

# American Record Guide

independent critics reviewing classical recordings



## REINECKE: *2-Piano Pieces*

Genova-Dimitrov Duo

CPO 555454 [3CD] 189 minutes

What a wealth of good music! Genova and Dimitrov have consistently impressed me over 20 years with their comprehensive collections of piano duo music by a number of composers (Arensky, Sons of Bach, Beach, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Shostakovich, etc.). This collection was surprising in many ways.

Carl Reinecke (1824-1910) began composing at age 7 and lived to be 85 years old. His music has 288 opus numbers and yet is only known to me via his *Undine* Flute Sonata. After his foundational music training from his father, he studied with Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, and Franz Liszt. He taught most of his life; and his students included Grieg, Stanford, Sinding, Janacek, and Albeniz.

The pieces in this collection were composed from 1844 to 1905. There are 3 large sonatas and some wonderful pieces based on or transcribed from music by others (Bach, Gluck, Mozart, Schumann, and Reinecke's own orchestral pieces). The composer was quite noted for his playing of Mozart, and I enjoyed his concert arrangement for two pianos of the Finale of Piano Concerto 19. Perhaps the most familiar music here is heard in the big set of variations on Luther's Choral 'Ein Feste Burg'. The climax of this piece moves from the hymn to Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' and I cannot imagine that this would not be a very effective addition to any concert program. There are also some sets of pieces and miscellaneous concert works. Almost every opus here is good sized; only a few are under 10 minutes long.

Genova and Dimitrov give this almost unknown music the absolute best presentation one could ever hope for. Their legendary ensemble means that musically and technically you could not get better performances. The balancing of parts from the softest whisper to the big climaxes is just right. An excellent, detailed booklet and CPO's superb recorded piano sound complete this must-have release.