

"Frank Bridge Violin Sonata and Piano Quintet"

Review by Gramophone Magazine, December 2010

Bridge

Allegro appassionato, H82^a. Pensiero, H53^a.
Piano Quintet, H49^a^b. Three Sketches, H68^c.
Spring Song, H157^d. Phantasie Quartet, H55^c.
Violin Sonata, H39 (cped P Hindmarsh)^f

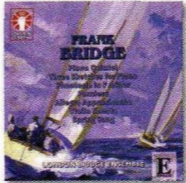
^bLondon Bridge Ensemble (^{acdf}Daniel Tong *pf*
^{ef}Benjamin Nabarro, ^gLucy Gould *vn* ^{ae}Tom Dunn
va ^{de}Kate Gould *vc*)

Dutton Epoch © CDLX7254 (77 • DDD)

Pf Qnt – selected comparison:

Lane, Goldner Qt (7/09) (HYPE) CDA67726

**Another generous Bridge helping
from this sensitive and stylish outfit**



I'd always thought of
Bridge's Piano Quintet
(written in 1904-05 and
drastically revised in
1912) as the solitary
failure in his substantial
chamber output but,

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Chamber reviews

after devouring the London Bridge Ensemble's heartwarming traversal, I can't help wondering whether I've been unduly hard on the piece in the past. For all the impressive accomplishment displayed by Piers Lane and the Goldner Quartet (an essential acquisition for the stunning account of the masterly Fourth String Quartet alone), the poetry, flexibility and ardour displayed by these gifted players held me captive from first note to last. If you need proof, sample the still, soft heart of the ambitious opening movement (from 7'45" onwards), a passage which in every previous performance I've encountered is prone to hang fire but which here acquires a magical sense of wonder. They even manage to make the finale's integration of earlier material sound inevitable rather than contrived, thus triumphantly vindicating Bridge's second thoughts.

The remainder of the programme will be doubly appealing for Bridge aficionados, containing as it does the premiere recording of a sonata for violin and piano that the composer started in 1904 but never finished (he broke off halfway through the second movement); Benjamin Nabarro plays Paul Hindmarsh's splendidly idiomatic completion of this appealing torso with ingratiating lustre and subtly shaded tone. Elsewhere, viola player Tom Dunn makes light of the not inconsiderable technical challenges of *Pensiero* (1905) and *Allegro appassionato* (1908), while Kate Gould's sweetly sung cello in *Spring Song* (1912) is another treat. In all four pieces, Daniel Tong tenders immaculate support. The ensemble's pianist also makes a classy showing in the Three Sketches (1906), his generous rubato in "Rosemary" both apposite and disarming.

Michael Ponder's sound and balance are beyond reproach and Paul Hindmarsh supplies detailed notes. Don't hesitate for a moment – and fingers crossed for more Bridge from this exemplary team! **Andrew Achenbach**

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Gramophone Dec 10

reviewing
London Bridge Ensemble's
latest release for Dutton Epoch