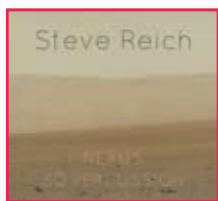


*multiplications* has some subtle and quiet melodic lines leading into some excellent multiphonic work.

The liner notes state: "Each piece is a tribute to a great saxophonist/pedagogue: Marcel Mule, Jean-Marie Londeix, Eugene Rousseau, Frederick Hemke and Daniel Deffayet." I am surprised the altissimo section is not dedicated to Sigurd M. Rascher whose *Top Tones for the Saxophone* (which I purchased decades ago) is a standard in saxophone literature. This small quibble aside, *Cinq études* is worth a listen for its inventive and musical demonstration of multiple techniques.

**Ted Parkinson**

**Steve Reich**  
**Nexus; Sō Percussion**  
**Nexus 11042 (nexuspercussion.com)**



▶ A collaboration between two leading percussion groups, veteran Toronto-based Nexus and younger-generation New York-based Sō Percussion,

this album features four percussion-centred scores by American composer Steve Reich.

Reich's music is generally characterized by repetition, canons, slow harmonic changes and, for a time, the adoption of selected musical notions from West Africa and Indonesia. By the mid-1960s Reich sought to create music in which his compositional process was clearly discernible by the audience in the music itself. From 1965 to 1971, his style was dominated by a process called "phasing," a kind of Escher-like perceptual magic where incremental changes to the music being performed are revealed to the listener in real time.

All those compositional and performative approaches deeply colour the brilliantly performed music on this album: *Clapping Music* (1972), *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ* (1973), *Mallet Phase* (2016, based on *Piano Phase* 1967), and *Quartet* (2013). The first three, controversial in their day, have become contemporary standards. *Quartet*, a jazz-inflected work scored for two vibraphones and two pianos, is an outlier in this program. Reich called it "one of the more complex [pieces] I have composed." While frequently shifting key and continuity by restlessly changing metres, the outer sections maintain a pulsed momentum, a recognizable link to Reich's earlier compositions. In stark contrast, the middle slow movement introduces chordal harmonies unusual in his music, evoking a peaceful, pensive mood.

This is Nexus' 31st commercial album release – and a resounding way to celebrate both its 50th anniversary and its deep and enduring relationship with Reich.

**Andrew Timar**

**Ofer Pelz – Trinité**  
**Meitar Ensemble; Quatuor Ardeo**  
**New Focus Recordings FCR303**  
**(newfocusrecordings.com)**



▶ Intricate prepared-piano ricochets and barbed ensemble alchemy converge to permeate the Meitar Ensemble's latest release – a portrait of music by

Montreal-based Israeli composer Ofer Pelz. The five pieces on the disc represent an eight-year collaboration between the composer and the virtuosic ensemble.

Pelz's clear and punctuated sound world is well suited for the bravura and precision of intent capable by the Meitar musicians. The first work, *Backward inductions*, for augmented piano, evokes a process whereby reverse reasoning achieves a sequence of optimal actions. This dynamic music produces fluidity through compartmentalized yet spinning lines and tempestuous interruptions. A piece titled *Convergence* for alto flute and electronics is a wondrous barrage of granulated tinctures that envelopes the ear and the mind. The chamber work, *marchons, marchons*, performed in Toronto when New Music Concerts presented Meitar at the Music Gallery in 2017, offers delicate and distant conversations spoken in metallic whispers. Finally, a piece written in two movements for flute, prepared piano and amplified string quartet titled *Blanc sur Blanc* begins with a dance-like mysteriousness followed by wind-swept panorama.

The confident nature of Pelz's music is propelled forward by what is clearly a process-oriented approach – yet this attribute also contains a wealth of originality and expression. The music and performances on this release are as compelling as they are refreshing. Bravo to all.

**Adam Scime**

**Peter Gilbert – Burned into the Orange**  
**Arditti Quartet; Iridium Quartet; Various Artists**  
**New Focus Recordings FCR300**  
**(newfocusrecordings.com)**



▶ Composer Peter Gilbert's second full-length album – *Burned into the Orange* – is a collection of chamber works that explore rich and sensuous textures performed

by the Arditti Quartet, Camilla Hoytenga, Magdalena Meitzner, Jeremias Schwarzer, Richard White, Michael Veit, Emanuele Arciuli and the Iridium Quartet.

