

a long, distinguished career as a tenor, returned to the baritone repertoire in the 1960s, retiring in 1969 with a final Iago.

He was most noted for tenor roles requiring great heft and power (Radames, Canio, Don Jose, Samson, Tannhäuser, Tristan). His services were in demand everywhere (Metropolitan, Bayreuth, Covent Garden, La Scala, Verona, Salzburg). The role he is most remembered for is his heroic, virile, violent Otello. Of the 11 selections heard here, six of them are from his 1951 Columbia recording of excerpts from *Otello*, with Eleanor Steber (Desdemona) and Frank Guarrera (Iago), conducted by Fausto Cleva. From a 1946 LP of excerpts from *Carmen* Vinay is heard in the 'Flower Song' and the final scene with Gladys Swarthout, conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. The Act 1 Jose-Micaela duet and the Act 1 Cavaradossi-Tosca duet, both with Florence Quartararo, are derived from a 1946 LP of excerpts (Jean Morel). From a 1953 broadcast from the Bayreuth Festival, Vinay is heard in 'Ein Schwert Verhess mir der Vater' (Clemens Krauss).

Good monaural sound, no texts, brief biography.

PARSONS

Souvenirs of French Opera

Symposium 1331—79 minutes

This one is for the historically minded and the curious. The list of eight singers reads like a

"who?" Soprano Alice Verlet (six arias), tenor Eugène de Cruéus (two), soprano Berthe Auguez de Montalant, bass Jean Vallier (one), bass Paul Guillamat (one), tenor Leon Beyle (two arias from Reyser's *Sigurd*), soprano Lucette Korsoff (two *Romeo* duets with Beyle). Only Hector Dufranne might be recognized; he was the creator of the role of Golaud in Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande* (seven arias). All of the singers, save Dufranne, spent most of their careers in France.

The repertoire is deliciously obscure and rare: David's *Le Desert*, Isouard's *Joconde*, Adam's *Le Chalet* and *Si j'étais Toi*, Massenet's *Le Cid* and *Jongleur de Notre Dame*, Thomas's *Hamlet*, Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and *Robert le Diable*, and *Le Porcherons* by Gisar. More familiar repertoire embraces *Rigoletto*, *Lakmé* (not the Bell Song), *Manon*, and *Romeo et Juliette*.

Sure, the sound is 1905-1908 and scratchy, but what a treasure trove of beguiling arias and impressive, confident singing. Extra kudos to soprano Verlet for some extraordinary piano singing and to all for authentic "French style". Only the sharp-voiced, flat-pitched singing of Korsoff lets down the team.

No texts, brief biographies.

PARSONS

The Newest Music

Mars

MAURER, PUNTIN, MANDERSHEID, KUGEL: *Chryse Planitia; Elysium Planitia; Valles Marineris; Newton Basin; Chasma Boreale; Back to Earth;* **MAURER:** *Goodbye Earth; Tempe Terra; Olympus Mons*

Syntopia Quartet—Nemu 1—64 minutes

HAUSER: Deep Time

Pauline Oliveros, accordion; David Gamper, electronics; Urs Leimgruber, sax, s; Fritz Hauser, perc
Deep Listening 32-2005 [2CD] 74 minutes
(845-339-6858; www.deeplistening.org)

LAUTEN: Variations on the Orange Cycle; Crossroads; Sonate Ordinaire

Elodie Lauten, p—4Tay 4013—76 minutes

SANDRESKY: Sleeper's Notebook

Eleanor Sandresky, p
One Soul 1025—60 minutes

FRANCE: Heritage Overture; 3 Miniatures; What Goes Around Comes Around; Fluctuating States of Calm; Quartet 1; Monism; Duo; Miss Mugwort; Kroger March

Kate Bowan, p; Max Holtzner; Barbara Gilby, Pal Eder, v; Catherine Owen, va; David Pereira, Charlotte Winslade, vc; Virginia Taylor, fl; Nicole Canham, cl; Gary France, Wyana Etherington, perc; Sandra France, toy whistle; Lawrence University Wind Ensemble, Sydney Symphony/ Robert Levy, Colin Piper, Tor Fromyhr

Tall Poppies 177—61 minutes

CHATMAN: Lawren S. Harris; Varley Suite; 5 Songs; In Memorium Harry Adaskin; Black & White Fantasy; Home on the Range Variations; Wild Cat

Sara Davis Buechner, Jane Coop, Karen Lee-Morlang, p; Paolo Bortolussi, fl; Andrew Dawes, v; Robyn Driedger-Klass, s; Borealis Quartet
Centrediscs 11105—65 minutes

BARRY: In the Asylum; CLARKE: Trio; Etude, Independence I; Island; Isolation; FINNISSEY: In Stiller Nacht; Necessary & More Detailed Thinking; Independence Quadrilles

