



'A series of engrossing, sympathetic and intense conversations': the Los Angeles based Calidore Quartet perform Haydn and Mendelssohn

Feldman

Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello

Aleck Karis *pf* Curtis Macomber *vn*

Danielle Farina *va* Christopher Finckel *vc*

Bridge © BRIDGE9446 (75' • DDD)



The mere 75 minutes of Morton Feldman's last work, *Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello*, receive a rapt performance from pianist Aleck Karis and three friends. It captures the quality that most endears the American minimalist to his adoring fans: the courage to take on the establishment with music that moves slowly and quietly through micro-harmonic interstices and lasts as long as six hours (his String Quartet No 2). *Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello* employs a combination of instruments that Feldman used only once before, 12 years earlier in his eight-minute long *Four Instruments*. It is a suitable combination for impersonal, thoughtful sounds that may or may not be interdependent. In this last attempt to sketch the unsketchable with his refined range of elegant, concise gestures, Feldman has once again discovered and shared a musical universe for which there is no verbal road map.

The pay-off for newcomers or listeners who take a cooler view of Feldman, beyond his awesome stretching of time and space, is the sheer purity that radiates out at times, which William Bland described so perfectly

in *The New Grove Dictionary* in 1980 as 'washing a period of time with a general hue'. The still, suitably aerated recording was made in Conrad Prebys Hall at the University of California at San Diego, where Karis is a Distinguished Professor of Piano. Only the brief booklet-notes, while perhaps philosophically aligned with Feldman's music, disappoint. **Laurence Vittes**

Haydn • Mendelssohn

Haydn String Quartet, 'Emperor', Op 76 No 3

Mendelssohn String Quartet No 2, Op 13

Calidore Quartet

Colburn School © (55' • DDD)



The world is filled with excellent quartets, and here comes another, whose debut disc features elegant and vibrant performances of works by Haydn and Mendelssohn. The Calidore Quartet, formed in 2010 at the Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles, derives its name from the words California and *doré*, French for 'golden'.

Whatever their name may imply, the Calidore players are the epitome of confidence and finesse. They collaborate as if engaged in a series of engrossing, sympathetic and intense conversations – so much the better to characterise the qualities in the music on their stands. In Haydn's *Emperor* Quartet, the musicians are

keenly attentive to the surprising changes in mood and harmonic colour. Among the score's jolts is the second movement, the source of its subtitle, *Emperor*. Haydn wrote the theme for Emperor Francis II but it has long been better known as the German national anthem. The Calidore delineate the theme and variations with superb shading before moving vividly on to the work's final two movements.

Flexibility, warmth and drama are hallmarks of their account of Mendelssohn's A minor Quartet. An astonishingly mature achievement for an 18-year-old, the piece gives the Calidore many opportunities to revel in poetic and propulsive writing. The players are as touching in the tender lines of the second movement as they are expressive and urgent in its fugal phrases: for this alone, the group's splendid recorded debut is worth possessing. **Donald Rosenberg**

Hovhaness

Prelude and Quadruple Fugue, Op 128.

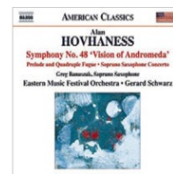
Soprano Saxophone Concerto, Op 344^a.

Symphony No 48, 'Vision of Andromeda', Op 355

^aGreg Banaszak *ssax* Eastern Music

Festival Orchestra / Gerard Schwarz

Naxos American Classics © 8 559755 (56' • DDD)



The three works by Alan Hovhaness on this new Naxos CD seem to have entered into a