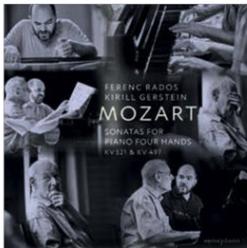


CHAMBER MUSIC



Mozart Sonatas for piano four hands:
C major K521, F major K497
Kirill Gerstein, Ferenc Rados pfs
Myrios MYR029

Recorded in Berlin in June 2018, this album pays tribute to Ferenc Rados, a rare visitor to the studio. In Budapest he studied with István Antal and Pál Kadosa, in Moscow with Viktor Merzhanov. Gerstein, latest in a line including Ránki, Kocsis and Schiff, calls him his mentor and inspiration.

Intimate communion and unanimity of spirit stamp these performances. With Rados taking *secondo* in the C major Sonata, *primo* in the F major, the delights, subtleties and time-bendings are many, the slow movements yielding deliriously rhapsodical, improvisatory dimensions. In places ensemble could be tighter, the marginal speeding-up (twice) of the C major's first movement reprise bringing about unexpected short-windedness. Overall, however, this is playing of Orphean insightfulness, accompanied by generous booklet notes.



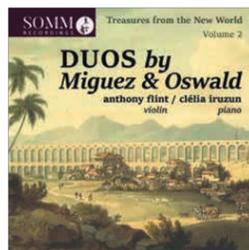
Żeleński Piano Quartet in C minor Op 61
Mozart Piano Quartet in G minor K478
Paweł Wakarecy pf Jakub Jakowicz vln
Katarzyna Budnik vla Marcin Zdunik vcl
Fryderyk Chopin Institute NIFC CD110

From the end of the 18th century to 1918 Poland was largely absent from the European map, its psyche and culture burning intensely enough in the hands of its

emigrés but otherwise repressed through punitive Prussian and Tsarist annexation. Władysław Żeleński (1837-1921) was one of many musicians relegated to the periphery, introspective and disinclined to provoke – yet not beyond writing an opera on Mickiewicz's subversive 1828 poem *Konrad Wallenrod*, symbol of the country's resistance spirit. However 'unpropitious' the conditions, his villa in Kraków (where he was director of the conservatoire) was a renowned chamber music hub.

Taking Schumann and Brahms at its starting point, Żeleński's late-Romantic Piano Quartet, begun in 1904, is paradoxically both valedictory (following the unexpected death of his first wife) and vernal. The dark moments are weighty but rarely heavy: the A-flat Romanza is fragrantly veined, the folkloric Intermezzo playfully expressive, the Finale impassioned and biting.

Marginally brisker than Jonathan Plowright's 2011 Hyperion recording, this performance is excellent, Paweł Wakarecy, along with his gifted peers, bringing brilliance and imagination to the score. Their 'breathed' Mozart is also winningly elegant, drawing on the autograph manuscript for K478 that was acquired by Warsaw's Fryderyk Chopin Museum in 1957.



Treasures from the New World – Vol 2
Oswald Violin Sonata Op 36 Mignone
Romanza Miguez Violin Sonata Op 14
Nobre Poema I Op 94/1
Levy Tango Brasileiro
Clélia Iruzun pf Anthony Flint vln
Somm SOMMCD0632

Having usefully revived Henrique Oswald's Piano Quintet last year, Clélia Iruzun now brings us his later Violin Sonata (1908), a considered, elegantly Brahmsian/Franckian score. Arthur Rubinstein thought of Oswald as 'the Brazilian Gabriel Fauré', and we learn from Robert Matthew-Walker's booklet note that his parentage was not Hispanic but

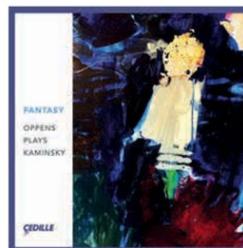
Swiss-German – pretty much summing up his aesthetic orientation.

Leopoldo Miguez was also European-trained and served as Oswald's predecessor as director of Brazil's National Institute of Music. Miguez published his A major Sonata in Leipzig in 1896. Lyricism, limpid invention, sensitivity of feeling and sureness of pen inform its pages, putting keyboard virtuosity at the service of point-making rather than self-glory. I particularly enjoyed the charmed fairies and fugues in the scherzo.

The remaining miniatures are expressively turned, a haunting love affair suggesting itself within Mignone's youthful 1917 Romanza. Ready for Hollywood, Nobre's first Poema (2002) breathes John Williams by the ocean. Levy's *Tango Brasileiro* (1890, the same year as Albéniz's *España 'Tango'*), arranged from the piano original by João de Souza Lima, cameos a world between Gottschalk and 'tropical Romanticism'. Iruzun's attentive collaboration with Anthony Flint, sweet-toned whatever the register of his instrument, makes for an essential album.

