



Plenty to offer: Tamar Beraia's debut solo recital pleases Bryce Morrison with its 'dazzling virtuosity', 'exhilarating life' and fine sound



For her debut album, Tamar Beraia, a 27-year-old Georgian pianist, offers a

richly comprehensive programme. Her quicksilver brilliance lends a special wit and charm to Haydn's D major Sonata, HobXVI/37, and she is admirably sensitive in the contrasting gravity of the central *Largo e sostenuto*. Beethoven's early G major Sonata, Op 14 No 2, is, again, as fleet and dextrous as you could wish even if, ideally, you miss the wealth of character, of light and shade, of Kempff, while Liszt's First *Mephisto Waltz* is dispatched with skittering aplomb.

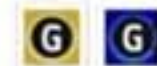
However, Beraia truly comes into her own in her winged and delectable performance of Schumann's *Carnaval*. Here any reservations concerning surface facility vanish. Dazzling virtuosity (try 'Papillons' and 'Pause') are complemented by the most stylish voicing and inflections ('Valse noble'). The entire performance breathes new and exhilarating life into a familiar masterpiece.

The Bach-Busoni Chaconne is impetuous and individual, light years away from, say, Michelangelo's autocracy. Yet

it is entirely successful in its own terms. Hopefully we shall be hearing much more of this exceptional artist. BR-Klassik's sound for [eaSonus](#) leaves nothing to be desired and Carmen Delia Romero's glowing tribute to Beraia is richly deserved.

**Bryce Morrison**

### Mahan Esfahani



**JS Bach** *Musikalisches Opfer*, BWV1079 - Ricercar a 3; Ricercar a 6; Canon a 2 per tonos  
**Byrd** *Clarifica me, Pater I-III. John come kiss me now. Pavan and Galliard - No 1; No 5. The Marche before the Battell. Fancie (My Ladye Nevells Book, No 41). Callino casturame. Fantasia (Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, No 52). Walsingham*  
**Ligeti** *Passacaglia ungherese. Continuum. Hungarian Rock*

**Mahan Esfahani** *hpd*

Wigmore Hall Live (M) WHLIVE0066 (75' • DDD)

Recorded live, May 3, 2013



by Byrd, Bach and Ligeti (from which this disc derives) felt that the programme would have been more effectively contrasted had

the three Ligeti works been interspersed among the others, rather than presented in chronological sequence. Oddly enough, I received this release as randomly numbered lossless digital files and initially wrote my review assuming that that this seemingly 'mixed and matched' sequence was the actual running order, and a very inspired one at that.

In fact, reordering strengthens the overall impact of Esfahani's flexible, articulate and deeply musical interpretations. Try putting Ligeti's austere, ceremonial *Passacaglia ungherese* before the three-part Ricercar from Bach's *Musical Offering*. Similarly, the rhythmic energy of Byrd's D minor Fantasia easily slips into the jagged disquiet of Ligeti's *Hungarian Rock*, which, in turn, provides a provocative bridge into the C minor Galliard. While many performances of Ligeti's *Continuum* barrel their way through the relentless dissonant *tremolos*, Esfahani's steady rhythm conveys a sense of air between the notes and allows the pitches to register more fully than usual. Also note how Esfahani points up the quirky cross-rhythmic interplay and tart accidentals in Byrd's Fantasia in A minor.

The wild mood contrasts and decorative writing in Byrd's *John come kiss me now*