Trio Fibonacci—NMC 107—64 minutes

YUASA: 2 Pastorales; 3 Score-Set; Serenade: Chant pour Do; Cosmos Haptic; Projection Topologic; On the Keyboard; Cosmos Haptic II; Subliminal Hey J.; Melodies

Ronald Squibbs, p

Au Courant 505—60 minutes

(PO Box 2231, Roswell GA 30077)

SCHOBER: Manhattan Impromptus

Stephen Gosling, p—Capstone 8749—60 minutes

BRANT: Wind, Water, Clouds, & Fire; Litany of Tides; Trinity of Spheres

Daniel Kobialka, v; Present Music, San Jose Symphony, Denver Symphony/ Kevin Stalheim, George Cleve, Henry Brant, Bruce Hangen, Carl Topilow—Innova 410—71 minutes

The Syntonia Quartet's program sounds like a relaxed wispy free-jazz improvisation. I find it hard to believe it is actually composed (jointly by Syntonia's members, playing violin, clarinet, double bass, and percussion). At first it seemed to lack ideas, having only a vague sense of place and direction: rhythmically loose, chromatic motion, glissandos and ponticello on the violin. That was the beginning. Getting deeper into the program, some riffs of tonality, modality, texture, and rhythm emerge. The consistent relaxed wispy feel casts coherence over the whole program, garnering sympathy from the listener. This is not ambitious music, but it's enjoyable for casual listening.

Fritz Hauser's journey into Oliveros's "Deep Listening" land takes itself much more seriously. Whereas Syntonia's music is gregarious, this music is quiet, introverted, almost covert in its stream-of-consciousness timbral journey. It tends to hoard its modus operandi; as a listener it's often hard to tell what sounds you are hearing—an eerie atmosphere results. It radiates coherence and continuity. Evidently this exemplifies Oliveros's concept of "deep listening", a concept she and her disciples have been writing about for a few decades. This seems much more refined than her feedback-loop forays of decades past (*I of IV, II of IV, etc.*) Fans of Ligeti's 1960s and 70s work would do well to get this.

Elodie Lauten's piano music travels in various directions. The post-minimal *Variations on the Orange Cycle* meditates in an improvisational fashion. Loose, free flowing, wondering,

OTTE: Minimum: maximum; Orient: occident Karl-Erik Welin, Gerd Zacher, keyboard; Ingo Goritzky, ob; Hans-Wilhelm Goetzke, cl
Pogus 1037—56 minutes
(50 Ayr Rd, Chester NY 10918)

TRAINER: Knots; Id; BETWEEN THE NOTES: Tangerine Dance; Lucky; Oakey & Burden: Love Action

Viktoria Mullova, v; Between the Notes

Black Box 1095—70 minutes

Gaida

Works by Sarunas Nakas, Remigijus Merkelys, Vytautas V. Jurgutis, Jurgis Juozapaitis
Gaida Ensemble, Kammarensenblen/ Mindaugas Piecaitis, Daniel Gazon, Franck Ollu
Caprice 21718—63 minutes

DIY Canons

Works by Bo Hell, Philip Corner, Mike Winter, Ross Craig, Kyoko Kobayashi, Drew Krause, Masaki Kubo, Giuliano Lombardo, Steven M. Miller, Bruno Ruviano, Mike Swinchoski, Stefan Tomic, Simon Wickham-smith, George Zelenz
Pogus 1036 [2CD] 104 minutes

It erects and dismantles an overtone series inspired by a droning dominant 7th chord. It starts very minimally, but builds gradually in intensity and detail. Sitting at the piano, I do not find it hard to make this sort of music; neither is it hard to listen to or follow—tasteful, pleasant. Her *Crossroads* takes a different path: mercurial, moody, murky. *Sonate Ordinaire* drips and droops with heavier meaning. Its atonal language rejects melody for tritones in chromatic motion and various harmonic offshoots of these. It won't cheer you up.

In a related post-minimal vein, I recommend Eleanor Sandresky's *Sleeper's Notebook*. These piano movements are quite pretty and subtly moody: post-minimalism's answer to Carter's *Night Fantasies*? I enjoy the way it achieves diversity of mood with a purity of materials. The movements called "R.E.M." will not let you doze.

Sandra France's music is not particularly extraordinary but has attractive qualities I respect. The opening track, *Heritage Overture*, is a colorful cheerful Ravel-Shostakovichian romp. Better is the first movement of the *Three Miniatures* for Piano Trio. It pleases with its original startling combination of col legno and pizzicato playing in the strings with plucking inside the piano. Her smooth and serious string quartet owes much to Bartok. All of the works tend toward the neoclassical; they are pleasantly restrained and often charming.

