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**CD Review by Maria Nockin**

**TABULA RASA** • Manrico Padovani, Natasha Korsakova (vn); Charles Olivieri-Munroe, cond; North Czech Philharmonia Teplice • ARS 38552 (66:49)

**BACH** Concerto for 2 Violins and Orchestra in d, BWV 1043. **PÄRT** *Tabula Rasa*. **VIVALDI** Concerto for 2 Violins in c, RV 522. **SCHNITTKE** Concerto grosso No. 3

Although Bach may have written many more concertos for violin, at this point in history, we only have two concertos for single violin and one absolutely fascinating double violin concerto. Bach, who was a master violinist as well as a composer, increased his skills by studying and rearranging Vivaldi’s music. When Natasha Korsakova and Manrico Padovani play Bach’s circa 1730 concerto, you feel electric tension in the air and your toes begin to tap the rhythm. Throughout the three movements marked *Vivace*, *Largo ma non tanto*, and *Allegro*, these two players intertwine their lines equally like threads in a magnificent tapestry. The result is an array of gorgeous musical colors.

To balance the Bach with a modern piece, Korsakova and Padovani chose Arvo Pärt’s 1977 *Tabula Rasa* (Clean Slate), a double concerto for violins, especially prepared piano, and string orchestra. Its two movements are “Ludus” marked *Con moto* and “Silentium” marked *Senza moto*. This work exemplifies Pärt’s theory of *tintinnabuli*. Named after the Latin word for bells, *tintinnabuli* is a Minimalist compositional style influenced by the composer’s mystical experiences with Gregorian chant. Pärt composed *Tabula Rasa*, one of his earliest *tintinnabuli* pieces, at the request of his friend, conductor Eri Klas, who asked the composer to write a piece to accompany Alfred Schnittke’s Third Concerto Grosso. The Schnittke work is scored for two violins, prepared piano, harpsichord, and string ensemble. Violinist Gidon Kremer, the dedicatee, premiered the piece in Tallinn, Estonia, on September 30, 1977, with Tatjana Grindenko playing the second solo violin, Alfred Schnittke playing the prepared piano, and Eri Klas conducting the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. On this disc, Korsakova and Padovani play the *Tabula Rasa* with strict adherence to Pärt’s score and instructions. The sounds are conducive to deep thought and meditation.

Antonio Vivaldi composed his Concerto for Two Violins, op. 3/8, in 1711. He was enormously prolific, possibly because he was a priest and not allowed to have a family. At any rate, he wrote numerous single and double violin concertos and before his works were published, many elements of the concerto were not standardized. Vivaldi helped establish the concerto’s three-movement form. Movements for the Vivaldi Double Concerto on this disc are *Allegro*, *Larghetto e spiritoso*, and *Allegro*. Korsakova and Padovani play each with finesse, excellent technique, and equality in their

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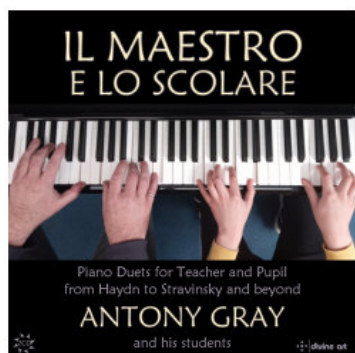
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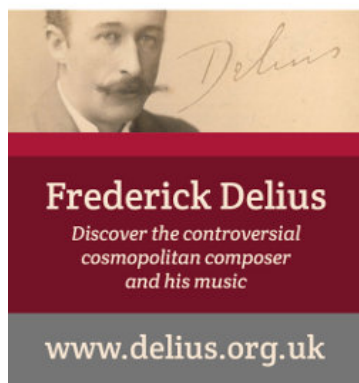
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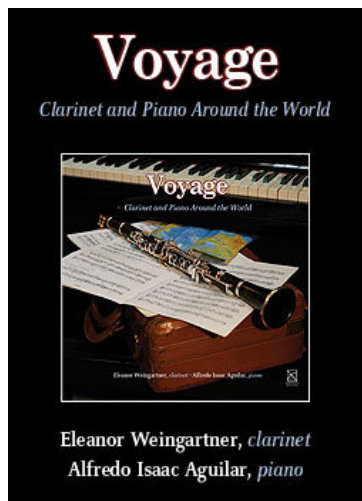
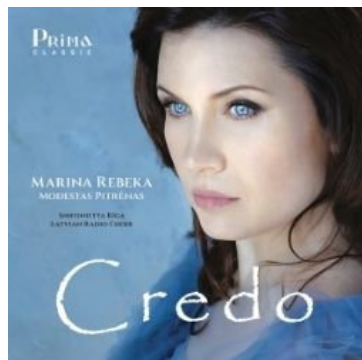
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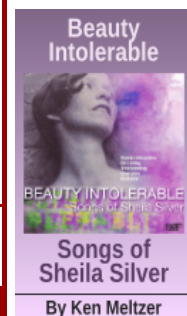
In 1985, Alfred Schnittke, wrote the Concerto Grosso No. 3 in which he pays tribute to five composers who had anniversaries that year: Schütz, Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, and Berg. The work has five movements—*Allegro*, *Risoluto*, *Pesante*, *Adagio*, and *Moderato*—but they are not paired with specific composers. Schnittke also uses bells tuned to B $\flat$ , A, C, and B $\natural$ , which in German musical language is B-A-C-H. Schnittke brings the Baroque and the modern together in his music, thus making this piece the perfect finale for Korsakova and Padovani's fascinating disc.

The sound on this CD is crystalline in its clarity, and the points made by the artists in programming these pieces together will be of great interest to lovers of both Baroque and modern violin music. **Maria Nockin**

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