



Music worthy of the noblest king and his court



Presentable for a prince



Worthy of a knight's honor



An honorable effort but not recommended



Even a bumbling knave would not spend a pence on this CD

LAMENTATE

Arvo Pärt
ASIN: B000A69QCW
★★★★★

Recently named "Europe's greatest living composer" by *Entertainment Weekly* and "one of the world's most honored composers" by National Public Radio's music critic Tom Manoff, Estonian musician Arvo Pärt has created an outstanding two-part CD titled *Lamentate*.

The opening chorus "Da Pacem Domine" is a clear and moving *a capella* set of choral harmonies that is beautifully rendered by the Hilliard Ensemble. A hauntingly meditative plea for peace, the choral work is carried by a stream of voices modeled on Gregorian chant. Dispensing with the type of vocal pyrotechnics found in choral works by other artists, this piece is simple to the point of being minimalist, yet steeped in sacred archaic tones.

This is followed by "Lamentate," which was composed for orchestra and piano. Set to quiet drums and horns at the beginning, the piece quickly evolves into explosive sound so darkly wrathful and turbulent that Old Norse epics come to mind. These are interspersed, at times, with the lyrical effect of solo pianist Aleksei Lubimov and supported by strings.

My one complaint about this CD is that at 42 minutes in length, it is too short. This is but nitpicking, however, for this album is brilliant. Rest assured, *Lamentate* will leave Arvo Pärt fans, both old and new, deeply satisfied.

—T. Mercadal-Sabbagh

ARVO PÄRT
LAMENTATE

NEW YORK CLASSICS

Victoria Lynn

Live in Concert
Harp, Celtic Harp, and Voice



VICTORIA LYNN:
LIVE IN CONCERT

by Victoria Lynn Schultz
CD #: 86851-1087-2



The harp is one of those instruments that invariably makes one think of medieval and renaissance music; when played by a virtuoso, it becomes a conduit to the distant past, a direct link to an ancient tradition. Victoria Lynn Schultz is just such a virtuoso, and her *Live in Concert* CD is an hour-long slice of history. A nicely representative collection of pieces for renaissance and Irish harp, the CD is perfect for background music at a period-themed event and equally suited to an afternoon or evening of relaxation.

Most of the pieces are period compositions, and their traditional feel is reflected in Schultz's superb playing; "Siciliana" and "Dance" evoke the courtliness and elegance of a noble household. The delicate notes draw upon one another, like couples calling one another to the dance. The sound quality is unusually good for a live album; every note is crisp, not cold or sterile. The harpist's fingers fly over the strings, especially on "Bianco

Fiore" and "All in a Garden Green," at times creating the illusion of multiple instruments in mimic of a court orchestra. Mellifluous vocals accompany "Tout cède a vos doux appas" and "Ah! Qu'il fait beau," a charming touch that furthers the fantasy.

The CD's second half switches gears and features performances on the Irish harp. In contrast to the renaissance harp selections that stem from the royal courts of Europe, these tracks reflect the origins of the songs among the common people, where the style is dramatically different but equally mastered by Schultz. Alternating the quicker tempos of "Nobody's Gigge" with the slow, ballad-like qualities of "Down by the Salley Gardens" and "Carrickfergus," the versatility of the harp in its various incarnations is showcased beautifully. Reels and jigs are also represented here, and their distinctive sound is obvious, even without the accompaniment of pipe and fiddle that typically joins them.

Finally, the collection is rounded out with several original compositions, including the award-winning "Celtic Suite;" its individual sections delve into the rich Celtic musical tradition in a satisfying sampler of sound.

Beguiling and soothing, this CD amply shows why the harp has long been associated with the music of angels. *Live in Concert* is a heavenly collection that is not to be missed.

—Richard Mackenzie