



ZEMLINSKY Cello Sonata in A minor, Three Pieces for cello and piano, Maiblumen blühten überall, Two Pieces for string quintet

**Zemlinsky Quartet,
Josef Klusoň (viola)
Michal Kaňka (cello)
Jaromír Klepáč (piano)
Lucie Hájková (soprano)**

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**Chamber music from
the hothouse of late
19th-century Vienna**



Thanks to the scholarship of the conductor-musicologist Antony

Beaumont, many previously unknown works by *fin-de-siècle* Viennese composer Alexander Zemlinsky are finally being heard. This recording brings together his early chamber music, from the 1880s and 90s, including the striking *Maiblumen* for soprano and string sextet, and the Cello Sonata first recorded by Raphael Wallfisch in 2006.

It doesn't take many bars of *Maiblumen*, with its rich scoring and emotionally charged atmosphere, before *Verklärte Nacht* comes to mind. Both, it transpires,

were written at about the same time, *Maiblumen* setting words by the poet Richard Dehmel, whose writing also inspired Schoenberg's work. The Czech performers give vivid and moving accounts both of this work and of the two surviving movements of Zemlinsky's String Quintet, whose luminous colours are underlined by spot-on tuning in the chords and intimate recorded sound.

The performance of the Cello Sonata by Zemlinsky Quartet cellist Vladimír Fortin is strangely disengaged and unengaging, however; only in the last movement does he seem really to get inside the music. The Three Pieces could almost be Schumann *Volkston* miniatures, especially with the light-hearted but forthright interplay and the dreamy central section of the 'Humoresque' and a beautifully executed *sotto voce* reprise in the 'Lied'.

JANET BANKS

