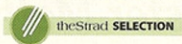


# CHAMBER



Heine Quartet: intimate playing



IRINE ZANOFF

**BRAHMS** String Quartet no.2 in A minor  
op.51 no.2

**JANÁČEK** String Quartet no.2  
'Intimate Letters'

**Heine Quartet**  
Genuin GEN 86066



This unusual pairing of quartets is partly explained in the accompanying notes by their common inspiration in friendships: Brahms and Joachim, and Janáček and his adored Kamila Stösslová. It is an effective one, and perfectly suited to the strengths of this fine ensemble. The Heine Quartet brings to both

works a sustained intensity and wide emotional range, with clean, clear playing and superb balance. The players adroitly negotiate the mood shifts of Brahms, genial and relaxed at the outset, marked by an easy rubato, with outbursts of Beethovenian drama in the latter stages of the first movement and agitated rhetoric amid the sometimes bleak beauty of the second.

The players show a judicious and effective use of vibrato: sweet in Brahms's engaging melodies; spare or absent altogether in his more melancholy moments. They are abetted by an acoustic that allows both satisfying clarity and fullness of sound. The quartet's skill in holding a course through disparate material, which shows again to great effect in the diffuse finale of the Brahms, is the major element in a particularly satisfying performance of the Janáček. This is indeed intimate playing: the composer's constant shifts of direction, the endless subtle recolouring of material and the extremes of expression are wonderfully caught. There is a strong sense of structure here, tying together the fragments and discursions, producing a cumulative depth and complexity of feeling that is profoundly moving. **TIM HOMFRAY**