The seemingly ever-rising pulsation of *the*

*voice opens wide to forget that which you are singing* produces an ephemeral hypnosis. The title track, scored for saxophone quartet, evokes sonic tendrils creeping among the sinuousness of a liquid cathedral. The almost violent gestures of *Channelling the Waters* produces a musical energy that tunnels through unknown timbral pathways. A piece titled *By the Lonely Traveller's Call*, for tuba and amplified mute, transduces extreme guttural bellows into resonant sonic clouds. The lingering harmonic canopies of *Soon as the Sun Forsook the Eastern Main* evaporate monumental piano sonorities into monoliths of aural brilliance.

This album is saturated with aural enchantment – each piece seems to be on a journey from unaltered impetus to transcendent harmoniousness. *Burned into the Orange* will surely burn into memory for those who listen.

**Adam Scime**

**Fantasy – Oppens plays Kaminsky**  
**Ursula Oppens; Jerome Lowenthal; Cassatt String Quartet; Arizona State University Orchestra; Jeffrey Meyer**  
**Cedille CDR 90000 202**  
**(cedillerecords.org)**



▶ Titan of the contemporary keyboard, Ursula Oppens is a rarity among artists living today. She is the stalwart bearer of a mid-century musical torch that

apparently burns eternal. How fortunate we are to have such musicians as Oppens still making music with fortitude, passion and tireless faith.

A most recent episode for Oppens has been a record made with the Cassatt Quartet and Arizona State University Orchestra showcasing music of American composer Laura Kaminsky. This disc, themed "Oppens Plays Kaminsky" seems a testament of friendship (these two impressive musicians have been longtime pals). Presently, they come together in a variety of idioms to demonstrate Kaminsky's portfolio in a traversal of *quintet*, *fantasy* and *concerto*.

Despite evocative titles such as *Maelstrom*, *and...*, or *Hurling. Still*, the music isn't always convincingly first rate. Nevertheless, there are moments of tunefulness and poetry. The affinity between Oppens and Kaminsky radiates throughout, leaving a palpable sense of fellowship and mutual joy amongst colleagues.

Oppens wields her piano at the album's centre, steering a varied vessel with consistent skill and surety. Even in brief piano passages, as she peeks out from dense ensemble material, Oppens' artistry sings unmistakably. The 20-minute solo *Fantasy* (2010) should be considered a tour de force in and of itself. When it comes to a career such as Oppens',

dedication and staying power carry the day. May she always urge us to listen close and listen well, ever compelling our ears toward the future.

Adam Sherkin

**Richard Danielpour – An American Mosaic**  
**Simone Dinnerstein**  
**Supertrain Records O25 SR**  
**(richard-danielpour.com)**



▶ The ever-engaging American pianist, Simone Dinnerstein, has been rather active during the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on, in lockdowns last

spring, she retreated into studio – inspired by nourishing walks through Brooklyn’s Green-Wood Cemetery – to lay down some favoured works by Schubert and Philip Glass. (See my review of the album *A Character of Quiet*, in the October 2020 issue of *The WholeNote*.)

She has now embarked on an attractive new project with Grammy Award-winning composer, Richard Danielpour: an album of pieces written expressly for her. This is a sequence of 15 miniatures, each offering comfort and musical solace during the difficult pandemic months of 2020 and 2021. The disc is capped by three arrangements of Bach’s music by Danielpour, as a tribute to Dinnerstein. He was first inspired by Dinnerstein’s celebrated recordings of Bach and set pen to staff paper in a generous outpouring of sound portraits of American society (usually in slow tempi!) over the past months of crisis: parents, teachers, first responders, religious leaders and even politicians. This recipe makes for a rich and varied (albeit lethargic) musical feast, contemporaneously narrating an era of suffering in which we still find ourselves. But why not take stock at such a close vantage point, reflecting on recent traumas still evolving?

As for Dinnerstein herself, how could she not record such music? This set was made especially for her quintessential artistry, quietly singing through at every corner. Here is the optimal example of performer-meeting-composer-meeting-performer-again; the results are worthy of a two-eared listen in these fraught, often one-eared times.

Adam Sherkin

**À Claude**  
**Benedetto Bocuzzi**  
**DiG Classic DCTT111**  
**(naxosdirect.com/search/8054726141112)**



▶ Twentieth-century piano-repertoire specialist, Benedetto Bocuzzi (b. 1990), is not only a concert pianist but also a composer, improviser and teacher. He regu-

larly performs in Italy and conducts workshops on contemporary piano repertoire, extended techniques and improvisation.

