

the WholeNote™

Volume 26 No 5

FEBRUARY 5 TO MARCH 19 2021

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**SO, how much ground
would a groundhog hog?**

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longer mourn for me falls into this latter category, starting its gestation as cellist Steven Isserlis' own passion project in 2013, thrown into disarray by Tavener's death later that year and, after a long and labyrinthine journey, eventually unveiled seven years later, in October 2020.

As is the case with much of Tavener's output, many of the works on this disc defy strict categorization, a reflection of the composer's numerous and eclectic influences including the Orthodox Church, the Anglican Cathedral tradition, Catholicism, Islam, Tolstoy and Shakespeare. The two principal tracks, *The death of Ivan Ilyich* and *Mahámatar*, are fascinating and stunningly beautiful cross-cultural experiences: in *Ivan Ilyich*, Tolstoy's text (sung in English by bass Matthew Rose) draws on Tavener's influences to form a uniquely dramatic work resembling a one-act opera; *Mahámatar* features Sufi singer Abi Sampa, along with Isserlis and the Trinity Boys Choir, in a magnificent exploration of East-meets-West through Tavener's eyes and ears.

The remaining works on *No longer mourn for me* are, although smaller in scale and performing forces, no less impressive, either from a compositional or interpretive perspective. Of particular interest are the two arrangements for eight-cello ensemble: Shakespeare's Sonnet LXXI, *No longer mourn for me*; and the *Preces and Responses*, a sublime setting of the prayers traditionally sung at the Anglican service of Evensong, originally composed for choir.

John Tavener's lengthy and highly regarded career resulted in an extraordinary range of material, as varied as the composer's influences and inspirations. Although only a portion of his late works is represented on *No longer mourn for me*, their depth and breadth serve both as an introduction for those previously unfamiliar with Tavener, as well as a point of exploration and discovery for those seeking to delve deeper into this great composer's eclectic and evocative style.

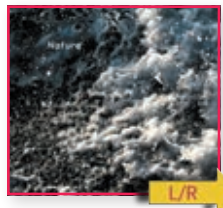
Matthew Whitfield

Nature

Fie Schouten

SOL Classics SOL010

(fieschouten.nl/en/discografie/)



► Fie Schouten makes the bass clarinet ring with a gorgeous sound. *Nature* is a collection of contemporary pieces that refer to our environment. They're cleverly

ordered, drawing attention first to the earth and sea, to the sky, and finally to the moon and stars.

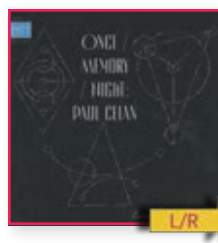
Jonathan Harvey's *Cirrus Light* is juxtaposed with *Abime des oiseaux*, from Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*.

Harvey's piece, which is played on soprano clarinet, was written in the final year of the composer's life, and sounds almost like an homage to the Messiaen. Schouten elects to present the Messiaen on basset horn, bringing more Abyss and less Bird to the performance. This is not all a bad thing: at a perfect fourth below the original pitch, desolation is powerfully rendered by the lower voice. Some of the sustained crescendi are marred by unintended timbre alterations, and I think the bird calls are more brilliant on the soprano instrument. Although it's a fine rendering, on balance, I prefer the original.

Oi Kuu, by Kaija Saariaho, is a duo for bass clarinet and cello that references the moon. It's beautiful. George Aperghis' *Façade-Trio* is also stunning. Written for two bass clarinets and percussion, it sounds like a dialogue of mad twins: two enraged geese, perhaps, arguing by the abyss. The extremely recent (August 2020) *Mankind ReMix* by Michael Finnissy is another solo bass clarinet piece, right in Schouten's wheelhouse: singing tone and powerful expression.

Max Christie

Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan Ensemble for These Times E4TT (e4tt.org/discography.html)



► Paul Celan was one of the 20th century's most profound poets. To listen to this breathtaking recording of his poetry is to be drawn to its haunting beauty as if by gossamer

strings. Elliptical, rhythmically spellbinding, each word obdurate and as inward as a geode, Celan's poems embody a conviction that the truth of what has been broken and torn must be told with a jagged grace. And few – if any – recordings of his work tell their truth better than *Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan by Ensemble for These Times*.

This recording features almost an hour of poetry echoing with heart-aching emotion delivered in a kind of near-spiritual quietude. A unique atmosphere is created by the disc's opening track: Libby Larsen's *4 1/2: A Piano Suite* brought to eloquent life by pianist Xin Zhao. Then follows *Die eichne Tür*, the cycle of Celan poems set to music by David Garner. The Ensemble's performance is both poised and haunting, and is raised to a rarefied realm by lustrous and soaring, songful recitatives executed by the inimitable Nanette McGuinness.

More of the transcendent beauty of Celan's work unfolds in Jared Redmond's *Nachtlang* before we are treated to the extraordinary recitation of another celebrated poet, Czeslaw Milosz's *A Song on the End of the World* by Milosz's son Anthony, followed by the disc's dénouement: a rapturous performance of

Milosz's poem which unfolds with poise and sensual fluidity from the lips of the magnificent McGuinness.

Raul da Gama

Albores

Dino Saluzzi

ECM New Series ECM 2638

(ecmrecords.com/shop)



► *Albores* – meaning “daybreak” – is Argentinian bandoneonist/composer Dino Saluzzi's first solo album in decades. Born in 1935,

Saluzzi is renowned

for his performances with his family band and orchestra, other ensembles and orchestras, and work with many jazz musicians such as Charlie Haden and Gato Barbieri. Here Saluzzi plays nine of his compositions on solo bandoneon, an accordion-like instrument popular in Argentinian folk music and tangos. Even though Saluzzi uses tango references, he also develops other styles in this emotional, storytelling music chronicling his life and musical adventures.

The opening track, *Adiós Maestro Kancheli*, is a reflective, mournful musical tribute to his late friend Georgian composer Giya Kancheli, highlighted by a high-pitched melody against a lower chordal accompaniment, reminiscent of a two-person conversation. Superb controlled bellows during held notes and volume changes makes the slow sparse *Ausencias* equally moving.

Don Caye – Variaciones sobre obra de Cayetano Saluzzi pays homage to Saluzzi's bandoneonist father, who taught him about music from a young age, in a more traditional joyous tango with steady rhythms, arpeggiated melodies and a short, slightly dissonant slower section. *Según me cuenta la vida – Milonga* briefly alludes to Piazzolla-flavoured *tango nuevo* yet Saluzzi's shorter contrasting melodies, dissonances and repeated notes make this contemporary milonga more his own.

Throughout, Saluzzi performs on bandoneon with detailed personal musicality, conviction, dedication and thorough technical understanding. His compositional reflections awaken a lifetime of countless feelings from happiness to grief in his own personal sound.

Tiina Kiik