Stephan Chatman's *Lawren S. Harris Suite* for piano quintet conjures memories of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony Op.9 as it begins with a series of slow ascending perfect

fourths, passing around from one instrument to the next. It soon brushes on Ravelian harmonic pastels; then it cadences in the manner of mature Hindemith. Chatman's variations on 'Home on the Range' for string quartet remind me instantly of Charles Ives—his second quartet especially. All the music here is tasteful. New Music it is. Yet mainly it looks toward the past, sometimes sentimentally, sometimes with detached irony. Charles Ives, Luciano Berio, William Bolcom, and others seemed to have gotten us used to this, but I'm not sure I am.

Trio Fibonacci's piano trio program starts with a rugged, brusque, Bartok-like work by Gerald Barry: *In the Asylum*—quite effective. Michael Finnissy's trio feeds my ear's curiosity. *In Stiller Nacht* weaves a thick web of languid threads veiling mere shadows of harmony. His *Necessary and More Detailed Thinking* first tickles with quiet pointillist interjections and tone clusters. A couple of years ago, I recommended one of Finnissy's piano works played by Philip Howard. I look forward to hearing more from Finnissy.

Ronald Squibbs's disc traces, chronologically, the career of Japanese composer Joji Yuasa, a contemporary of Takemitsu. Like several composers of his generation (Carter, Sessions, Dallapiccola, Berger, Gerhard) he passed through a neoclassical phase before arriving at a harder-edged atonal modernist style. The earliest of Yuasa's works here, from the early 50s, sometimes speak a naive Satie dialect; other conjure a richer Ravel-like language. Yet Yuasa is probably taken most seriously for his later modernism. Its charms didn't leap out at me, but grow they did. Of these modernist works, *Cosmic Haptic II* stands out as a stone-and-steel-carved homage to Messiaen. Here especially Yuasa displays his own voice, though through various un-Messiaen-like trajectories; it's not derivative. *Subliminal Hey [Joe]* amusingly executes a good idea. (I like its light touch better than Corigliano's *Fantasy on an Ostinato*, on the theme from Beethoven's Seventh.) The recording is slightly too close and dry for the earlier works, but fine for the later ones. Squibbs's playing seems committed and sensitive enough to make a case for Yuasa's music.

Schober's *Manhattan Impromptus* is fairly exciting stuff. The first one roars through rich and diverse atonal harmonies in spectacular displays of virtuosity. All the while, a minor triad arpeggiated in the baritone register declaims itself again and again. Other works seem to fuse the pianistic writing of Nancarrow, Ligeti, and Rzewski with the emotional sweep of Mahler and Strauss. I find it entertaining, but I don't always admire the results. Sometimes the

intensity feels unearned, and that somewhat cheapens the listening experience.

For decades Henry Brant has been leading the charge for spatially arranged musical performance, grabbing his torch from Gabrieli, Berlioz, Ives, and Carter. As ever, Brant cooks up a wild brew. In the "extraplanetary, environmental oratorio" *Wind, Water, Clouds, and Fire*, a pipe organ rubs elbows with Caribbean steel drums. Layers of orchestral interjections defy stylistic categories as they vary from angular modernism to Brahmsian warmth. A modal choral mantra recalls the singing in Reich's *Desert Music*. The text is Leonardo Da Vinci's.

Hans Otte is a curiosity—Germany's answer to Robert Ashley? Eccentric text-music-sound art of the 1970s and 80s is what it is. An angular atonal synthesizer ostinato gradually changes timbre as sparse German text is read over it. It actually is interesting to listen to, though I don't know what it's supposed to suggest, or if anyone else does.

For this release, violin virtuoso Victoria Mullova abandons her usual classical repertoire for contemporary fare. The polymetric post-minimalism of the title track, Fraser Trainer's *Knots*, pulsates and syncopates. In the modal tonality of *Tangerine Dance* the pulse-minimal textures become the backdrop for Mullova's lyrical melodies and tense histrionics.

The Gaida Ensemble chooses repertoire rough around the edges—not the least bit tidy. It's quite unlike the Lithuanian program I reviewed in May 2005; Gaida's music is more aggressive, more adventurous, less accessible. Through repeating hearings it can grow on you. Jurgis Juozapaitis's *Jaura* impresses me the most. Like the other works on the disc, this one promotes extended techniques, scratchy sounds, clicks, glissandos changing to slow and wide vibrato. Sustained pitches pull the marshy aleatoric frolic into focus. Sparkling fountains of flute, oboe, and clarinet filigree emerge from the gradual climactic surges. These waver between pulsed and free rhythms, and between tonality and atonality. There's a lot to enjoy here.

