



MUSIC ●●●●○ SONICS ●●●●○

**Ukrainian Moods.** Violina Petrychenko. Ars Produktion.

Degreed in musicology as well as performance, Ukrainian pianist Violina Petrychenko has devoted her recorded output to promoting and contextualizing the work of Ukrainian composers, much of it previously suppressed. She maintains a teaching and international concert career from her base in Cologne. Her first disc on Ars paired works by Scriabin and Viktor Kosenko, who was much influenced by the former's early romanticism and was one of Ukraine's most recognized composers. This SACD showcases miniatures by four Ukrainian composers spanning the 20th century. Lewko Revuzkij and Kosenko took the European tradition of Chopin to the threshold of modernism before being constrained by Stalinist post-avant-garde reaction. Mykola Kolessa, Igor Schamo, and his son Jurii found ways to use folkloric elements (dance forms, modes, song melodies) to finesse socialist orthodoxy within sophisticated chromatic idioms. Petrychenko displays a poetic depth of expression in these works, which alternate lyricism with bitter melancholy and a wry wit reminiscent of Satie or Mussorgsky's *Pictures*. World premieres all, some unpublished: a worthy discovery and engaging program.

**Randall Couch**

**Further Listening:** *The Silenced Voice of Vasyl Barvinsky* (Violina Petrychenko/Accelerando Produktion)



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**Time Traveler's Suite.** Inon Barnatan, piano. Pentatone.

Barnatan's concept: forming a new suite out of pieces and movements by Bach, Handel, Rameau, Couperin, Ravel, Adès, Ligeti, and Barber, culminating with Brahms' *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel*. The Baroque selections work well grouped with Ravel's "Rigaudon" from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Thomas Adès' *Blanca Variations* present the Judeo-Spanish tune "Lavaba la Blanca Niña," and then the first variation both intrudes suddenly and flows out naturally as the hazy, faux-baroque statement of the theme unravels. Everything is tastefully and fluidly played (only the Barber needs more of a sense of struggle) and perfectly enjoyable, but the Brahms is what sets the recital apart. The cheerful theme and the pervading feeling of joie de vivre are utterly satisfying. Brahms set aside many of his usual rhythmic tricks and compositional turns of phrase and let Handel shine through, and the resulting style is unique among his pieces. In Barnatan's hands, joy springs from bemusement, hope grows from yearning, and exuberance supplants uncertainty. Different parts and lines have their own colors, and Barnatan keeps me on the edge of my seat with his grasp of Brahms' dramatic arc. He has taken this underrated piece to new heights. **Stephen Estep**

**Further Listening:** Brahms: String Sextets (Cleveland Quartet, Zukerman, Greenhouse/RCA)



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**Vaughan Williams: Earth's Wide Bounds.** Royal Hospital Chelsea Chapel Choir, Vann; Ryan Albion.

Another high-quality release from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society's record label, with two recording premieres: the Communion Service, and a setting of Walt Whitman's "By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame." The Communion Service is a revision of the Mass in G Minor for use in the Church of England, itself a gorgeous linking of Vaughan Williams' harmonies with the English Catholic tradition of Tallis and Byrd. Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams reads the Ten Commandments, and there are choral responses. The long "Creed" (Credo) takes its doctrinal statement to the realm of ecstasy; it and the "Sanctus" were performed at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The Te Deum in G and several hymns, including "For All the Saints" and "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," are sung with stalwart muscularity. The Whitman setting, respectful yet forceful, paints its subject—a Civil War encampment—with thick, sliding chromaticism that makes me think of pre-atonal Schoenberg, of all people. The 23-person choir sings beautifully; the engineers got a fine balance between the church's acoustics and the choir's consonants, but you may still need the provided texts. Notes give just the right amount of detail. **SE**

**Further Listening:** Herbert Howells: Choral Works (Finzi Singers, Paul Spicer/Chandos)