

Classical music

selected by [Peter Bannister](#) in the [December 11, 2013](#) issue

In Review



Preludes and Dreams

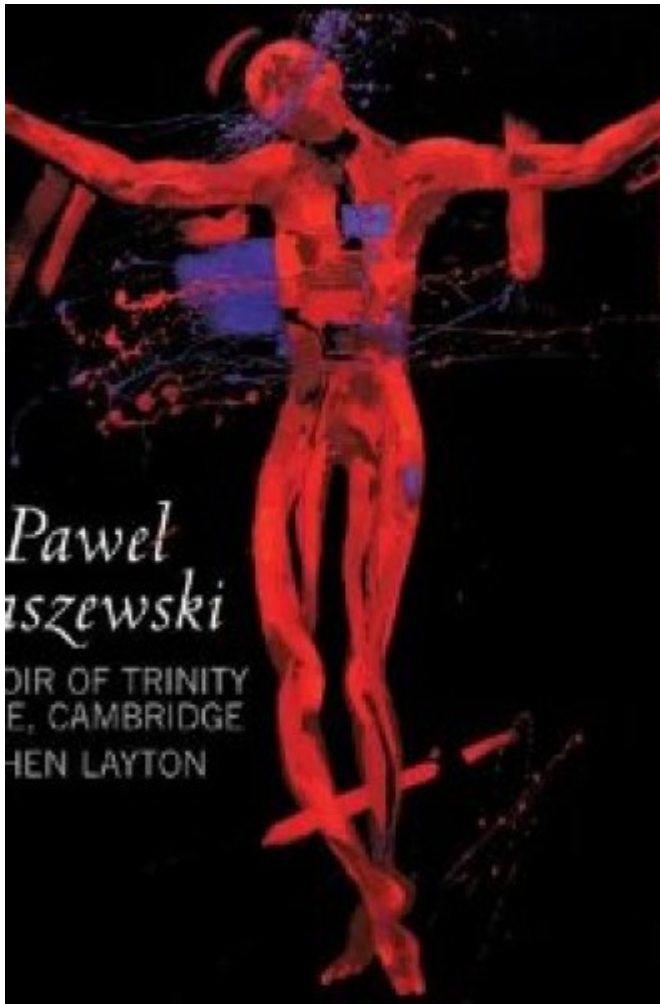
By Lera Auerbach

Bis



Beau Soir

Messiaen Janine Jansen, violin; Itamar Golan, piano
Decca Classics



Choral Music

By Paweł Łukaszewski Trinity College Choir, Cambridge; Stephen Layton, conductor
Hyperion



Piano Concerto “Resurrection”

By Krzysztof Penderecki Florian Uhlig, piano; Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra;
Łukasz Borowicz, conductor
Hänssler Classic

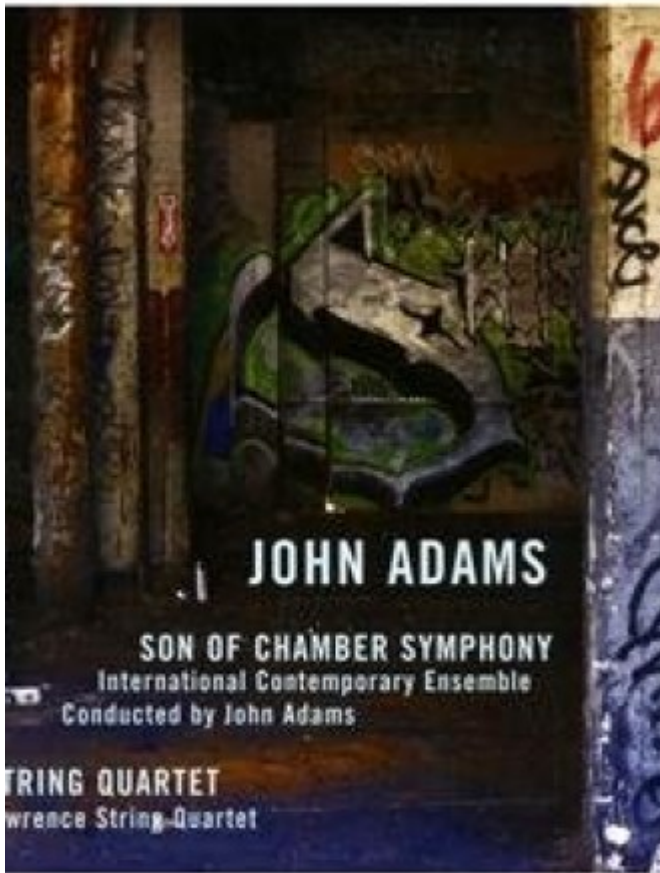
ARVO PÄRT

ADAM'S LAMENT

NEW NEW SERIES

Adam's Lament

By Arvo Pärt Latvian Radio Choir; Sinfonietta Riga, Vox Clamantis, Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra; Tonu Kaljuste, conductor
EMC