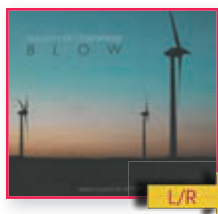
*À Claude*, Bocuzzi’s debut album, is an eclectic keyboard feast, featuring works by Claude Debussy, George Crumb, Toru Takemitsu, Olivier Messiaen, Diana Rotaru and Bocuzzi himself. The programmatic conceit of the album pays homage to Debussy, before moving on to a selection of the French maitre’s musical heirs.

Beginning with three miniatures from Debussy’s *Images: Cloches à travers les feuilles; Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*; and *Poissons d’or* (1907); the album sets a relaxed, impressionistic atmosphere inviting the listener to let imagination roam. Bocuzzi then very effectively renders six of American composer George Crumb’s texture- and allusion-rich *Makrokosmos I* (1972–1973). This collection of aphoristic piano pieces describes the temperaments of the houses of the zodiac, famously using an encyclopedic range of colouristic effects including plucking the strings, producing massive tone clusters, coaxing overtones from depressed keys not played and directly quoting music of composers such as Chopin.

Three pieces of the *Vingt regards sur l’enfant-Jésus* (1944) by French composer Messiaen receive a muscular performance here, though sections of *Regard de la Vierge* exude a poignant cantabile quality. Particularly admirable is Bocuzzi’s precise rendering of the demanding birdcall references throughout.

Andrew Timar

**Blow – Wind Quintets by Donatoni, Salonen & Lash**  
**The City of Tomorrow**  
**New Focus Recordings FCR294**  
**(newfocusrecordings.com)**



▶ Part way through the sixth movement of *Leander and Hero* (2015) by Hannah Lash, a ghostly flute-like voice enters the texture. As the liner notes reveal, the

sound is one player blowing across the open mouth of another. When it comes to unusual

directions from composers, I apparently have neither seen nor heard it all. This new release, from the spectacularly capable wood-wind quintet The City of Tomorrow, delights and amazes.

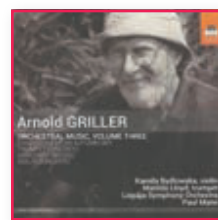
Put aside that in the current circumstances this would simply be an unacceptable breach of personal safety for both performers, the intimacy of the act demands trust and care, to say nothing of technical control of “embouchure” and/or “instrument.” It wouldn’t surprise me to learn the effect was overdubbed onto the track, but I’m willing to bet the players didn’t need to. Given how the rest of this disc is presented with complete assurance and musicality, a little thing like playing your colleague’s head like a jug in a jug band would hardly be beyond them.

The title track, Franco Donatoni’s stutter-stepping *Blow* (2000), provides the players an opportunity to show off more conventional contemporary skills. I love his music, it’s always full of swing and fire, and this is no exception. The group’s sound is crisp, tart and sweet, like a perfect fall apple.

Esa-Pekka Salonen closes things with *Memoria* (2003), music reworked partly from unpublished material, composed over a period of 20 years, and compiled to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra, a group he co-founded. Angst-y Finnish melancholia suits the group to a tee.

Max Christie

**Arnold Griller – Orchestral Music, Volume Three**  
**Kamila Bydlowska; Matilda Lloyd; Liepaja Symphony Orchestra; Paul Mann**  
**Toccata Classics TOCC0590**  
**(naxosdirect.com/search/tocc0590)**



▶ In 1955, while studying composition with Darius Milhaud, Arnold Griller (b.1937 in London, England) wrote his 13-minute, Coplandesque

*Concerto Grosso* for strings, filled with long-lined, brooding melodies. Griller’s father Sidney was first violin of the renowned Griller Quartet but, writes Douglas Finch, “Griller chose to withdraw from the musical maelstrom into which he was born and for most of his adult life has remained in relative seclusion.” Now living in a small Cornwall village, Griller even spent 25 years teaching ESL in Winnipeg!

Three recent (2017–2018) works, each over 20 minutes, variously utilize what conductor Paul Mann calls “the Griller gamelan” – harp, xylophone, marimba, celesta, glockenspiel and harpsichord.

Griller’s *Violin Concerto* memorializes Yodit Tekle, Toccata Classics founder/CEO Martin Anderson’s partner, cancer victim at 37. The dark-hued orchestra, lacking violins, gowns