

# Ries

Piano Concertos – in C, Op 123; in A flat, Op 151, 'Gruss an den Rhein'

Christopher Hinterhuber *pf*

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / Uwe Grodd

Naxos ® 8 557638 (61' • DDD)

Spirited playing of neglected but delightful concertos – more, please



Remembered as the pupil, amanuensis, friend and biographer of Beethoven, Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838) as a composer has suffered the familiar fate of being entirely dismissed

because he did not happen to be a genius. That admitted, he is clearly his own man. Neither of these works has much to do with Beethoven beyond the obvious references in the orchestral timbre of the earlier (1806) C major Concerto and the odd phrase lifted (tongue-in-cheek?) from his master. The character of the material and the way in which Ries writes for the keyboard has far more in common with Field, Clementi and Hummel. There are clear parallels between the latter and Ries in the high-spirited A flat Concerto of 1826 (its subtitle refers to Ries's homeland, to which he returned in 1824 after a lengthy sojourn in London).

Much of the credit for this recording's success is due to the verve and conviction of the soloist, whom I had not encountered before: Austrian-born and a pupil of Lazar Berman, among others. If Howard Shelley is the current undisputed master in this kind of repertoire, Hinterhuber comes not far behind. The New Zealanders provide keen and sympathetic support under Grodd and the recorded balance is exemplary.

This distinguished release is completed by the booklet from Allan Badley, who also provided the performing edition of these delightful concertos. If these two world-premiere recordings are anything to go by, the complete Ries for piano and orchestra promised by Naxos will be a most welcome addition to the catalogue. **Jeremy Nicholas**