

The New York Times

Classical Playlist: Andrew Parrott, Jeroen Van Veen, Ildar Abdrazakov and More

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MONTEVERDI: ‘L’Orfeo’

Taverner Consort and Players; directed by Andrew Parrott

(Avie; 2 CDs)

There are many fine recordings of Monteverdi’s landmark “L’Orfeo,” the first great opera, composed in 1607. A superb new recording features the distinguished conductor Andrew Parrott, directing the impressive singers and period-instrument performers of the Taverner Consort & Players. This account is exceptional for its fluidity, elegance and tenderness. The cast is headed by the poignant tenor Charles Daniels in the title role. *(Anthony Tommasini)*

CLASSICAL PLAYLIST

Times critics share what they’ve been listening to lately.

ARVO PÄRT: ‘Für Anna Maria, Complete Piano Music’

Jeroen Van Veen, pianist

(Brilliant Classics, 2 CDs)

The somber, spiritual music of the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, who rebelled against Soviet strictures, often incorporates tintinnabuli, the signature technique he developed inspired by the Latin word for bells. “Für Alina,” the disc’s enigmatic opening work — tenderly rendered by the pianist Jeroen Van Veen — showcases that technique. The second disc features earlier works of a very different aesthetic, including two neo-Classical sonatinas and a partita that evokes Shostakovich.

(Vivien Schweitzer)

‘POWER PLAYERS: RUSSIAN ARIAS FOR BASS’

Ildar Abdrazakov, bass-baritone; Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra; Kaunas State Choir; Constantine Orbelian, conductor

(Delos)

Starring in Borodin’s “Prince Igor” at the Met this week, the Russian bass Ildar Abdrazakov is, at 37, turning his attention to Russian works. That production and this album, which moves gracefully from comic to sobering and back again, are therefore a coming-out party of sorts. His voice moves well in fast music, but it and he are developing the depth for Igor, Boris Godunov and the like. The Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra in Lithuania (not to be confused, as I first did, with the Kansas City Symphony) gives him easy, flexible support. *(Zachary Woolfe)*

‘SPRUNG RHYTHM’

Inscape Chamber Orchestra; Abigail Lennox, soprano

(Sono Luminus)

I don’t tend to put much stock in Grammy nominations, which rarely seem to reflect critical consensus or popular acclaim. But this gorgeously recorded CD/Blu-ray set by an exciting young Washington, D.C., chamber ensemble thwarts skepticism, offering brilliant accounts of characterful instrumental pieces by Nathan Lincoln-DeCusatis, Joseph Hallman and Justin Boyer, as well as a buoyant song cycle by Mr. Hallman that simply must be heard. *(Steve Smith)*

‘PANORAMA ARGENTINO: PIANO MUSIC OF ARGENTINA, VOL.

2’

Mirian Conti, pianist

(Steinway & Sons)

Think Argentine music and the instruments that most readily come to mind are the bandoneón, the hand-held accordion integral to tango, and the violin. Here, to redress the balance, comes the second installment in Mirian Conti’s collection of wistful, headstrong and elegant miniatures for solo piano by 19th- and 20th-century Argentine composers, among them Carlos Guastavino, Julián Aguirre and Ángel Lasala, which Ms. Conti performs with poetry and rhythmic verve. *(Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim)*

MONTSALVATGE: 'Madrigal' and Other Works

Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano; Tim Fain, violinist; Perspectives Ensemble, conducted by Angel Gil-Ordoñez

(Naxos)

The Spanish composer Xavier Montsalvatge is no household name, but you couldn't ask for a better introduction to his elegant, refined and piquant oeuvre than this vibrant collection by New York City's Perspectives Ensemble. A well-balanced selection of pieces composed from 1969 to 1995, the disc is further abetted by the mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke's ravishing voice and the violinist Tim Fain's bravura solo work. *(Smith)*

SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

Tracks from the recordings discussed this week. (Spotify users can also find it [here](#).)