



Idil Biret

ARCHIVE EDITION . 5

"Schönberg, insisting on the legitimate interest that attaches to every aspect of the life and person of a great man, once said he would have liked to see how Mahler tied his tie. It is in something of that spirit that one approaches the earliest Mahler work to have come down to us, the single movement for piano quartet in A minor (apparently the first movement of a projected four-movement opus), which he wrote while a student at the Vienna Conservatory, probably late in 1876 when he was 16 years old. As Mahler put it in 1893 "in the end I sent it to Moscow for a competition and it got lost". But in fact it was found among the effects of his widow Alma after her death in 1964, in a folder labelled "early compositions"..."

Weighty, four-square, thickly-scored, discursive, impassioned, Franck's quintet seems to transgress against every one of what one usually thinks of as the conventional "Gallic" virtues: deftness, lightness of texture, epigrammaticism, objectivity, elegance, wit... Even such a quintessentially "Gallic" composer as Debussy could respond to Franck's idealism and purity of aims, despite the gulf that separated their artistic temperaments. "César Franck is always a worshipper of music", he wrote. "No power on earth can induce him to interrupt a passage he considers just and necessary; however long it is, it must be gone through. This is the hallmark of an imagination so selfless as to check its very sobs until it has first tested their genuineness." What redeemed Franck for Debussy, then, was the intense, irresistible sincerity that has won his late work a devoted audience now for over a century. The quintet, the earliest of Franck's works to have joined the enduring concert repertoire, bears it the most eloquent of testimonies."

Richard Taruskin / Columbia University 1981

Gustav MAHLER Quartet for Piano and Strings

1 Introduction – Allegro 11:29

César FRANCK Quintet for Piano and Strings

2 Molto moderato quasi lento – Allegro 15:56

3 Lento, con molto sentimento 13:25

4 Allegro non troppo, ma con fuoco 09:01

Idil Biret with the London String Quartet:
Carl Pini (Violin), Benedict Crufit (Violin), Ruşen Güneş (Viola), Roger Smith (Cello)

Recorded at the CBS Studios, London, England in September 1980.
Recording Engineer: Mike Ross assisted by Mark Chamberlain.
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