

Instrumental Reviews

BRIEF NOTES



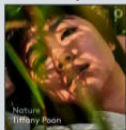
Journey through time: Tiffany Poon guides the listener through centuries with *Nature*

Mompou Piano Music Paul Crossley (piano) *CRD CRD3553 76 mins*



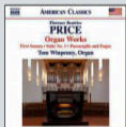
In this exquisite record, Paul Crossley brings complete sensitivity to Federico Mompou's deeply introspective piano world. Crossley captures the composer's hushed stillness, leaning into his lush harmonic writing, and from the outset, evoking echoes of Debussy's impressionism and Satie's minimalistic restraint. The accompanying booklet notes that Mompou's work is that of 'adumbration – everything a faint sketch... a glimpse,' and this feels accurate from the opening *Musica Callada*, its poise and sense of suspended atmosphere setting the tone for this intimate collection of pieces. *Miranda Bardsley* ★★★★★

Tiffany Poon Nature Pentatone *PTC5187423 65 mins*



Bringing together movements by French composers from across the centuries, Tiffany Poon's album is inspired by the natural world – but it's also a perfectly paced programme, which takes the listener on a chronological journey from the Baroque to impressionism. The album is closely recorded, showcasing Poon's gorgeously poised and articulated pianism – and it's an enchanting experience. *Charlotte Smith* ★★★★★

Price Organ Works Tom Winpenny (organ) *Naxos 8559956 67 mins*



Florence Price spent many an hour at the organ providing the music for silent film screenings, and here we get a well-rounded overview of her own works for the instrument, from the early First Sonata to the *Variations on a Folksong* ('Peter, go ring dem bells'). Though a virtuoso player herself, Price rarely indulges in fireworks, but instead lets her own melodic gift – or, elsewhere, skill at reworking the melodies of others – work the magic. She is done excellent service here by Tom Winpenny on the Skinner Organ of Saalkirche Ingelheim. *Jeremy Pound* ★★★★★

REMY HOUWICK

and allow the brain to immerse itself in music of power and beauty. Highly recommended.

Kate Wakeling ★★★★★

Nánd

Works by Hafliði Hallgrímsson and Hugji Guðmundsson

Sigurgeir Agnarsson (cello)
Crescendo CRESCO01 66:37 mins



Icelandic music is generally little-known across the seas, these solo works for cello

offering a welcome contribution to the genre. Hugji Guðmundsson's opening set, *Coniunctio*, conceived in five movements, was written for the album, and dedicated to cellist Sigurgeir Agnarsson. Cast in direct tonality, 'Reverie' is an unassuming gentle rocking start. The ensuing 'Psalm' offers some more astringent harmonies, and tremolando fluttering textures, a good contrast to 'Perpetual' which uses cross-accents to effect gentle syncopation.

But 'Veris' from his *Alluvium* (2019) is a more striking composition, using electronics and loops to shroud the cello line in mystery. They 'freeze moments in time' while the lyrical cello line has a beautiful timbre, elegantly performed by Agnarsson.

This is something of a family affair – Hafliði Hallgrímsson is the uncle of Guðmundsson, and Agnarsson has known both since childhood. There is a complete understanding in these performances, which may be results from these close ties and long-term creative artistic collaborations.

The two sets of *Solitaire* by Halgrímsson are separated by over 50 years. The first set's 'Oration' is cast in edgy tonality with a strong declamatory statement, treated to a highly virtuosic rendition. 'Serenade' focuses on pizzicato invention – akin to the similarly titled 'Serenata' movement in Britten's First Suite, whereas 'Nocturne' is characterised by mesmerising droning double stops.

The second set of *Solitaire* perhaps has more defined material, 'Lamento' bursting onto the scene with strong emotion cast in double stops. 'Circum' is given over to pizzicato motives, the strumming suggesting a Spanish influence. 'Perpetuum Mobile' in contrast offers subtle syncopation in

fluctuating metres, energised and edgy in this insightful and refined performance. *Jo Talbot* ★★★★★

Sing! Songs Without Words

Works by Schumann, Brahms and Wagner

Raphaël Sévère (clarinet); Adam Laloum (piano)

Harmonia Mundi HMM902746 60:08 mins



Both Brahms and Schumann sanctioned playing some of their chamber works on other

instruments, and it was the singing quality of Richard Mühlfeld's playing that charmed Brahms out of retirement and inspired the four great late chamber pieces. So neither composer is likely to have minded anyone arranging their songs for clarinet and piano too much.

Raphaël Sévère plays these songs with restrained, refined elegance and he has a fine feeling for hushed expression, which Adam Laloum balances and reflects very nicely. As salon instrumental pieces, Schumann's 'Widmung' and Brahms' 'Wie Melodien' work really well. It is on the whole a very pleasing disc, and if you didn't know the songs you might ask where the problem is. Well, for all his subtlety, Sévère doesn't really do big, bold and impassioned, and I miss that occasionally in the Brahms and Schumann songs, and more than occasionally in the Wagner.

Even more than that, I missed the words in subtler and more psychologically penetrating songs like Brahms' 'Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer', or Schumann's 'Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen'. If you think German's an unmusical language, listen to these, and then to a really good recording of the originals – Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau will do nicely. So much is lost without the sound of the words, let alone their power of suggestion.

Recordings are good, though there is what sounds like a tiny mistake in the piano at the quiet heart of 'Mondnacht' – not exactly the ideal place for it. *Stephen Johnson* ★★★★★

The Well-'Tamped' Clavier

Bach arr. Sam Post
Sam Post and Ralitza Patcheva
Acis APL53516 102:69 mins