than a minute, which can be really irking at times). Overall Reinecke has probably the most "musical sanity" out of the trio (no pun intended here).

Reviewed in the United States on March 29, 2007

It is a pity that with the extensive range of music available on CDs works such as Reinecke's are neglected. For those people who enjoy the chamber music of Brahms, Reinecke is a real discovery and should more be recorded I for one would be eager to explore it further. Having tried to purchase this CD through a UK source and finding it was a limited edition we were indeed lucky that Amazon.com had it in stock. It is an excellent recording by Naxos and I thoroughly recommend it. I particularly wanted it for the Undine Sonata, which was originally composed for the flute and piano, the recording of which on LP I have long cherished, but this version with clarinet and piano is richer in tone.