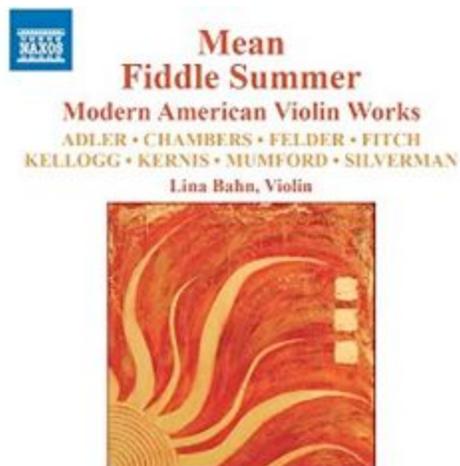


CD Review

Lina Bahn — *Mean Fiddle Summer: Modern American Violin Works*

by Mike Telin



For her latest recording, *Mean Fiddle Summer: Modern American Violin Works*, Lina Bahn has tapped the repertoire of composers she has admired and championed during her impressive, yet still young career. With a playing time of one hour and fifteen minutes, the CD is a fascinating listen as Bahn performs pieces representing a variety of styles ranging from fiddling to works inspired by Ysaÿe and Bartók. From start to finish, the violinist demonstrates her adroit technical facility, kaleidoscope of colors, and consummate musical taste.

For fourteen years, [Lina Bahn](#) served as executive director and violinist with the VERGE Ensemble during its residency at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She has also been a member of the National Gallery New Music Ensemble of the Smithsonian. She is currently Assistant Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.

The CD features works by two local composers, Keith Fitch and Jeffrey Mumford. Fitch composed the album's inspired title track, *Mean Fiddle Summer*, for Bahn in 2011. Its lyrical "Twilight Airs" grows in fervor before returning to calmness. Bahn gives "Bela's Blues," with its array of pizzicatos and double stops, a powerful performance.

The violinist delivers a thoughtful performance during the five brief movements of Mumford's absorbing *an expanding distance of multiple voices*. Her long bow strokes in "molto delicatissimo ed etereo possibile" and her whimsical

performance during the dance-like “molto appassionato” are particularly wonderful.

Adam Silverman’s two works written for Bahn in 2005 are simply delightful. A catchy piece that takes fiddling into the 21st century, *Lina’s Hornpipe* is really fun, while *The viol, the violet and the vine* is a highlight of the CD. That track is inspired by works of Ysaÿe and Bartók, and its first movement, “Lively,” is exactly that. Following the beautiful “Sarabande,” the folksy, lilting dance of “Music box” brings the work to an enchanted conclusion.

The CD opens with a hidden gem, Samuel Adler’s *Canto III* (1976). Its many moods easily hold your attention, and Bahn’s performance sparkles. Another precious stone is David Felder’s entertaining *Another Face* (1987), a work that provides endless possibilities for creating stories in your head.

Bahn’s interpretations of Aaron Jay Kernis’s *A Dance of Life* (2010) and *Aria-Lament* (1990), and Daniel Kellogg’s *Sizzle* (2007) are magnificent, and her contemplative playing of Evan Chambers’ Celtic-inspired *Last Night at Yaddo* (2006) brings the recording to a magical ending.

The recording quality of the CD brings Bahn’s pure and focused sound to life. *Mean Fiddle Summer* was recorded at Roser Atlas Black Box Theater at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Produced by Lina Bahn and Edward Dusinberre and engineered by Kevin Harbison, the album is available for purchase at [Classics Online](#) and from [NAXOS](#).

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