

Feigelson played them from the manuscripts, which he acquired from the composer's widow in Moscow, having recorded Sonata No.1 along with the 24 Cello Preludes in 1996. (Those recordings are now available on Naxos 8.572280.) If you are even remotely interested in music for unaccompanied cello then this CD is an absolute "must" and at the low Naxos price it's a no-brainer. Buy it. Play it. And hang on to your socks.

Despite his English name, **George Onslow** (1784-1853) was a French composer. Although highly regarded in his time – he was known as the French Beethoven! – his music was until recently neglected and difficult to obtain. A recent CD from the French ensemble **Quatuor Diotima (Naïve V5200)** features three string quartets from 1828 – Nos. 28, 29 and 30 – that Onslow wrote while still trying to come to terms with the impact of Beethoven's late quartets, which he found both fascinating and disconcerting. They marked a change from a pre-Romantic style to one of intense expressiveness, a quality captured perfectly in these dazzling and clearly empathetic performances. The booklet notes describe this music as "exciting, personal, and amazingly neglected" – a perfect description. Naxos has issued another two excellent CDs featuring Onslow's seldom-played violin concertos.



Sergei Mikhailovich Lyapunov (1859-1924) was a Russian nationalist composer who studied with Balakirev and remained strongly influenced by him.



His **Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.61** is a one-movement work that sounds exactly as you would expect: big, Tchaikovsky-like melodies, a Romantic flow and a dazzling solo part. **Maxim Fedotov** is in superb form, with excellent support from the **Russian Philharmonic Orchestra** under **Dmitry Yablonsky**. The latter are also terrific in Lyapunov's **Symphony No. 1 in B minor, Op.12 (Naxos 8.570462)**.

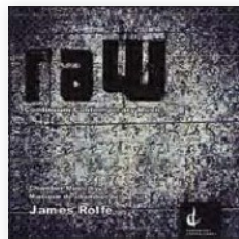
MODERN & CONTEMPORARY

raW – Chamber Music by James Rolfe
Continuum Contemporary Music
Centrediscs CMCCD 16210

● The Continuum ensemble, comprised of Toronto's top contemporary musicians, adds a third CD to its discography. Here effectively conducted by Gregory Oh, the entire album is dedicated to the music of multi award winning Toronto composer

James Rolfe (b. 1961).

raW (2003) is a delightful musical romp. Based on Bach's Second Brandenburg Concerto, Rolfe notes that the musical elements of **raW** are filtered through several reggae songs and the John Philip Sousa march **Stars and Stripes Forever**. The work starts smartly with a series of recognisable motoric sixteenths from the Bach treated to syncopation and silencing. This stream is then subjected to a complex multi-layered compositional process exposing evanescent and barely recognizable echoes of reggae and march. The effectiveness of **raW** is heightened by its masterful scoring. The first series of chords sound as if a much larger ensemble than Continuum's six musicians produced it. Graced with deftly constructed light-hearted moments, it's no wonder this effective work was awarded the 2006 Jules Léger Prize for Chamber Music.



The composer's brand of cheeky humour re-appears in **Deville Swan** (1995). Here the composer takes apart the late 18th-century hymn tune **China** by Timothy Swan, the American hymnodist. Like James Rolfe's composition teacher John Beckwith has often done in his own works, **Deville Swan** takes an established hymn and re-composes it; except that the student takes compositional messing to new extremes. Rolfe virtually vivisects the hymn, proposing an ode to chromaticism and rhythmic stasis.

The violin sonata **Drop** (1999) is most memorable where the extended violin melody is doubled on the piano. **Squeeze** (1997) on the other hand starts off as a jaunty march, flavoured with a "Les Six"-like insouciance. Further on it marches right into the mysterious dreamy realm of a Bach chorale, dissolving into an unresolved tonal, harmonic and textural mistiness.

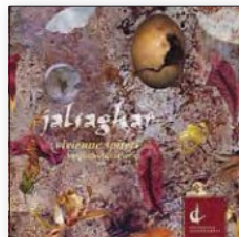
Composer Rolfe, evidently fond of bass drum thumps of all dynamic gradations, indulges his penchant in **Revenge! Revenge!! Revenge!!!** (1995) to dramatic effect, adding brake- and other drums for good measure.

This is a distinguished album by one of our most gifted composers of new concert music, definitively played.

—Andrew Timar

Jalsaghar
Vivienne Spiteri
Centrediscs CMCCD 16410

● This new offering from the enigmatic Canadian harpsichordist Vivienne Spiteri is brilliantly unique. Although I do not understand Spiteri's musical approach,



I cannot help but respect and applaud her conviction and honesty to her art and her playing. In the five duets and two trios featured, she is able to seamlessly transport her ideas from thoughts to fingers to keyboard, showing a talent so wide ranging that it is mind boggling.

A Who's Who of Canadian composers and performers join Spiteri on her musical journey. In Hope Lee's **In the Beginning was the End**, accordionist Joseph Macerollo's exquisite long tones juxtaposed against the crisp harpsichord sounds move the composition in an ethereal dimension that only this world-class accordion hero can achieve. The three duo works by John Beckwith are diverse. In both **Ringaround** with lever harpist Sharlene Wallace, and **Lines Overlapping** with Kirk Elliott on five-string banjo, a sparse dialogue of overlapping parts creates a tinkling aural world. In contrast, Beckwith's **Blurred Lines** has Spiteri and violinist Lawrence Beckwith blast into the sonic future. Percussive or florid harpsichord lines against droning, moaning or plucked violin melodies jubilantly cross styles, moods and centuries in this top track. Works by Bruce Mather, Linda Bouchard and Kirk Elliott complete the disc.

A remarkable depth of performance is key here. Spiteri never overshadows or disappears in her ensemble playing. She knows what she wants yet lets others do what they do best.

—Tiina Kiik

Canadian Flute Quartets
Laurier Quartet
CML Productions CD 104

● This recording of flute quartets by Canadian composers was funded by Wilfrid Laurier University in celebration of its centennial year. It can also be seen as a celebration of the work of Amy Hamilton, who has been teaching the flute at Laurier since 1987: the four players are she and three of her students, Jennifer Brimson, Heather Snowden, and Dawn Ellis-Mobbs, each of whom has gone on to pursue post graduate studies in flute in Canada, the U.S. and Britain. Their playing is consistently accomplished and assured, excellent intonation, articulation, and tone quality, even on the bass and alto flutes called for in several of the six compositions on the disc.



The repertoire covers a broad spectrum of contemporary genres, from the minimalism of Sally Norris's **Writing the Voice** (for piccolo quartet) to the lyricism and piquant and sonorous harmonic vocabulary of Carl Derfler's **Flute Quartet No. 1**. Even more interesting and individual are the pieces in between: the spellbinding counterpoint of David McIntyre's **A Gentle Melancholy**,