

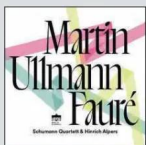
## BRIEF NOTES

Haunting and dramatic:  
Hinrich Alpers joins the  
Schumann Quartett



### Martin • Ullmann • Fauré – *Piano Quintets etc* Schumann Quartett, Hinrich Alpers (piano)

Berlin Classics 0303971BC

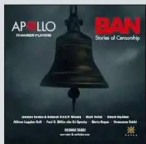


Romantic, intensely dramatic and with the occasional Ravel-like feel, Martin's 1919 Piano Quintet 'À ma femme' is one of those works whose comparative neglect today seems hard to understand. Ditto the haunting Third Quartet by Ullmann, written while the doomed Austrian

composer was interred in the Theresienstadt concentration camp during World War II. Altogether more familiar, Fauré's sumptuous D minor Piano Quintet of 1906 rounds off a highly recommendable listen. *Jeremy Pound* ★★★★★

### Ban: *Stories of Censorship*

Apollo Chamber Players *Azica Records ACD-71385*



*Ban* is a striking work that explores the threat of censorship through works by an array of contemporary composers across the globe. In the opener, *The Book Of Names*, Marty Regan draws inspiration from the list compiled in 2022 of every person incarcerated in Japanese-American internment camps during WWII, with actor George Takei shining as narrator. Allison Loggins-Hull's *Ban*, Mark Buller's String Quartet No. 6, Homayoun Sakhi's *Arman (Hope)* and DJ Spooky's *Quantopia* are amongst the compelling works throughout the programme that explore historical erasure, book bans, disinformation and artistic survival through a brilliant range of electronics, spoken word and varied instrumental arrangements. *Miranda Bardsley* ★★★★★

### Voyager – *Works by Beethoven, Debussy et al*

Viano Quartet *Platoon PLAT2738*



The 2019 Banff Competition winners here pay homage to NASA's 1977 Voyager programme. Taking centre stage is Beethoven's Op. 130, including the 'Cavatina', featured on Voyager's Golden Record, and played with beautifully controlled emotion. Alistair Coleman's *Moonshot* captures well a sense of mystery, while Hao Zhou's arrangements, including 'Clair de Lune' are warm and understated. *Charlotte Smith* ★★★★★

the bassoon to create a strikingly different and very beautiful sound-world, enriched by the delicate addition of the riq tambourine and the oud.

The oud appears again here in a short piece by Khaled Al Kammar, which lets Mohamed's expressive technique shine, as does everything else on this CD, which is full of surprises. De Bréville's forgotten work is a very welcome exhumation, as is Hindemith's short sonata, while a brief viola arrangement of Mendelssohn's most popular song-without-words adds a dash of perfumed high spirits. *Michael Church* ★★★★★

### Gypsy Melodies

Works by Bartók, Boulanger, Dvořák, Janáček et al  
Talich Quartet

*La Dolce Volta LDV129 59:57 mins*



The rationale for this winning collection of arrangements for string quartet of songs,

duets and instrumental items seems to be that musical hits don't belong exclusively to the modern popular repertoire. A classical 'hit' in any era, and certainly in the 19th century, could bring a work into the home in reworkings for other mediums, although not so frequently for a professional string quartet.

Nevertheless, there is an excellent precedent for the Talich Quartet's treatment of Dvořák's *Gypsy Songs* from the composer himself. Dvořák made very successful versions of 12 of his early Cypress song settings, although quite what he would have thought of the rather sentimental embellishments added to the main theme of 'Songs My Mother Taught Me' on its second appearance can only be guessed at.

But across the board these arrangements, the majority by Jiří Kabát, are invariably idiomatic and very enjoyable on their own terms. Janáček's *Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs*, a pungent mix of lively swagger and heartfelt emotion, reveal new dimensions when transferred to this format. Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances*, with the quartet enhanced by a double bass and some splendid cimbalom playing from L'ubomír Gašpar, benefit greatly from some varied, not to say, uninhibited treatment.

The players of the Talich Quartet clearly revel in this repertoire and are equally at home in the soulful numbers as in the sheer fun of the more excitable items such as Georges Boulanger's *Sérénade Tzigane* and Ivan Vasiliev's well-known *Deux Guitares*. Sustained listening 'hit by hit' might prove a touch on the enervating side, but dipping in here and there to these infectiously played miniatures is a guilty pleasure well worth savouring. *Jan Smaczny* ★★★★★

### Passing Fancy: *Beauty in a Moment of Chaos*

Works by Byrd, Dering, Duarte, Rossi et al

Sonnambula/Elizabeth Weinfeld; James Kennerley (harpsichord and tenor)

*Avie AV2746 53:35 mins*



This is a beautiful disc with a slightly odd agenda. Sonnambula is an American

ensemble of viols, violins and keyboard, now resident at the Frick Collection in New York, and they weave together very effectively contrasted groups of pieces: viol fantasias by the Elizabethan Richard Dering; dances, sonatas and a song by Salamone Rossi; sinfonias by Leonora Duarte and keyboard music by William Byrd. They start with a reduction of a feisty overture by Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, and there are two vocal items: a psalm setting by Rossi and finally a 15th-century song from the famous Spanish Cancionero de Palacio ('Mi querer tanto vos quiere').

All are beautifully turned, and the wide chronological range is hardly a concern: the Dering comes across as slightly severe, the Rossi is more lively, while the sinfonias by Leonora Duarte are dramatic and compelling. A few extrovert moments come in the Byrd keyboard pieces, nicely played on a sweet-toned harpsichord by James Kennerley; he also adds the vocal lines in the two songs.

I would find this cool and expert sequence very satisfying as it stands. But the background we are invited to grasp from the title and elsewhere is that some of these composers, like Byrd and Dering, had to hide their religious identity; some like Duarte had to live as Christians, though they were Jewish. The chosen pieces