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Premiere Recording

**Andreas Späth** (1790 - 1876)

Chamber Music for Clarinet,  
Piano and String Quartet

Rita Karin Meier, Clarinet  
Karl-Andreas Kolly, Piano  
Galatea Quartet

1 Hybrid-SACD **222**<sup>®</sup>  
RECORDING

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### Fascinating Saves

Andreas Späth was a clarinetist, a violinist, an organist, and a voice teacher as well as the city music director in Neuchâtel, the concertmaster of the Ducal Court Orchestra in Coburg, and an honorary member of the Swiss Music Society. His death at the ripe old age of eighty-five in 1876 marked the end of an active and richly varied musician's life – so that it is hardly surprising that he wrote more than 150 compositions for a wide range of genres. Rita Karin Meier has explored Späth's works for clarinet, his early main instrument, and teams up with the Galatea Quartet and Karl-Andreas Kolly for a long-overdue tribute to this composer who is entirely forgotten today.

### Solid Foundation

Späth was greatly esteemed during his lifetime, and the move of this "beloved and brilliant director" from Morges to Neuchâtel was regarded as a newsworthy item even in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in faraway Leipzig. The composer also met with great praise in Switzerland; of two of his Masses it was said "that in Neuchâtel one has never heard anything more beautiful in the church style." The clarinet chamber music recorded here impressively demonstrates that this judgment rests on a solid foundation.

### Romantic Spirit

Although Späth had mastered the fine points of instrumental technique, he in no way merely delivered virtuoso material. Already the beginning of this

meticulously produced Super Audio CD reveals his great ambitions: situated somewhere between Mozart's "Dissonance Quartet" and Weber's "Wolf's Glen Scene," the introduction to the variations on a song from Weber's *Preziosa* incidental music produces an atmosphere filled with romantic associations, and when the clarinet later has the opportunity to shine in the variations, the strings also have to engage in energetic participation.

### Rewarding Finds

The *Nocturnes*, the three *Mélodies*, and the *Elegy* also very much reflect the character of romantic composition. The title of the last work in particular might mislead today's listeners. Anything but melancholy and sorrowful, it tends more to the free form of a fantastic character piece and includes spirited polonaises. There is also more to the *Mélodies* than the title might suggest; they are concertante duets elaborated with fine art. Meier, the principal clarinetist at the Zurich Opera, and Kolly present these works with wit and charm – in what is a highly rewarding discovery!

### Also available:

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Clarinet Quintets op. 19, 22 & 23

Rita Karin Meier, clarinet

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