

Mp3 The Fry Street Quartet - Janacek: String Quartet #1 (

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A stunning performance of a dramatic quartet by one of the leading contemporary composers. 8 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, CLASSICAL: Traditional Details: About the FSQ Formed in Chicago in 1997, The Fry Street Quartet (FSQ) brims with exuberance and energy. The quartet's 2001 debut at Weill Recital in New York "spoke of precision, preparation, excitement, profound heritage, and ultimate satisfaction" (New York Concert Review). Their performance earlier that season at the 92nd Street Y in New York was hailed by the New York Times as "a triumph of ensemble playing." Winners of the Millennium Grand Prize the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and the First Prize Winners of the Yellow Springs Competition, the FSQ performs nationally and internationally with concerts this year across the country, and their debuts in Austria and the Czech Republic in the fall of 2004. The FSQ made their European debut with a concert tour of the Balkans sponsored by Carnegie Hall and the U.S. State Department. The quartet is Faculty Quartet in Residence at Utah State University where they enjoy influencing and encouraging future generations of musicians. About the music Leos Janacek's first string quartet is after Lev Tolstoy's novella "The Kreutzer Sonata" which is a passionate and violent story about a jealous murder. Janacek's quartet was written in 1923 and his compositional language remains original and extraordinary in the way he evokes passion, delirium, compassion, and everything in-between with his soundscape. Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quartet in C Major, Op. 59 #3 remains a pillar in the string quartet literature with its stunning fugal finale marking the piece unforgettable. The opening of the quartet shocks with dissonance, especially considering the advertisement of the key of C Major in the title, and instead gives us a glimpse of the cosmic nature of his late works. About the recording The Fry Street Quartet Recording Sessions For The Fry Street Quartet's debut CD, the members of the quartet chose to record the Beethoven String Quartet in C major Op. 59 No. 3, and Leos Janacek's String Quartet No. 1, after Tolstoy: The Kreutzer Sonata (1923). A giant undertaking, considering we had only four days in the studio, The Fry was well prepared as usual. The two pieces were part of their Carnegie Hall debut concert in November of 2000. Our sessions were booked for August 6, 7, 8, and 9, 2001, at the Carriage House Studios in Stamford, CT. Jon Altschiller of 'chillersound, New York, was chief engineer. For

microphones, Jon chose Neumann 87's for the violins, an Elam Telefunken 251 for the viola, and a Lawson for the cello. We recorded on Pro Tools with an SSL board and analog backup. We decided to record the Beethoven first. We began by recording short sections, with contrasting dynamics, and then listening back together in the control room. This enabled us to decide as a team whether subtle corrections in balances would best be made by moving microphones or by adjustments from the players. The basic strategy was to get as many complete takes of whole movements as reasonably possible each day. Rather than take up studio time with a lot of listening, we made jukebox mixes at the end of each session and took them back to Bogmoor each evening for review. In this manner we could determine what we had and what we had to do over. It was a highly focused and intense four days. We were quite fussy about tempos and about intonation. Borderline intonation was not tolerated. We were all in agreement that weak intonation simply spoils everything immediately. As an aside, I will say that many well known string quartets apparently assume their intonation is adequate, when in fact, it isn't. Both the Beethoven and the Jancek have particularly challenging sections in terms of intonation, especially where two instruments are in unison or in octaves. One of The Fry Street Quartet's goals is to be the most "in tune" string quartet on the concert stage, as well as on recordings. I am particularly proud of the majestically slow tempo of the first movement chorale in the Beethoven as contrasted with the lightning fast fugue in the last movement. The Fry Street Quartet's sense of ensemble and feeling of "oneness" in interpretation, along with their awesome dynamics, are defining qualities of the group that make them stand out on the world stage. Jancek's first string quartet is a complex piece. Anyone perusing this score for the first time will find a bewildering array of musical markings, tempo changes, complex rhythms, arcane interpretive directions, and fiendish, anti-string key signatures. The Jancek, however, has become a signature piece for The Fry Street Quartet. They play it with the passion and confidence of interpretation necessary for a convincing performance. The piece jumps to life in their hands. I believe part of the reason for the life-giving resonance they bring to this piece is that each individual player has a deeply felt connection, a private feeling about what the piece is about. The Jancek allows each player moments of individual expression and each of the Fry Street players rises to the occasion brilliantly. At the same time The Fry are able to bring a consummate ensemble to the piece as a whole. Note in particular the wonderful growls and howling overtones achieved in the third movement. This was a magnificent and startling moment in the studio. After an interval of reflection on the rough mixes-about two weeks-final

mixing sessions took place at 'chillersound, Jon Altschiller's perfectly equipped studio in New York. Mr. Altschiller's engineering prowess and production skills together with his excellent ears and memory was an invaluable asset to the entire project. Working with The Fry Street Quartet on this project was a pleasure and a privilege. A world-class string quartet is emerging from these young, gifted, and above all, musical artists. -T. McFaul

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