ATEŞ ORGA

CONTEMPORARY/JAZZ



Fantasy: Oppens Plays Kaminsky
Laura Kaminsky Piano Quintet; Fantasy;
Reckoning: Five Miniatures for America;
Piano Concerto
Ursula Oppens, Jerome Lowenthal pfs
Cassatt String Quartet; Arizona State
University Orchestra/Jeffery Meyer
Çedille CDR 90000 202

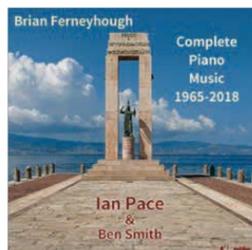
The piano music of leading American composer Laura Kaminsky is loosely tonal or modal, quirkily rhythmic with suggestions of jazz, and highly personal. It is immensely appealing yet offers a challenge to listeners.

The first movement of the Piano Quintet is 'Anthem', which melds West African drumming patterns with Eastern European irregular dance rhythms. The solo *Fantasy*

(2007-10), described by the composer as 'free-form yet organically conceived', recalls Copland's *Fantasy for Piano* in ambition and achievement, though its fluidity echoes Elliott Carter's *Night Fantasies* (premiered by Oppens in 1980). In one remarkable passage, the two hands play lines that are completely rhythmically disjoint.

The colourful, often fiery *Reckoning: Five Miniatures for America* for piano four-hands, with veteran pianist Jerome Lowenthal, was written for this recording, and reflects our turbulent times. The album concludes with Kaminsky's Piano Concerto, inspired by images of sunlit rivers in New York and St Petersburg, where Oppens gave the world premiere with Jeffery Meyer. Its 21-minute single movement, with a chamber-like quality, is orchestrated with gorgeous delicacy. The bitonal, opening cadenza provides the work's material.

An exciting, compelling release.



Brian Ferneyhough: Complete Piano Music 1965-2018

Ferneyhough *Lemma-Icon-Epigram, Quirl, Opus Contra Naturam, Invention, Epigrams, Three Pieces for Piano, Sonata for Two Pianos*

Ian Pace, Ben Smith pfs
Métier/Divine Art MSV28615



Becomings

Hayden *Becomings, ...still time..., Fragment (After Losses), Piano Moves*

Ian Pace pf
Métier/Divine Art MSV28611



Compelling: Ursula Oppens

British modernist composers Brian Ferneyhough and Michael Finnissy have been brought together in a movement that critics labelled New Complexity – presumably in contrast to Old Complexity (Schoenberg, Webern, Boulez and Stockhausen) and New Simplicity (minimalism). Ferneyhough (born 1943) has produced a relatively modest output for solo piano that fills two CDs, but which embraces scores of incredible complexity in his hallmark style.

British pianist Ian Pace is a leading exponent of this challenging music. A musical thinker as well as a virtuoso of the highest order, he began his Ferneyhough project for Métier in 2005, just before the label was acquired by Divine Art. Pace subsequently extended the recording to include more recent compositions and the Sonata for Two Pianos, which he performs here with Ben Smith.

The music was composed between 1965 and 2013. The earliest pieces – *Invention* (1965), *Epigrams* (1966), *Three Pieces for Piano* (1966-67) and *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1966) – are rooted in Old Complexity. The album really comes alive with an electrifying interpretation of *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (1981), where Pace is looser and more Romantic than Nicolas Hodges' rather classical treatment on Neos – though both are outstanding interpretations. *Opus Contra Naturam* (2000) for speaking pianist was developed from a scene in Ferneyhough's Walter Benjamin-inspired opera *Shadowtime*.

The album of Sam Hayden's piano music features a comparable stylistic terrain to the

Ferneyhough release. Hayden (born 1968) studied with Michael Finnissy, as well as Jonathan Harvey and Louis Andriessen. The album is dominated by Hayden's monumental seven-movement cycle, *Becomings (Das Werden) I-VII* (2016-18), the most ambitious and demanding work here. It was premiered by Pace in 2019. The title refers to the sense of 'becoming' advocated by Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, famous for his remark that 'No one ever steps in the same river twice', for whom the world is in constant flux. The composition contrasts hyper-energetic material with moments of relative calm.

There are two shorter works, *...still time...* (1990) and *Fragment (After Losses)* (2003), plus the more substantial *Piano Moves* (1990) for amplified piano. Hayden comments in an online interview that '*Piano Moves* is more gradual, process-driven music (minimalistic, in some ways), and *...still time...* [has] more in common with complexity' – it was written in 1990 while he was studying with Michael Finnissy. According to Hayden, the subtle electronic enhancement of *Piano Moves* is not intended to make the piano sound overtly 'electronic': 'Compression is used to narrow the dynamic range ... Some reverberation is also used, extending the natural decay of the instrument.' The 'moves' are the series of relatively sudden harmonic changes in which the hands move to the piano's extreme registers. Hayden's music is perhaps less individual than Ferneyhough's but will still appeal to more adventurous listeners. **IP**
ANDY HAMILTON