

# Anna Zassimova: TANEYEV Piano Quintet. Piano Quartet. Piano Trio on cpo



Classical Reviews - Composers & Works

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TANEYEV Piano Quintet. 1 Piano Quartet. Piano Trio • Anna Zassimova (pn); Albrecht Breuninger (vn); 1 Stefan Krznaric (vn); Julien Heichelbach (va); Bernhard Lörcher (vc) • CPO 777 793-2 (2 CDs: 119:52)



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It's a sign of the times that all three of these late chamber works by Taneyev have multiple recordings in print. And this album provides some of the finest, most committed playing in all three compositions that I've heard in some time. The piano trio is as good as the legendary Oistrakh-Knushevitsky-Oborin version (currently available on Brilliant Classics 9272), matching the twists

and turns of Taneyev's quixotic musical thought processes with ease. The piano quintet's finale equals the technical poise and hair-raising tension of Pletnev et al (Deutsche Gramophon 449602), but surpasses them in the subtle flexibility and warm phrasing of the largo movement; and the scherzo is less hard-driven, allowing for more of the movement's airy whimsy à la Saint-Saëns to shine through. Meanwhile, if you want to hear passion, momentum, and a perfect balance between the parts, check out the piano quartet's allegro brillante.

I admit to being caught by surprise by this release. I've admired Zassimova and Breuninger for some time, but I was unaware they, and their compatriots here, had put in much time together on these difficult, extremely rewarding works. It's clear they have, however, and that the studio recording environment does nothing to dampen the spontaneity of their music-making. I could only wish that CPO had provided sound that was a bit more forward. In particular, Zassimova's piano and Lörcher's cello are slightly muffled. But with playing and interpretation like this, I can forgive a lot.

Timings are short, thanks to the first disc only containing the piano quintet. Too bad they didn't convince Zassimova to perform Taneyev's late Prelude and Fugue in G# Minor, or several of his early scherzos. Regardless, all three works are beautifully performed on this set that has become a persuasive contestant for my next Want List. Barry Brenesal

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