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Composed in 1839 and 1845, respectively, the two mature piano trios of Felix Mendelssohn have endured as two of his most celebrated and often-performed chamber works. Mendelssohn's gifts as an accomplished pianist come to the fore with two relentless, highly virtuosic scores that pit the piano against the two string players, frequently causing balance issues in both live performances and recordings. No such difficulties can be detected in these fresh, vibrant recordings of the young Swiss Piano Trio on the Audite label. Formed in 1998, this ensemble has already achieved a great many well-earned accolades. This Mendelssohn album shows them to be meticulous in their adherence to the score, insightful in their musical decisions, and refined in their technical execution. What is perhaps most satisfying for the Mendelssohn trios is the crisp, precise, and well-matched articulation used by all three musicians. This, along with the admirably sparse use of the pedal by pianist Martin Lucas Staub, provides listeners with a satisfyingly clear path to each note of the inner voices, notes that are frequently glossed over or covered up. The Swiss Piano Trio's choice of tempi are risky but successful; the nimble Scherzo of the C minor trio takes off like a rocket but is held tightly together while keeping listeners on the edge of their seats. Audite's recorded sound is as clear and detailed as the performers themselves, and the SACD layer offers still more clarity, warmth, and definition.

~ Mike D. Brownell, Rovi