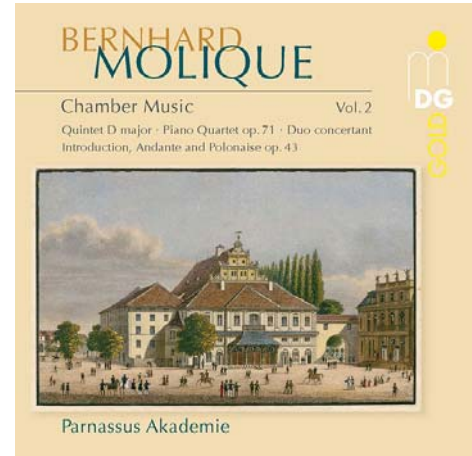




28.11.2019

Bernhard MOLIQUE (1802-1869) Chamber Music - Volume 2

Quintet in D major for flute, violin, violas and cello [28:32]
Introduction, Andante and Polonaise in D major for flute and piano,
Op. 43 [13:25]
Duo concertant in G major for flute and violin [12:13]
Quartet in E flat major for
violin, viola, cello and piano, Op. 71 [18:01]
Parnassus Akademie
rec. 2019, Konzerthaus der Abtei Marienmünster, Germany
MDG 303 2132-2 [72:12]



A highly enjoyable disc of early Romantic chamber music, the Piano Quartet being a real find.

Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und Grimm have served the Nuremberg-born German composer Molique well over the years, having already released three discs of his string quartets featuring the Mannheimer Streichquartett, a volume of which (777 336-2), is the only music by the composer that I have on disc. This disc represents the second volume of a new venture to record the rest of his chamber music; volume one of this series contained the piano trios performed by the Trio Parnassus (303 2116-2).

Molique was the son of a musician and received his first tuition from him. He learned to play a number of instruments before being drawn mainly towards the violin and Louis Spohr gave some lessons to the thirteen-year-old Bernhard. Later, he entered the University of Munich, where he studied the violin under Pietro Rovelli. After his studies, he became a court musician in Munich and eventually succeeded Rovelli as the court violinist. In 1826 he moved to Stuttgart, where he became director of the orchestra. As a composer, Molique did not compose many works, although he did compose six numbered violin concertos and a *Concertino in F minor* for violin and orchestra which served as his Op. 1. Added to those are a handful of concertos for other instruments, including a *Cello Concerto* which was once conducted by Berlioz, but from what I can make out, none is for the piano. His output for chamber forces mainly revolves around the string quartet, of which he composed eight, while there is also a sonata for, of all things, concertina and piano.

The first thing that I must say is that you must like the flute in order to enjoy this disc; thankfully, having a flute-playing daughter, I have come to enjoy many an hour of flute music. The quartets were clearly influenced by Spohr, Mendelssohn and early Beethoven, and the same can be said of the works featured here, although not so much Beethoven this time. The *Quintet* is quite lovely; its opening melody of the Allegro is played on the strings which is then repeated by the flute, then there is some wonderful conversational music between the strings and the flute in the Andante, before the spirited final Rondo vivace brings the work to a spirited conclusion. The *Concertino in F minor* for violin has some nice interplay between the flute and piano, whilst the same can be said of the flute and violin in the *Duo Concertante*, although of the two shorter works this is the more accomplished, probably as he was writing for his own instrument along with the flute.



Of the four works featured on this disc, it is the *Piano Quartet* which I have enjoyed the most, its strong melodic music being more reminiscent of Schubert than Beethoven. A bold gesture in the opening of the Allegro leads to some nice interplay between the piano and the strings in which they swap who leads the melodic development. This is followed by a tender andante; again, some nice development of the thematic material is shared between the instruments. However, it is in the Rondo vivace that the aforementioned composers' influence is most felt: the booklet notes suggest that this music "captures this air of the serenade"; it has a charming lilt as it bounces along to the work's conclusion which brings to mind Schubert's 'Trout', or even his piano trios. This makes me all the more eager to invest in the first volume of this series.

The playing is excellent throughout, although Helen Dabringhaus should be singled out for the beautiful, smooth and mellow tone of her flute; it often sounds like a period wooden instrument, but the booklet mentions nothing about that. There is a great sense of ensemble and enjoyment here which makes want to buy the Piano Trios disc and the other discs of Quartets sooner rather than later. The booklet itself is in the form of an interview with Michael Groß, a format that I am never fully happy with, but some detail about the works can be gleaned from the text. The recorded sound is up to MDG's usual very high standard, making this a most desirable disc.

Stuart Sillitoe