



The Guitar

Music by Bach, Piazzolla et al

Rupert Boyd *g*

SONO LUMINUS DSL-92231



Fine playing from an Australian guitarist in New York

New York-based Australian classical guitarist Rupert Boyd's third solo outing returns us to the vibrant soundworlds of Piazzolla and Brouwer while introducing Baroque and Viennese Classicism into the mix. When I listen to Boyd I'm reminded of the playing of David Russell. There's that same clean technique, broad tonal palette and intelligent musicianship. It's the style that respects the composer and the music without allowing one's ego to be subsumed by them.

The two Jobim pieces which open the program feel so vibrant, so alive and yet reflective of the fleeting nature of life. Boyd manages to breathe new life into Sor's *Introduction and Variations on a Theme of Mozart* – no mean feat – by emphasising the flashes of romanticism in the classical clothing. Bach's E Major Lute Suite exhibits a beautifully contained exuberance, which gives it a peculiar energy. The *Prelude* flows so purposefully into the calm *Loure* before the more energetic dances again pick up the pace to urge us to the end – and the sustained meditation that is Graeme Koehne's *A Closed World of Fine Feelings*.

A selection of Brouwer's simple-yet-sophisticated *Estudios Sencillos* is as welcome as it is rare, Boyd highlighting the Bachian as much as the Afro-Cuban elements. They're a perfect preparation for Piazzolla's *Milonga del Angel* and *La Muerte del Angel*, which find Boyd at his expressive best. Lennon and McCartney's *Julia* brings this terrific recital to a disarmingly simple end. **Will Yeoman**



John McCabe

Organ Works

Tom Winpenny *org*

RESONUS RES10144



Fine performances, not without some whimsy

John McCabe's often spiky modernist music has never been as popular amongst organists as that of his contemporaries, Kenneth Leighton and William Mathias. Yet, as an accomplished pianist and professional composer with many organist friends, he made a significant contribution to the organ repertoire. Although this recording appeared as a download in 2015, the last year of McCabe's life, it is only now in his 80th anniversary year that it is available in disc format. Tom Winpenny plays these well-crafted works with solid technique and artistic flair on the Harrison and Harrison organ of St Albans Cathedral. Most of the pieces receive their first recording here.

McCabe's inspiration came from many sources. The title track was inspired by a painting of the same name by Paul Klee, reproduced on the booklet cover. Bookending the program are two works that travel from darkness to light. *Dies Resurrectionis* (1963) revolves around French-style toccata figuration, while *Esperanza* (2010) charts the amazing rescue of 33 miners from a Chilean mine after 70 days underground. Other pieces include a set of seven clever Carol-Preludes (2008) that display something of McCabe's sense of whimsy. (After all, he did compose a *Miniconcerto for Organ, Percussion and 485 Pennywhistles!*)

Here is a timely invitation for organists to revisit McCabe's music, with its breadth of expression and range of technical demands from easy to difficult. **Tony Way**



Lang Lang



Piano Book

Music by Mozart, Beethoven et al

Lang Lang *p*

DG 4797441



In the right hands, even Tinkle Twinkle can shine again

In his first album release since 2016, Lang Lang has returned to his "first love, to the pieces that made me want to become a musician in the first place". The works will be familiar, perhaps painfully so, to students. Bach's *Prelude in C*, Beethoven's *Für Elise*, Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*, and even *Chopsticks* accompany less commonly practiced pieces from Max Richter, Yann Tiersen, and Elena Kats-Chernin, along with arrangements from Sweden (*Limu, limu, lima*), China (*Jasmine Flower*), and Korea (*Arirang*).

Lang quite rightly observes of these works and the many others on the two-disc release that "Generations of amateur pianists have grown up with them and their melodies have become classics. But these masterworks seldom receive the careful attention they deserve." Clearly, *Piano Book* will appeal to teachers and their students; one edition of the release even comes accompanied with a luxury, 115-page hardback sheet music collection.

Lang has brought all of his artistic attention to the pieces, treating them as serious music. Many students will be familiar with the Czerny etude, "the bane of many a young player's early musical practice", observes the liner notes, but "a work that contains so much more music that you'd ever expect." Indeed, under Lang's capable hands, even the most well-known Mozart and Bach melodies are subject to elegant interpretive treatment. Some pieces become quite expansive, although there is a sense here that the virtuoso wants to encourage listeners to think about the creative potential of these well-worn tunes.

As Lang recalls, playing such etudes and sonatas was part of his daily routine, but there were too few quality recordings available. *Piano Book* goes a long way toward addressing this notable absence. **Ben Wilkie**