

**A Bouquet of CDs & a Book:  
18 recommendations for the holidays by our correspondents**

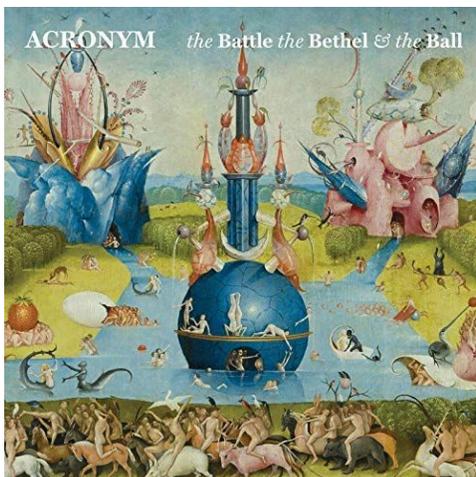


To guide your last-minute shopping, the staff of ClevelandClassical.com has compiled a list of 17 CDs by artists who work or have a regular presence in the classical music scene in Northeast Ohio, and a book about New York City Opera that will interest local opera fans. Support your local musicians by gifting their music to family and friends!

Some of the following recordings are being reviewed here for the first time, while reviews of others are reposted from editions of ClevelandClassical.com since our last CD roundup in December of 2017.

**ACRONYM: *The Battle, the Bethel & the Ball***

by Nicholas Stevens



ACRONYM — Anachronistic Cooperative, Realizing Obscure Nuanced Yesteryear’s Masterpieces — does not play the kind of music that marketers can brand as “relaxing.” Just as classical musicians have questioned the selling of their art as soporific and soothing, these twelve string and keyboard players reject sleepiness, self-seriousness, and the confines of the canon. On *The Battle, the Bethel & the Ball*, they pursue their stated mission of giving life to unknown, “wild instrumental music of the 17th century.” [Read the review](#)

## Finding inner chill: Michael Adcock's *Ragtime in Washington*

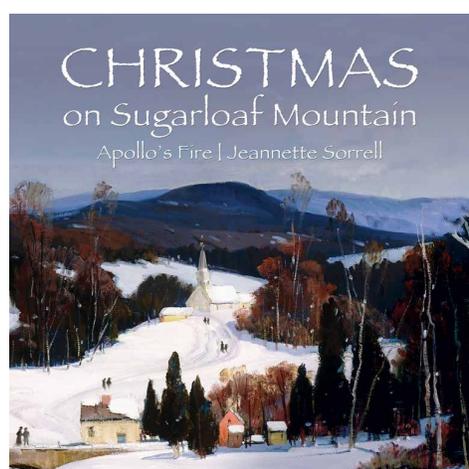
by Hannah Schoepe



Now that everyone is returning from summer vacations, school is in session, new seasons are starting, and the workplace is beginning to pick up the pace, the search for a window of relaxation amidst the craziness of everyday life is becoming real. Pianist and Oberlin Conservatory alum Michael Adcock's new CD, *Ragtime in Washington*, might be just the thing. The tunes on this album evoke images of sitting by the fire with a warm beverage, enjoying swayed rhythms that make you want to sway too. [Read the review](#)

## Apollo's Fire: *Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain*

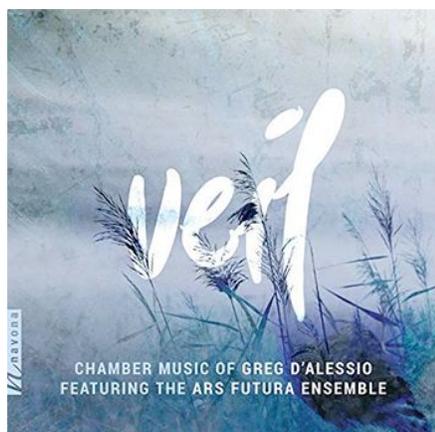
by Hannah Schoepe



December evokes fantasies of snug fires, family festivities, and winter wonderlands. Cleveland's Baroque Orchestra Apollo's Fire provides a fitting soundtrack to these daydreams, in their new album *Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain*. The tracks portray sounds of Christmas from the Irish hillsides to the Appalachian Mountains. Light a candle, and put your dancing shoes on, because this album traverses songs of community, faith, and history, as well as barn dances and Scottish reels. [Read the review](#)

