

GRAMOPHONE

ISOUNDS OF AMERICA

A special eight-page section focusing on recent recordings from the US and Canada

Eno

Discreet Music

Contact with Emma Zoe Elkinson fl

Dean Kurtis-Pomeroy gongs

Cantaloupe © CA21114 (60' • DDD)



Contact, the Toronto-based contemporary music ensemble, marks the 40th anniversary of

the release of Brian Eno's ambient *Discreet Music* with this haunting new version, which comprises seven parts running a total of 60 minutes, or nearly twice the length of the original piece. In an arrangement by Contact founder and percussionist Jerry Pergolesi, Eno's synthesised score is transformed for acoustic instruments: cello, violin, soprano saxophone, electric guitar, double bass, vibraphone, piano, flute and gongs.

Pergolesi's booklet-note says that Eno's 'preference was to make plans rather than execute them; to initiate situations and systems that, once in place, could create music with little intervention on his part'. The Contact arrangement, in Eno's original key, gives the players some freedom as they shape the simple melodic and harmonic progressions. The result is a weave of undulating and repeated phrases along minimalist lines, with textures evolving slowly and the music unfolding with utmost discretion.

Contact offer a staged version of *Discreet Music* designed by Pergolesi and performed with video by Suzanne Bocanegra, which would be interesting to experience. The recording makes the listener abundantly aware of Eno's looping technique, inspired by Terry Riley and Steve Reich, and of the need to dispel any assumptions about how music develops. The recording was made in one take, a testament to the powers of concentration and interaction of the seven Contact musicians and their guests, Emma Zoe Elkinson (flute) and Dean Kurtis-Pomeroy (gongs). **Donald Rosenberg**

Fairouz

After the Revels^a. Annabel Lee^a. German Romantic Song^c. Jeder Mensch^a. No Orpheus^b.

GRAMOPHONE talks to...

Ian Gindes

The pianist discusses the music and programming of his new album, 'American Visions'

Explain the thinking behind the album.

I wanted to celebrate the diversity of the American experience, from that of rural communities to that of sophisticated urban lifestyles. The music on this album spans the 20th century to the present and, I think, embodies a set of values and visions that have persisted - they are things that inspired the composers we feature and continue to inspire American composers today.

How important is it to mix 'popular' and 'classical' repertoire in this way?

I wanted to make sure that everyone could enjoy it. It enabled me to not only engage listeners in a new way but also to illustrate the variety of American music.

What are the challenges of the arrangements you include?

There were a couple of challenges in creating this recording. The first is that a lot of people



have heard these pieces, especially Copland's music, so my interpretation would have to be fresh to get people to take a second look. Also, many of the pieces on the album were originally written for orchestra. Some of the passagework really mirrors this and some are almost physically impossible to play.

But then there's the challenge of eight hands on two pianos...

That was both challenging and a lot of fun. Performing Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever* in concert with some of my friends was both something that we had a great time doing and that required a lot of rehearsal - but the audience loved it!

Refugee Blues^a. The Stolen Child^a. Three Fragments from Ibn Khafajah^a. We Are Seven^a ^aKiera Duffy sop ^{ab}Kate Lindsey mez ^aChristopher Burchett bar ^aMargaret Lancaster fl ^aEmily Ondracek-Peterson vrn ^aAshley Bathgate, ^bAdrian Daurov vc ^aDavid Kaplan, ^aRussell Miller, ^aDavid Moody pf ^aRupert Boyd gtr
Naxos American Classics © 8 559783 (62' • DDD)



Mohammed Fairouz's seventh major recording since 2011 explores a decade of his writing for the voice, seemingly chosen for its private thoughts and varied musical

pleasures. The CD takes its title 'No Orpheus', from an exceptionally moving paean to his grandmother, and the rest includes at times explicitly sensual love songs, an obsession with Alma Mahler and a preoccupation with loss and isolation.

The CD opens audaciously with a setting of Auden's savage 'Refugee Blues', recalling Fairouz's large gestures bearing important messages, as in his Symphony No 3, but the ambition from here on is muted and the messages, while no less important and perhaps even more intense, are of smaller public consequence.

