



MUSIC ●●●○○ SONICS ●●●●●

Beethoven: Piano Concertos 0, 2, & 6. Vetter; Hamburg Symphony, Ruzicka. Oehms.

Roughly five years after Beethoven finished his *Emperor* Concerto, he sketched out and then abandoned a sixth concerto. Musicologist Nicholas Cook and his student Kelina Kwan (uncredited here) created a performing edition in the late 1980s. Hermann Dechant wrote a new cadenza and conclusion for Cook and Kwan's version, and this is the premiere recording. Though the performance is admirable, the piece is an unsatisfying mess. The themes aren't up to Beethoven's usual standards, and the structure is nowhere near what he would have shaped it into; even the solo part is often more decorative than integral. But for the curious, it's here, and at 15 minutes it leaves plenty of room for other endeavors. The Second Concerto was written before the First, and while the influence of Mozart and Haydn is clear, it could only be by Beethoven. The *Zeroto* Concerto is even earlier; the themes are boilerplate but enjoyable, and the harmonies and orchestration already reveal plenty of muscle for a boy of fourteen. Sophie-Mayuko Vetter chose a creaky, outgunned fortepiano for this one, and I wish she had stayed with a modern instrument. Even so, she plays with grace and youthful sparkle. **Stephen Estep**

Further Listening: Beethoven: Violin Concerto arr. Piano; Piano Concerto No. 4 (Bautigam, Norrköping, Parrott/BIS)



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#CelloUnlimited. Daniel Müller-Schott. Orfeo.

In nine years of writing for *TAS*, this is only the third album I've rated a 5 for the sound; in tonight's sonic shootout, it easily bested twenty other cello discs on hand. The engineers, Christiane Voltz and Jochen Fornell, have captured the very soul of one of the loveliest of instruments in all its glory. Overtones and sympathetic vibrations ring strongly after releases, and they can even be clearly heard on longer notes. The background is astonishingly quiet, and there's just the right amount of reverberation and atmosphere. And the engineers did all this while picking up a minimum of sniffs and breaths. I can almost forgive the hashtag in the album title! Four accessible 20th-century sonatas anchor the program. Though long-winded, Kodály's sonata is a landmark. After Prokofiev's death, Nicholas Blok completed his fragment of a movement, and it dances gleefully with Bach. Hindemith's Opus 25, No. 3 is one of his more playful works, and George Crumb's early sonata is compact yet varied. There are also miniatures by Hans Werner Henze, Pablo Casals, and Müller-Schott himself, who plays everything flawlessly, vigorously, and intelligently. The cello is balanced beautifully across its range, always rich, never congested or whiny. **SE**

Further Listening: *Solo* (Yo-Yo Ma/Sony)



MUSIC ●●●●● SONICS ●●●●●

Fantasy. Lark, Yang. First Hand.

With several competition prizes and career grants under her belt, the young violinist Tessa Lark has been in demand as a concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. Lark was born in Richmond, Kentucky, and her earliest influences were Bluegrass and American roots music; her career, she says, has been informed by her "fiddler's soul." For her first solo recording, Lark has collected several free-form, quasi-improvisational works—fantasies—that seem to the performer to have a "folk-like freedom." She plays three of Telemann's unaccompanied Fantasies and, also for violin alone, her own *Appalachian* Fantasy, a four-minute gem that feels very authentic in musical substance, tone, and execution. Lark is joined by pianist Amy Yang for the most substantial work on the program, Schubert's *Fantasie* in C Major, D934, which the violinist and her accompanist keep vital despite the 25-minute running time. Yang also provides attentive support for Fritz Kreisler's *Viennese Rhapsodic Fantasietta* and Ravel's virtuosic *Tzigane*. Lark plays a 1683 Stradivarius and her sound is sweet but never cloying. The recording is superb, thanks to veteran engineer/producer Judith Sherman and the choice of venue, the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City. The violin sonority is richly textured and the piano has weight and dimensionality. **Andrew Quint**

Further Listening: *Violin Fantasies* (Jennifer Koh)