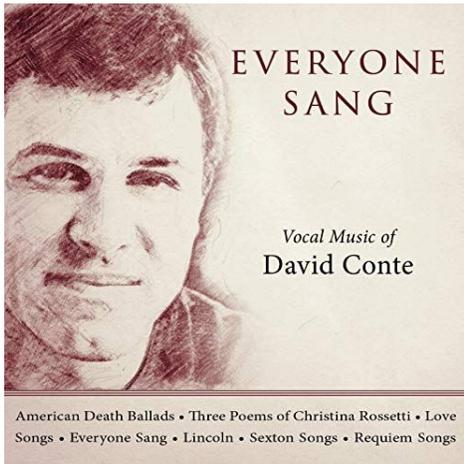
## Ars Futura: *Veil, Chamber Music of Greg D'Alessio*

by Hannah Schoepe



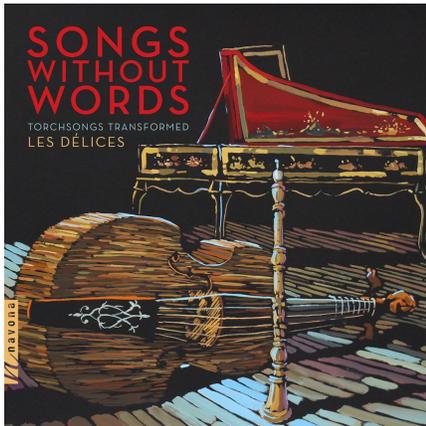
To be “veiled” suggests a loss of orientation, dimmed sight, and a shadowy sense of mystery — ideas that are captured in Cleveland-based Ars Futura Ensemble's newest album, *Veil*. Released by Navona Records on September 14, the playlist consists of five multifaceted, many-hued works by Cleveland State University faculty member Greg D'Alessio. [Read the review](#)

## ***Everyone Sang: Vocal Music of David Conte*** by Mike Telin



While many in the Cleveland area may be familiar with the choral works of Lakewood native David Conte — his music is regularly performed by ensembles such as Good Company — his recent CD, *Everyone Sang*, offers another side of his vocal-writing talents. Released in August on the Arsiv label, this two-disc set comprises engaging works for solo voice and piano, as well as voice and instrumental ensembles. [Read the review](#)

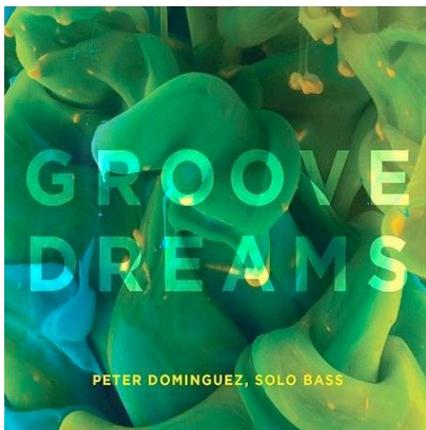
## **Jazz, pop, and Baroque intermingle in *Les Délices' Songs Without Words*** by Jarrett Hoffman



Two risks, one small and one big, make up the concept behind French Baroque ensemble Les Délices' latest CD, *Songs Without Words*.

[Read the review](#)

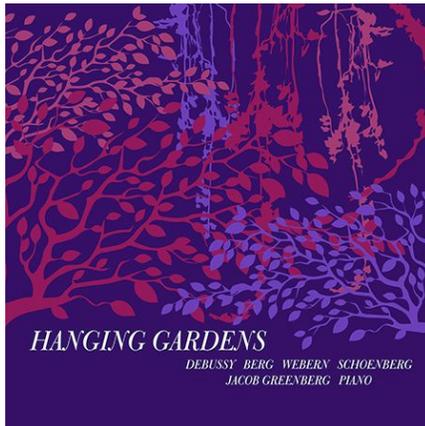
## ***Groove Dreams* — Peter Dominguez, solo bass** by Jarrett Hoffman



Nearing the end of this summer, which included the third edition of the Milt Hinton Bass Institute at Oberlin, we look back a year earlier to a solo album with important connections both to the Conservatory and to the legendary Hinton himself. *Groove Dreams*, released on the Oberlin Music label in May of 2017, spotlights a special performer and a special instrument: Oberlin professor Peter Dominguez and the 18th-century Italian bass which Hinton played throughout his career. [Read the review](#)

## ***Hanging Gardens* — Jacob Greenberg, piano**

by Jarrett Hoffman

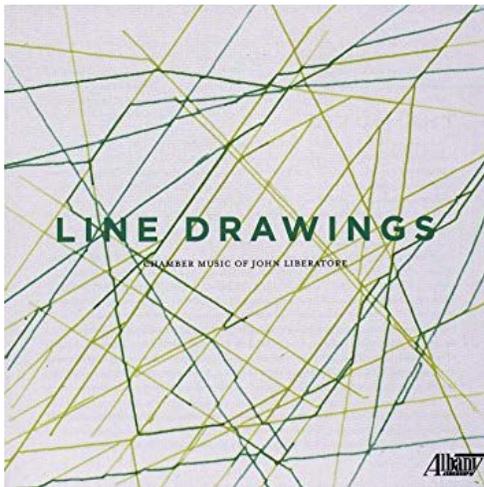


Pianist Jacob Greenberg, a longtime member of the International Contemporary Ensemble, explores the intersections between Debussy and the Second Viennese School in his latest album, the sprawling, two-disc *Hanging Gardens*, released on July 20 on the New Focus Recordings label. The opening pairing perfectly illustrates the focus of the album: these composers’ shared sense of musical passion. Although Debussy’s “Sarabande” from *Pour le Piano* and Berg’s Op. 1 *Sonata* in some ways inhabit completely different worlds, at the heart of both is an intensity that ranges from ecstasy to deep struggle.

