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Site review by [Polly Nomial](#) March 22, 2010

Performance: ★★★★★ Sonics: ★★★★★

A wonderful disc of quite lovely music, let down a little by a curiously dry recording.

For those who are unfamiliar with the work of Niels Gade, he was a Danish composer who was very good friends with the Schumann's; his music carries elements of Robert's output as well as Mendelssohn's - i.e. it has very well crafted, pretty melodies with an element of Sturm und Drang intensity. The first two sonatas are 3 movement works and are both highly attractive pieces. Separating them is Schumann's Nordisches Lied from Album for the Young Op. 68 before the disc concludes with another fine sonata (4 movement this time) from Gade. Whilst none of Gade's music is particularly memorable or distinctive, the melodies are always pleasing on the ear and the harmonies refreshingly simple.

Both Thomas Albertus Imberger and Edoardo Torbianelli are very interested in performing on historical instruments and they do so here to great effect. The 1846 Hammerflügel by Schweighofer produces a very rounded sound under Torbianelli's hands without a trace of clattering harshness that a modern instrument can bring to such repertoire. There are fewer differences with Imberger's instrument to the modern violin but the tone is softer so that even protracted use of the open E string in the opening sonata is not in the least troubling. Their playing has a very high degree of ensemble and they share the same view of the music, so much so that their rubato is uncannily together. The freshness of approach to this repertoire is something that would suit more mainstream composers well (and some more famous players too!) and it is to be hoped that this is not the last we shall here from this partnership.

The sound is good without being outstanding. There is no suggestion of too much resonance but the acoustic is strangely dry, even though the instrumental sounds themselves seem to have plenty of air - a little odd. The ear adjusts quickly enough but really, after one has heard what Channel Classics can achieve for similar forces in Mozart for example, it shouldn't need to!

Recommended for such a winning manner in seldom heard or performed repertoire.