

Honeck's Excellent Pathétique, Creatively Coupled

•



Honeck's Excellent Pathétique, Creatively Coupled

Review by: David Hurwitz



Artistic Quality: 9

Sound Quality: 8

You would expect Honeck to respond to the passion and intensity of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, and so he does. The wild first movement development and exciting scherzo handily capture the music's dynamism, and the playing is, as usual, terrific. What lingers in the mind most, though, is Honeck's ability to project the despairing finale in a single arch from start to finish. There's something about his phrasing that captures the music's flow with special conviction; it's true also of the first movement's lyrical second subject.

While it's difficult to find anything to criticize—perhaps the second movement could move a bit more swiftly—I still wouldn't rate this performance more highly than reference versions by Mravinsky or the stereo Fricsay (both DG), but it comes awfully close. Perhaps the coupling will prove decisive: a really interesting fantasy arranged (with help) by Honeck from Dvorak's opera Rusalka. The music is gorgeous, of course, and the piece works very well. I only wish that the famous "Song to the Moon" had been given to a clarinet or wind instrument, and not just the predictable solo violin. Still, this is an unusual and noteworthy bonus.

Sonically this recording is not quite as fine others in this series. It's slightly "tight" in the bass, and the orchestral picture seems somehow flat. Don't get me wrong: by any standard the sonics are still very good, but coming from this source we have come to expect better. I know this sounds like quibbling, because this disc is in every way a keeper, and I don't mean to suggest otherwise. It's just that this music has been recorded so often, and so well, that it's impossible not to make the obvious comparisons.

Recording Details:

Reference Recording: Symphony: Fricsay II; Mravinsky (both DG)

- September 10, 2016 by David Hurwitz

Nicolas Altstaedt is a terrific cellist when he tries to be musical rather than "authentic" (see my review of his gruesome disc of CPE Bach concertos for details). These are excellent performances all... [Continue Reading](#)



The best of
Danish classical
and contemporary
music

DACAPO

