

Ching-Chu Hu presents a vivid contrast with his piece *Pulse* that deals with issues of the heart and a range of human emotions.

The three composers share a language that is largely tonal and combines a wonderfully creative inclination for rhythmic interest with clever tune-smithing.



Hando Nahkur's fifth solo album is his first completely devoted to the piano music of Franz Liszt **Lisztomania Vol.1 (HN Productions handonahkur.com/discography/)**. This recording promises further volumes of Liszt but begins by offering a couple of transcriptions of Schubert lieder, *Erlkönig* and *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*, in addition to larger works. Nahkur is consistently

amazing in his ability to blend both the technical and interpretive demands of this repertoire. *Après une lecture du Dante* is perhaps the most difficult piece in the program but it comes across with an unencumbered directness and a conceptual maturity required by the subject matter. The contrasting thematic ideas of heaven/hell are as demanding as the work's closing passages of rapid chromatic octaves. The way he embraces all this shows how secure Nahkur is with Liszt – one of his favourite composers – and it bodes well for future volumes.

It's unusual to find a brilliantly gifted performer of Nahkur's calibre still producing on his own independent label. How long before a major label signs him?



Jonas Vitaud's third major recording is an impressive double disc set **Debussy – Jeunes années (Mirare [MIR 392 mirare.fr](http://MIR.392.mirare.fr))**. It's mostly piano solo but includes some songs for soprano and tenor, as well as a gorgeous performance of Debussy's *Fantaisie pour piano et orchestra*.

Vitaud, in his late 30s, has impressive credentials and artistic pedigree. His playing

is flawless and obviously informed by a deep intellectual inquiry that searches for meaningful content in every note he plays. He's a thinker and a very effective communicator. He lifts Debussy out of the purely impressionist mould and interprets him in broader terms. While there's lots of requisite legato playing of beautiful long lines, there's also an unmistakable new sharpness to staccatos, lifts and phrase separations. Vitaud somehow manages to harness a rhythmic energy in Debussy's music that is often missed in other performances. Listen for this throughout the *Suite Bergamasque*, *Mazurka* and *Images oubliées*. The 2-CD set is an impressive early addition to a very promising discography.



Michael Adcock has released a new disc **Keyboard Transcriptions (Centaur [CRC3534 arkivmusic.com](http://CRC3534.arkivmusic.com))** presenting works by Prokofiev, Gershwin/Wild, Bizet/Horowitz, Schumann/Liszt and Saint-Saëns/Godowsky. It's a rich program with plenty of drama and brilliance.

Prokofiev's own piano version of his *Romeo and Juliet Op.75* ballet is one of the

two major pieces on the recording. It's big, bold and unapologetic. The piano Adcock uses for the performance is a Steingraeber concert grand with a powerful bright sound ideally suited for Prokofiev's angular music. Adcock performs the suite splendidly with all the energy you'd expect from a full orchestra. The beautifully sinister *Montagues and Capulets* is especially effective with its evil bass line and foreboding melody.

The other major work on the CD is Earl Wild's *Seven Virtuoso Etudes* on tunes by George Gershwin. These are the real highlight of this recording. Wild was an extraordinary performer and gifted composer/arranger, and the *Etudes* demonstrate his genius for invention and virtuosity. Adcock plays these with an easy conviction that makes them seem like a natural fit for his impressive ability and fluid style. While each one is memorable, *I Got Rhythm* stands out for its intelligence and complexity.



Hubert Rutkowski is a Chopin specialist and his latest disc **Chopin on Pleyel 1847 (Piano Classics [PCL 10129 piano-classics.com](http://PCL.10129.piano-classics.com))** adds to the growing number of performances using period instruments to capture the sound and feel that composers associated with their work. Chopin owned a Pleyel and regularly performed on one in public. The Pleyel that Rutkowski uses in this recording

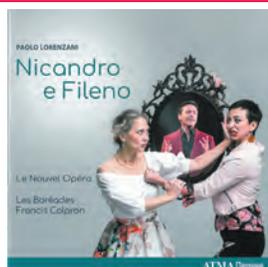
dates from 1847 and while it was built just a couple of years before Chopin died, there's no suggestion that he ever played this particular instrument.

Modern pianos have evolved dramatically from their early forms, based on the development of technology and materials, as well as an artistic imperative for richness of sound and simple raw power. Rutkowski's playing is wonderfully light and song-like. He takes advantage of the Pleyel's slightly delayed dampening system and the more direct feel of keyboard contact with the strings. The piano's voice is a softer one owing to the lower tension of the strings that are supported by a composite frame using iron cross bars.

Rutkowski quickly captures the sound of Chopin's era but more importantly, revives the music with an authentic voice that is intriguingly fresh. 🐼

What we're listening to this month:

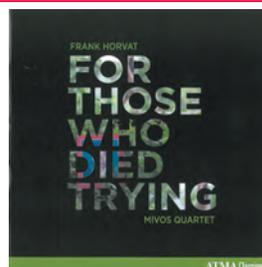
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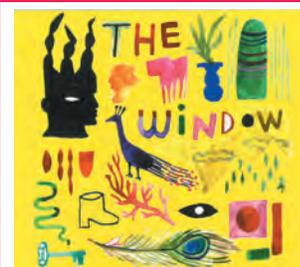
Lorenzani – Nicandro e Fileno
Le Nouvel Opéra ; Les Boréades ; Francis Colpron
ATMA Classique presents the first-ever recording of *Nicandro e Fileno*, a pastoral opera by Paolo Lorenzani (1640-1713) first performed in 1681.



Global Sirens
Christina Petrowska Quilico
Internationally acclaimed pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico takes listeners on a musical excursion into the works of some neglected women composers from around the world.



Frank Horvat – For Those Who Died Trying
Milos Quartet
The world premiere recording of *The Thailand HRDs*, an epic 35-movement string quartet by critically-acclaimed Canadian composer Frank Horvat performed by the Mivos Quartet.



The Window
Cécile McLorin Salvant
An album of duets with the pianist Sullivan Fortner, explores and extends the tradition of the piano-vocal duo and its expressive possibilities.