The most memorable music is the title track, in which mezzo-soprano Kate Lindsey, who recorded Fairouz's *Follow Poet* last year for DG, sings three simple,



Together and apart: Carol Rodland and Scott Kluksdahl play music by Bartók and three American composers

moving poems by Lloyd Schwartz (coincidentally one of America's senior classical music critics) accompanied exquisitely by cellist Adrian Daurov.

The most addictive music is the *Three Fragments* by the 11th-century poet Ibn Khafajah, sung – in Arabic, since 'the beauty of the original cannot be translated' – hypnotically by Kiera Duffy backed by violin, cello, flute and guitar, traditional instruments in Arabic music, the guitar allowing Fairouz 'to evoke the plucked tenderness of Andalusian lovedreams'.

The CD concludes with a setting of 'Annabel Lee' which is attractively Britten-ish, in spirit more than style, and a heartbreaking 'The Stolen Child' to Yeats, which feels as though a relative of Schubert's Erl King has been transported across time and space. **Laurence Vitte**

'American Visions'

Becker *Elegy*. **The Four Curiosities** – *Passacaglia*
Copland *Four Piano Blues* – No 3. *Our Town*.
Rodeo **Gershwin** *Seven Virtuoso Etudes* (arr Wild)
– No 4, *Embraceable you*; No 7, *Fascinatin' rhythm*
Rodgers *Carousel Waltz*. *My favorite things* (both
arr Hough) **Sousa** *The Stars and Stripes Forever*^a
Ian Gindes *pf* with ^a**Tatiana Shustova**,
^b**Jiafang Yan**, ^c**Jing Hao** *pfs*
Centaur © CRC3475 (63' • DDD)

^aRecorded live at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana, IL



It would be no exaggeration to say that Ian Gindes's new recording is a Yankee Doodle Dandy. The pianist plays music by American composers in both popular and 'classical' realms with affection, energy and keyboard brilliance. Much of the fare, offered in transcriptions, is familiar, but Gindes brings to each piece a freshness that prompts us to love this music anew.

He opens with selections by Aaron Copland – two in piano versions so persuasive in mood and nuance that the well-known orchestral versions aren't missed. Four of the five movements from the ballet *Rodeo* and three excerpts from the movie score to *Our Town* find Gindes basking in Copland's distinctive juxtaposition of nostalgia and revelry. He also brings elastic finesse to a piece originally for the instrument, *Four Piano Blues* No 3 (dedicated to William Kapell).

Two appealing short works by Kris Becker – *Passacaglia* (from *The Four Curiosities*) and *Elegy* – rub shoulders with arrangements of Broadway fare that gives Gindes many opportunities to exude pianistic panache. Earl Wild paid tribute to Gershwin in *Seven Virtuoso Etudes*, including the lavish

treatments of 'Fascinatin' rhythm' and 'Embraceable you' that Gindes performs here. Another virtuoso pianist, Stephen Hough, pays homage to Richard Rodgers in grand and grandiose incarnations of 'My favorite things' and the *Carousel Waltz*.

The final selection is the biggest arrangement of all, Mack Wilberg's two-piano/eight-hand version of Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Gindes shares the stage with Tatiana Shustova, Jiafang Yan and Jing Hao to rousing effect. **Donald Rosenberg**

'Dialogue'

Bartók *23 Duos* (arr P Bartók)^b
Del Tredici *Cello Acrostic*^b **Piston** *Duo*^a
Read Thomas *Dream Catcher*^c
^a**Carol Rodland** *va* ^b**Scott Kluksdahl** *vc*
Crystal Records © CD880 (56' • DDD)



Perhaps 'Dialogues and Monologues' would have been a more accurate title.

Carol Rodland and Scott Kluksdahl perform duos by Béla Bartók and Walter Piston and go it alone in works by Augusta Read Thomas and David Del Tredici that were written for them.

Bartók composed 44 duos for violins. His son, Peter, arranged 23 of them for viola