to Beethoven's final masterpieces.' and International Record Review 'one of the best quartets in the world today'. Full details of the Quartet's available recordings can be found on their website: www.wihanquartet.com

The Wihan are Quartet in Residence at Trinity College of Music, London, and for several years have taught many of the UK's gifted young Quartets at Pro Corda in Suffolk. The Quartet are great supporters of the work of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust, giving inspirational concerts and master classes to young people in many parts of the country.

Live recording made in the Convent of St Agnes, Prague

Producer: Jaroslav Rybář
Sound Engineers: Václav Roubal and Karel Soukeník
Design: www.doubletakedesign.co.uk
Photo: Wolf Marloh
© & Ⓟ 2010 Wyastone Estate Limited
www.wyastone.co.uk **www.wihanquartet.com**

NI 6115

LIVE RECORDING

Wihan QUARTET

Antonín Dvořák

Quartet in D minor, Op.34 • Quartet in A flat, Op.105

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

String Quartet No.9 in D minor, Op.34, B.75

1	Allegro	12:13
2	Alla Polka: Allegretto scherzando – Trio: quasi l'istesso tempo	6:53
3	Adagio	7:41
4	Finale: Poco allegro	7:09

String Quartet No.14 in A flat, Op.105, B.193

5	Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro appassionato	8:07
6	Molto vivace	6:02
7	Lento e molto cantabile	8:02
8	Allegro non tanto	10:45
		TT 67:30

The Wihan Quartet
Leoš Čepický & **Jan Schulmeister -** *violins*
Jiří Žigmund - *viola* • **Aleš Kaspřík -** *cello*

The Wihan Quartet
Leoš Čepický & **Jan Schulmeister -** *violins*
Jiří Žigmund - *viola* • **Aleš Kaspřík -** *cello*

The Wihan Quartet, formed in 1985, are heirs to the great Czech musical tradition. The Quartet's outstanding reputation for the interpretation of its native Czech heritage and of the many classical, romantic and modern masterpieces of the string quartet repertoire is widely acknowledged.

They have developed an impressive international career, which includes visits to major festivals in Europe and the Far East. They visit the United States and Japan regularly and have had highly acclaimed tours of Australia and New Zealand. They are frequent visitors to the UK and can often be heard on BBC Radio 3 as well as in concert at Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, the South Bank and many other venues throughout the country.

The Wihan Quartet has won many International Competitions including The Prague Spring Festival and the Osaka 'Chamber Festa'. In 1991, they won both the First Prize and the Audience Prize in the London International String Quartet Competition.

During 2008 the Quartet completed the first ever cycle of Beethoven Quartets in Prague and also repeated this cycle at Blackheath Halls, London. "Their unanimity of conception was admirably and readily apparent in the opening concert" Musical Opinion. "This was an outstanding recital. The performance of the first of the expansive Razumovsky Quartets, Opus 59 was inspired and gripping from beginning to end." Musical Pointers

Their landmark series of Beethoven concerts in Prague was recorded for release on CD and DVD on the Nimbus Alliance label. The Independent said of the release of the Late Quartets: 'these [performances] are excellent: their fiery interpretations do full justice

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

String Quartet No.9 in D minor, Op.34, B.75

It took Dvořák just twelve days to write this quartet – between 7 and 18 December 1877 – when it seems that composition was his way of dealing with his emotional state. The key and prevailing minor tonality are understandable when it is remembered that the Dvořáks had suffered great loss with the infant deaths of their first three children between 1875 and 1877. Although other children were yet to be born to them, the childless condition deeply affected the religious and family loving father. In such circumstances he found solace also in completing his *Stabat Mater*. Coupled with this was the acceptance by Simrock in Berlin to publish some of Dvořák's music on the recommendation of Brahms and for that reason he dedicated this work to the senior composer, for which Brahms wrote that he was deeply honoured.

Dvořák expressed his grief in the pages of the first three movements while radiating a sense of hope and renewal through faith through the music of the last movement. His love of the music of Schubert is reflected in the opening figuration of the inner parts of the first movement, recalling the older composer's *String Quartet in a minor*. The prevailing D minor is lightened with a passage in G major and the development in B major. With the marking of *Alla Polka* for the second movement, any expectations of a jolly dance are dampened as the music moves from major to minor, with even the Eb major of the *Trio* section remaining subdued. The slow movement finds Dvořák at his most melodically expansive in an ardent D major before moving into a mood of contemplation. The last movement returns to the home key of D minor but with the composer determined to face the future with hope and finding strength in his faith, expressed in music of forceful rhythms and dynamic contrasts creating a sense of energy and activity.

