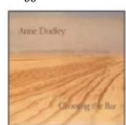


# Brief notes

This month's selection includes pop, percussion and a pot pourri of piano trios

## Anne Dudley Crossing the Bar

Anne Dudley (piano) et al  
Buffalo Music BUFALCD1



The sound of a new piano inspired this collection of original pieces and folksong arrangements.

Dudley's talent for creating musical drama is in clear evidence and she creates some really lovely textures with the additional strings here and there. Evocative. (MB) ★★★

## Alexis Ffrench Truth

Alexis Ffrench (piano) et al  
Sony Classical 19439966602



Ffrench is becoming something of a force to be reckoned with, and this latest album once again showcases the composer-pianist's 'pop' sensibilities and an innate gift for melody. This is glossy music-making from an artist whose high standards are clearly audible. (MB) ★★★★★

## Holmboe

String Quartets, Vol. 2  
Nightingale String Quartet  
Dacapo 6.220717



This second instalment of Holmboe (1909-96) quartets by fellow Danes the Nightingale Quartet is a joy – lush, romantic playing, but equally clean and spacious. The works themselves owe a debt to both Bartók and Shostakovich, and to the folksongs of Holmboe's homeland, which are woven throughout. (CS) ★★★★★

## Mårten Jansson Requiem Novum

Anna Dennis (soprano), Voces8  
Foundation Choir, Philharmonia et al  
VOCES8 Records VCM140



There's much to enjoy in Jansson's lushly scored work, whose sumptuous, tonal choral writing occasionally reminds one of Eric Whitacre. Admittedly, there are moments when it leans towards the corny, but it is very well performed and recorded here. (JP) ★★★

## E Mayer Piano Trios

Klaviertrio Hannover *Genuin* GEN22790



One of the great discoveries in the recent renaissance of music by women is Emilie Mayer, a

German Romantic composer. These three piano trios, recorded here for the first time, are wonderful chamber works, full of vitality and invention. The Klaviertrio Hannover play them with aplomb. (RF) ★★★★★

## Fanny Mendelssohn Piano Music

Martina Frezzotti (piano)  
Piano Classics PCL10238



Fanny Mendelssohn composed her piano cycle *Das Jahr* in 1841, giving a copy to her husband as a Christmas present. Her 12 characterful miniatures, one for each month, all superb, range from a sparkling scherzo to a bittersweet serenade. Martina Frezzotti is an engaging guide. (RF) ★★★★★

## Mozart

Palatine Sonatas, K301-306  
Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin),  
Daniel-Ben Pienaar (piano)



These six charming sonatas for violin and piano were written in a single summer by the then 22-year-old Mozart and showcase, in their colourful drama, an impressive maturity. Sheppard Skærved is an experienced advocate for the works, balanced nicely by Pienaar's lightness of touch. (CS) ★★★

## Arvo Pärt • R Strauss Metamorphosen etc

I Musici de Montréal *Atma* ACD22813



Human tragedy underpins this programme. Strauss's elegiac *Metamorphosen* is paired with Pärt's 2009 Symphony No. 4, an anti-Putin work. I Musici de Montréal throws itself into both the passionate outpourings and the atmospheric stillness, with first-rate playing. (RF) ★★★★★

## Penderecki

Theatre and Film Music

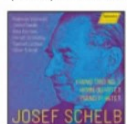
Beethoven Academy Orchestra et al  
Dux DUX1864



The majority of these works were written for puppet theatres, and the likes of *Little Orphan Mary* and *the Dwarves* are full of character, painting a clear narrative. This is a generous treasure trove that dusts off some of the late Polish composer's more obscure early pieces. (MB) ★★★★★

## Schelb

Piano Trio No. 2; Piano Quintet etc  
Daniel Gaede (violin), Samuel Lutzker  
(cello) et al *Hänssler Classic* HC22015



Increasing in forces – Piano Trio, Horn Quartet, Piano Quintet – the three works here make a fine introduction to the darkly chromatic world of the 20th-century German Josef Schelb. When there is levity, it inevitably has a sardonic edge. (JP) ★★★★★

## Eric Tanguy In a Dream

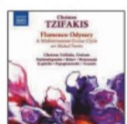
Alexandra Conunova (violin) et al  
Erato 9029635566



This prestige release by an ensemble of first-rate performers features eight chamber works by contemporary French composer Eric Tanguy. The title work is performed with strength and conviction by Conunova, while cellist Edgar Moreau and violist Lise Berthaud are equally convincing in their compositions. (CS) ★★★★★

## Christos Tzifakis Flamenco Odyssey etc

Christos Tzifakis (guitar) et al  
Naxos 8.579112



This is a strange beast. On the one hand, there are the solo movements in which Tzifakis's admirable virtuosity is able to shine. On the other, when the chamber ensemble is added to the mix, the result is an unconvincingly recorded Mediterranean mishmash. (JP) ★★

## John Williams

A Gathering of Friends

Yo-Yo Ma (cello); New York Phil et al  
Sony Classical 19439983662



It's a treat to hear Ma lend his still-flawless technique to this selection. His light and transparent tone floats serenely above the Concerto's dense harmonic landscape, and the arrangements of film themes are captivating, too – though he doesn't quite achieve the gravitas of Itzhak Perlman's original *Schindler's List* recording. (CS) ★★★★★

## 48 Strings

Works by Popper, Klengel et al  
Andreas Brantelid, Ingemar Brantelid  
et al (cello) *Naxos* 8.574301



There's a fun twist to this cello recital, which builds from one to 12 cellists. But with dry sound and an unsatisfying programme, it makes for a rather indigestible listen. A shame, because the level of musicianship is so high. (RF) ★★

## Charm, Passion and Acrobatics

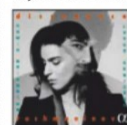
Works by Chausson, Kunc et al  
Misha Galaganov (viola), John Owings  
(piano) *Navona* NV6434



It's always fun to discover new 'old' works as a listener, but this set of 19th-century pieces were new to violist Galaganov, too, who came across them in a private library. Impressionist gems by Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht perhaps sparkle the brightest. (MB) ★★★

## Rachmaninov Songs

Asmik Grigorian (soprano),  
Lukas Geniušas (piano)  
*Alpha Classics* ALPHA796



Whole worlds are packed into each of the 19 songs on this unmissable debut recital from Grigorian. The Lithuanian's soprano has a steely glint and powerful intensity, but nor does she stint on vulnerability and introspection. Geniušas is a superb piano partner. (RF) ★★★★★