Finally, here's the cream of this crop: *DIY Canons* (Do-it-yourself canons) is a compilation of four voice mensuration canons. (This means the later a voice enters, the faster it goes.) The whole program is inspired by Larry Polansky's series of four-voice canons and a canon template he issued for others to use. I've spent a number of hours enjoying this captivating new release. It expands the genre beyond expectations. Winter's piece is particularly stunning. Swinchoski's Canon No.1 begins with a *klangfarbenmelodie*, then it does what many of the works here do in their own unique way: starting from an indefinite,

inchoate state, it gradually gains clear focus as all the voices enter. This is indeed the theme of the whole project. Some works build their canonic layers from granular clouds of pitches, others use feedback noise, and still others use recordings of spoken text—often to humorous effect. What's fascinating here is

that from hearing the first voice enter on its own, you cannot predict the texture that will emerge when all the voices enter. That's the art of mensuration canon composition unveiled here. The program overflows with variety and discovery.

MAILMAN

Videos

NEWEST OPERA VIDEOS in a HOME THEATER

DELIBES: *Sylvia*

Aurelie Dupont (Sylvia), Marie-Ages Gillot (Diana), Nicolas Le Riche (Amor, Orion), Paris Opera Ballet/ Paul Connelly
TDK DVWW-BLSVA—136 minutes, 16:9,
Stereo LPCM, DD 5.0, DTS 5.0

MOZART: *The Marriage of Figaro*

Lucio Gallo (Count Almaviva), Eteri Gvazava (Countess), Patrizia Ciofi (Susanna), Giorgio Suriani (Figaro), Florence May Festival/ Mehta
TDK DVWW-OPNDFF—181 minutes, 16:9,
Stereo LPCM, DD 5.1, DTS 5.1

VERDI: *La Traviata*

Eva Mei (Violette), Piotr Beczala (Alfredo), Thomas Hampson (Germont), Zurich Opera/ Franz Welsler-Most—Art Haus 101247—128 minutes
16:9, Stereo LPCM, DD 5.1, DTS 5.1

PUCCINI: *Turandot*

Gabriele Schnaut (Turandot), Johan Botha (Calaf), Christina Gallard-Domas (Liu), Vienna Philharmonic/ Gergiev
TDK DVUS-OPTURSFR—125 minutes
16:9, Stereo LPCM, DD 5.0, DTS 5.0

VERDI: *Nabucco*

Leo Nucci (Nabucco), Miroslav Dvorsky (Ismaele), Giacomina Prestia (Zaccaria), Maria Guleghina (Abigaille), Vienna Opera/ Fabio Luisi
TDK DVWW-OPNAB—126 minutes,
16:9, Stereo LPCM, DD 5.1, DTS 5.1

VERDI: *Nabucco*

Ambrogio Maestri (Nabucco), Andrea Gruber (Abigaille), Paata Burchuladze (Ismaele), Piacenza/ Daniel Oren—Art Haus 101241—130 min
16:9, Stereo LPCM, DD 5.1, DTS 5.1

[DD 5.1 is Dolby Digital 6 channels, DTS 5.0 is Digital Theater System 5 channels, Stereo LPCM is 2-channel Linear Pulse Code Modulation (CD technology). These can sound noticeably different, depending on sources and encoding choices.]

This *Sylvia* was recorded in March 2005 at the Bastille Opera, using John Neumeier's third version of his 1997 choreography. *Sylvia* has had an influential and varied sort of history since its 1876 premiere at the new Palais Garnier. Always associated with the Paris Opera, it even acted as a trigger in Diaghilev's founding of Ballets Russes in 1909. It was used as a vehicle for modern dance interpretations but did not achieve popularity in Europe until Ashton's choreography in 1952. It was first produced in the US by San Francisco Ballet in a classical interpretation by Morris (2004). Neumeier's production is fully modern in dance and staging.

The core of this ballet has always been Leo Delibes's composition, a romantic and interesting work that follows many of Wagner's innovations in "music drama". The orchestra is an equal partner with the dancers, and employs diverse instrumental textures, melodies, and rhythms. For example, the French horns get a proper workout along with stage-prop hunting bows at several points. The story line is a complex interaction between Diana the huntress and her nymphs (Sylvia et al), and several male characters—most of whom are pursuing love. The Act I finale; 'Orion seduces Sylvia' is one of several riveting *pas de deux* where the libretto is elegantly expressed.

The stage setting is minimal: a few stylistic flats represent trees, and costumes are simple—leather shorts and colorful farmer's overalls. The dancer's magnificent bodies and dynamic functions are usually in evidence, overlaid and led with Delibes's expansive music. Lighting is variable and never calls attention to itself with shadows or glare. The videography is varied, moving between frames that encompass the dancer's full bodies, close-ups of their facial expressions, and the entire stage. The three audio tracks supply expected performance, with DTS a clear choice for realistic stage-image and acceptable tonal accuracy. The few subtitles are offered in the usual five European languages. The bonus track