Dvořák revised the work in 1879 and it is thought that the première was given by the Heller Quartet in Trieste in 1881. However, it received its first Prague performance on 27 February 1882, played by a quartet of his friends – Ferdinand Lachner, Petr Mareš, Václav Borecký and Alois Neruda.

String Quartet No.14 in A flat, Op.105, B.193

Numerically this is the last of Dvořák's fourteen string quartets, although it was begun in New York on 26 March 1895, towards the end of his three year stay in America but then laid aside until after his return home to Prague a month later. Once back in his beloved homeland and at his country house at Vysoká, he took a while to adjust but in November he began a new quartet, the one in G major published as Opus 106. He finished this in a month and then immediately returned to the unfinished quartet and completed it on 30 December.

There is no doubt that Dvořák was happy to be home again with all his family around him, among his friends and enjoying his country retreat. This feeling of elation we find reflected in his correspondence with friends and colleagues from this period and in the pages of this A flat quartet. This is a most happy and sunny work. The violoncello starts the slow introduction, moving up through all four instruments to evolve into the principal theme. Strong rhythm and a triplet element mark the second theme, the music then developed and cleverly merged into the recapitulation with Dvořák emphasising his joy in the carefree nature of the final seven bars. This mood continues into the *furiant* of the second movement scherzo, both themes skilfully dovetailed, while the gentler trio section is marked by a typical Dvořákian broad melody, inverting material from the scherzo. Contentment is the essence of the slow movement, with a sense of thanksgiving for a safe return home. His use of counter-melodies and the character of the four instruments to colour the music are masterstrokes of his quartet scoring. His happy mood dominates his final quartet movement, with strong echoes of Czech folk music and the *polka*. The violoncello quietly and teasingly starts the boisterous rough and tumble which pervades this movement, in which its three themes are eventually ingeniously combined and the work ends in high spirits.

The work received a private performance in Prague on 16 April 1896 by the Bohemian Quartet (Karel Hoffmann, Josef Suk – Dvořák's pupil and later son-in-law, Oscar Nedbal and Hanuš Wihan). It was given its first public performance on 20 October of that year by the Rosé Quartet, also in Prague and was then taken into the repertoire of the Bohemian Quartet who performed it both at home and abroad many times thereafter until the Quartet disbanded in 1933. Thus it was a quartet of Dvořák which received early wide international recognition.

© 2010 Graham Melville-Mason

NIMBUS ALLIANCE

DVOŘÁK STRING QUARTETS OP.34 & OP.105
WIHAN QUARTET

NI 6115

LIVE RECORDING

Wihan QUARTET

Antonín Dvořák

String Quartet No.9 in D minor, Op.34, B.75

1	Allegro	12:13
2	Alla Polka: Allegretto scherzando – Trio: quasi l'istesso tempo	6:53
3	Adagio	7:41
4	Finale: Poco allegro	7:09

String Quartet No.14 in A flat, Op.105, B.193

5	Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro appassionato	8:07
6	Molto vivace	6:02
7	Lento e molto cantabile	8:02
8	Allegro non tanto	10:45
	TT:	**67:30**

Live recording made in the Convent of St Agnes, Prague
Producer: Jaroslav Rybář
Sound Engineers: Václav Roubal and Karel Soukeník
Design: www.doubletakedesign.co.uk
Photo: Wolf Marloh
www.wyastone.co.uk www.wihanquartet.com

NIMBUS ALLIANCE

DVOŘÁK STRING QUARTETS OP.34 & OP.105
WIHAN QUARTET

NI 6115

NIMBUS ALLIANCE

COMPACT disc DIGITAL AUDIO

LC 5871

DDD

mcps

Made in the UK by Wyastone Estate Limited
Produced under an exclusive license
from the Wihan Quartet
℗ 2010 Wyastone Estate Limited
© 2010 Wyastone Estate Limited
www.wyastone.co.uk

0 710357 611520