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*Scènes de Quatuor: Autour de La Grande Fugue de Beethoven*  
(review)

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ately performed by a man or a woman. This is despite the decidedly masculine perspective of several texts, e.g., “Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe, die Mutter gar von Eh” [“The girl spoke of love, her mother even of marriage”] of *Gute Nacht* or “Ich such’ im Schnee vergebens nach ihrer Tritte spur” [“I sought in vain for a trace of her footprint in the snow”] and “Wenn meine Schmerzen schweigen, wer sagt mir dann von ihr?” [“When my pain has abated, what shall remind me or her?”] of *Erstarrung*. Even bearing this in mind, Ludwig’s comments are well taken that the journey itself, which is depicted in Schubert’s *Winterreise*, is not specific to either sex. She suggests, rightly I think, that women “think differently about love [and] death . . . that women are more sensitive and have greater emotional depth than men” (p. 9). On the subject of transposition, Ludwig admits to freely transposing the songs in the cycle “so that they always lie within [her] natural range, where [she] can best express the meaning of the word.” She speaks, in the interview, of “[wanting] to make [the songs] as *simple* as possible, like a folksong you sing in a range that suits and your own timbre” (p. 10).

The second section of the interview, Ludwig’s comments on her pedagogy and her musical upbringing, is particularly meaningful when applied to the master class excerpt. She says, “my credo for teaching singing is a bit like a table resting on its legs: these are breath control and upper register—the two most important things—and after that you can start putting the other things on the table, the food and so on, but that is the basis” (p. 11). I watched

the disc in reverse order, in order to study Ludwig’s teaching, observe per pedagogical emphases and, only then, to listen to their application in her own performance. She coached Stella Gregorian (soprano), Markis Pelz (baritone), and Velerij Serkin (tenor). Her emphasis in each case was on the legato performance of the melodic line and the dramatic expression, whether musical or physical, that the situation requires. She counsels the singers, also, to strive for an even crescendo and to vary musical repetitions using either dynamics, articulation, or ornamentation. It nearly goes without saying, when considering an artist of Ludwig’s stature, that her dramatic and musical interpretation of Schubert’s music is first rate, her phrasing and expression is natural and expressive, and that, when (minimal) physical gestures are used, they are appropriate to the text or dramatic situation being expressed, e.g., flicking eyes and grasping hands in *Die Krähe*, open, imploring hands during *Einsamkeit*, or clenched fists in *Mut*.

I would recommend this disc for purchase by all music libraries; it is an exemplary performance of *Die Winterreise* in every musical respect, and an important one inasmuch as the cycle has been recorded by few women (Christine Schäfer, Mitsuko Shirai, and Lotte Lehmann are others), but is a mainstay of the baritone/tenor repertoire. This disc also affords the viewer a glimpse into the pedagogy of a great artist and can be enjoyed by all musicians, but especially by singers and teachers of singing.

BENJAMIN M. AYOTTE  
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**Scènes de Quatuor: Autour de La Grande Fugue de Beethoven** (Strings Attached: Around Beethoven’s Great Fugue). DVD. Directed by Bruno Monsaingeon. Paris: Medici Arts, 2008. EDV 1333. \$24.99.

Since forming in 1989, the Berlin-based Artemis Quartet has earned an international reputation as one of the most exciting and intellectual young string quartets on the concert circuit today. French filmmaker Bruno Monsaingeon offers a brief glimpse into the working methods and musical acumen of this renowned quartet in his 2001 film *Strings Attached: Around Beethoven’s Great Fugue*, which profiles the quar-

ter and documents their preparations for an April 2001 Paris recital. Packaged with footage of the recital, this new DVD carefully depicts the challenges, risks, and rewards of chamber music and offers valuable insight into the complex nature of musical collaboration.

Interspersing the reflections of individual quartet members with excerpts from the ensemble’s Paris recital, the film’s

opening segment explores what Artemis cellist Eckert Runge describes as “a four-way marriage” (“*Heirat zu viert*”) between the quartet’s members, a complex relationship that demands extraordinary dedication and sacrifice, a willingness to share one’s strengths and to improve upon one’s weaknesses, and the ability to make compromises for the sake of the whole. In the film’s second act, the give-and-take of this unique relationship is made more tangible as Monsaingeon takes viewers inside the Artemis Quartet’s rehearsal space as they continue their then two-year journey through Beethoven’s *Große Fuge*. As the ensemble works meticulously to clarify their interpretation and to reach a common understanding of the piece, it becomes clear that no detail is too small to escape the quartet’s attention. For example, a lengthy discussion about an articulation yields two different interpretations that violist Volker Jacobsen, who is recruited to decide between the two, believes to be so similar that he “can’t tell the difference” between them. Just as passions begin to take over, violinist Natalia Prischepenko diffuses the tension by suggesting that the quartet play one of the proposed articulations with their eyes closed, and, after following her advice, the musicians return to laughter. This vignette offers great insight into the complicated and nuanced musical and social dy-

namics of the string quartet and serves as a valuable masterclass in communication.

*Strings Attached* concludes with the Artemis Quartet’s 2001 performance of Beethoven’s *Große Fuge*, which confirms the value of such a detailed approach by presenting a nuanced performance of this dense work that reveals not only its extraordinary counterpoint but its manic emotional range without sounding overwrought or hysterical. The second film, culled from the same Paris recital, gives further evidence that their approach yields interesting musical experiences that gratify intellectually and emotionally, particularly in their readings of Beethoven’s Op. 18, No. 2 quartet and Webern’s Six Bagatelles, Op. 6. Monsaingeon skillfully directs the viewer’s attention toward the subtle communicative acts that are required to create a convincing musical message, using tight shots to capture the eye movements of the individual musicians and wide-angle shots to highlight the interpersonal dialogue of more conversational passages. As a result, this DVD stands not only as an insightful portrait of one of the most engaging contemporary string quartets but as required viewing for anyone who seeks to understand the complex processes of musical collaboration.

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**Mademoiselle.** DVD. A film by Bruno Monsaingeon. [France]: Medici Arts: Idéale Audience International. 2007, 1977. DVD5DM41. \$25.99.

This recently released DVD of Bruno Monsaingeon’s film about Nadia Boulanger’s approaches to teaching, students, and musical taste, is little changed from its original 1977 production. Although it lacks the original’s iconic opening, a clip from the movie *Love Story* in which Boulanger is mentioned, the remaining material provides a brief glimpse into Boulanger’s studio, and in particular the famous Wednesday classes held at her Paris home.

Viewers are treated to nearly an hour of footage of Boulanger working with an assortment of students on works by Mozart, Stravinsky, Schumann, and Bach. Filmed just two years before Boulanger’s death in 1979, and before her health began to de-

cline seriously, the documentary captures aspects of Boulanger at her intellectual peak as well as showing her as she often was during her last years. In the former, we see her use of the Socratic method in group teaching as she cross-examines a class of students during an analysis of Schumann’s *Davidstbündlertänze*. While seated for the lesson, she is animated, snatching the pianist’s hands away from the keyboard to ask about the progressions that have just taken place, asking the students to sing the melodic line, and pushing them to dig past the obvious answers to her sometime—and perhaps deliberately—vague questions to find meaning and structure beyond the basics of the work. During the same session, though, we see glimpses of the older woman in a