Son of Chamber Symphony and String Quartet

By John Adams International Contemporary Ensemble; St. Lawrence String Quartet;
John Adams, conductor
Nonesuch



Bagatellen und Serenaden

By Valentin Silvestrov Valentin Silvestrov and Alexei Lubimov, piano; Münchener Kammerorchester; Christoph Poppen, conductor
ECM

Preludes and Dreams, Lera Auerbach, piano. Lera Auerbach, a Russian Jew who has lived in the United States for over 20 years, is not only a pianist but a visual artist and award-winning poet. She is the creator of an impressive number of large-scale works such as the ballet *The Little Mermaid* and the recent *Ode to Peace*. *Preludes and Dreams*, an album of piano pieces completed between 1999 and 2003, is typical of Auerbach's idiom. She is firmly rooted in a Slavic tradition traceable through Shostakovich and Rachmaninoff back to Chopin, and her work is profoundly personal in its emotional breadth and intensity.

Beau Soir, Janine Jansen, violin, and Itamar Golan, piano. Franco-Swiss composer and double bass virtuoso Richard Dubugnon has rapidly become known as one of the most fluent and exuberant composers of his generation. He is open to an eclectic range of influences from Bach and Honegger to funk, the Bee Gees and master composers of the mid-20th century. The three miniatures “La Minute Exquise,” “Hypnos” and “Retour à Montfort-Lamaury” featured on *Beau Soir* showcase the generous lyricism of Dutch violinist Janine Jansen.

Choral Music, by Paweł Łukaszewski. Sacred choral music has become the focus for a number of younger composers. This choral writing is often symphonic in ambition and texture. *Antiphonae*, the seven Advent antiphons of Paweł Łukaszewski recorded in Cambridge, are an example of this growing repertoire. Łukaszewski’s work has the granite-like quality and religious fervor of Górecki. His work encompasses electric outbursts of pulsating rhythm and moments of great melodic delicacy.

Piano Concerto “Resurrection,” by Krzysztof Penderecki. Penderecki’s concerto, dedicated to the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, was criticized as crass and emotionally manipulative when it premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2002. Some critics still balk at its overtly Mahlerian pretensions and heady neo-Romantic pianistic gestures. Others will find the piece enthralling due to the sweeping 38-minute structure that coheres by the sheer strength of its conviction. Uhlig combines hard-edged drive with immaculate shading of tone in the many meditative passages.

Adam’s Lament, by Arvo Pärt. This work for choir and string orchestra is one of Arvo Pärt’s largest and most striking recent compositions. Based on a text by St. Silouan of Mount Athos, *Adam’s Lament* was first performed in the ancient Hagia Irene basilica in Istanbul in 2010 by Christian and Muslim singers and players. Shot through with a somber, brooding magnificence typical of Pärt’s recent output, its musical evocation of the tears of Adam (who in the composer’s words “foresaw the human tragedy and experienced it as his personal guilt”) constitutes a universal cry of repentance. The CD has a number of smaller works, including a new version of Pärt’s mellifluous *Salve Regina* with orchestral accompaniment.

Son of Chamber Symphony and String Quartet, by John Adams. John Adams ranks among a handful of composers on the international new music scene to have gained favor with a popular audience while remaining a “composer’s composer.” The string quartet, given a commanding performance by the St. Lawrence, demonstrates his exceptional compositional toolbox, ranging from blistering motoric energy to lyrical

introspection. *Son of Chamber Symphony*, conducted by Adams himself, nods in the direction of early Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Nonetheless, it is quintessentially and at times maniacally Adamsian, complete with a finale in which a trash can lid plays a starring role.

Bagatellen und Serenaden, by Valentin Silvestrov. The haunting, dreamlike music of Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov is unique. The series of piano bagatelles displays a weightless delicacy. The translucent, pedal-soaked sonorities of *Der Bote*, for piano and strings, is an ethereal evocation of a forgotten 18th-century sonatina which began as the Agnus Dei of Silvestrov's *Requiem* for his wife. Silvestrov's "dialogue" with a "Wedding Waltz," attributed to Franz Schubert and preserved in oral tradition until written down by Richard Strauss in 1943, provides five minutes of nostalgia in which it is almost impossible (and irrelevant) to detect where Schubert ends and Silvestrov begins.