[Read the review](#)

## ***Line Drawings*, Chamber Music of John Liberatore**

by Nicholas Stevens



*Line Drawings*, the title of composer John Liberatore’s new album from Albany Records, refers to the eponymous piano suite that opens the recording. However, the title has a deeper significance. To hear the music on this disc — all “composed in the same way, and in close proximity,” according to Liberatore’s notes — is to feel pulled along at varying speeds in multiple directions, but always forward. The word *compelling* fails to capture the way this music ventures forth and draws the listener with it. *Inviting* works better, in every sense of that word.

[Read the review](#)

## Ronn McFarlane: *The Celtic Lute*

by Hannah Schoepe



Existence can be filled with emotional weather of various kinds. Perhaps it's a touch of rain inspired by to-do lists, appointments, and squabbles, or it may be a storm of vehement feelings. Everyone has moments where we long for a calming presence that tells us everything will be okay, and reminds us of the big picture. If clouds are descending upon you, the Christmas tree is crooked, the turkey is too big, or the Hanukkah candles simply won't stand up straight, there is one thing you can do — sit down with a cup of tea and listen to Grammy-nominated lutenist Ronn McFarlane in his new album *The Celtic Lute*. [Read the review](#)

## *Songtree*: Music of Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon

by Jarrett Hoffman



The alluring, accessible, and wildly creative music of Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon is the focus of last month's release from the Oberlin Music label, *Songtree*. [Read the review](#)

## *Convergent Winds*: Music of Paul Hindemith — Oberlin Conservatory Faculty (Oberlin Music)

by Jeremy Reynolds



Paul Hindemith's woodwind sonatas are gems, displaying the timbres of each instrument to great effect. Experiencing their individual personalities back-to-back on *Convergent Winds: Music of Paul Hindemith* is what makes the recently released Oberlin Music album so engaging. [Read the review](#)

## Ogni Suono: *SaxoVoce*

by Mike Telin

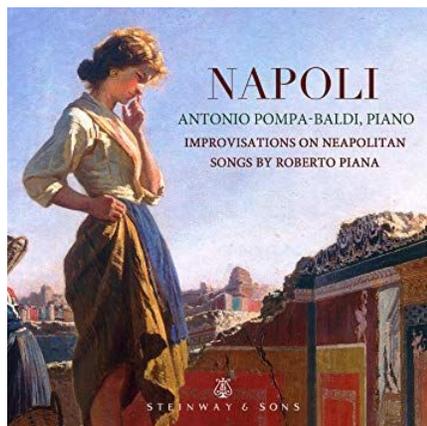


All musical instruments are an extension of the human voice. Even the best keyboard, string, and percussion players know how to create musical lines that breathe. While wind and brass players are keenly aware of how to use air to inflect a myriad of emotions, there is not a lot of music that requires them to incorporate their voices with their instruments. On their new recording, titled *SaxoVoce*, (to be released on September 7) the inventive saxophone duo Ogni Suono — Noa Even and Phil Pierick — take on the challenge of playing and vocalizing during seven eclectic works. [Read the](#)

[review](#)

## Antonio Pompa-Baldi in *Napoli: Improvisations on Neapolitan Songs*

by Mike Telin



On his 2013 recording, *The Rascal and the Sparrow — Poulenc meets Piaf*, pianist Antonio Pompa-Baldi delighted listeners with his captivating interpretations of music from two stalwarts of the 20th-century French *chanson*. On his latest CD, the pianist looks to the music of his native Italy for inspiration — specifically the emotionally charged Neapolitan song. [Read the](#)

[review](#)

## Syzygy: Music for Flute by Efraín Amaya Alexa Still (Oberlin Music)

by Alice Koeninger



Flutist Alexa Still recently released her second solo album on the Oberlin Music label. *Syzygy* is comprised of six pieces by Venezuelan-American composer and conductor Efraín Amaya. Assisted by her fellow Oberlin faculty member, pianist Robert Shannon — as well as a few other Oberlin professors and alums — Still showcases her exquisite lyricism and virtuosity on every track. [Read the review](#)

## Jack Sutte: *Bent*

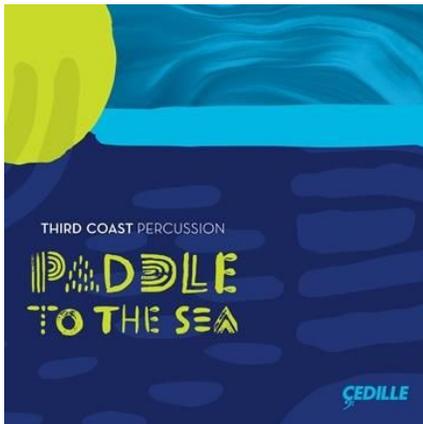
by Daniel Hathaway



Jack Sutte’s second album of solo trumpet music, *Bent*, follows *Fanfare Alone* and continues his passion for discovering new repertoire in that genre. After exploring various possible meanings of the album title in his liner notes (“images of metal, tubing, sound waves, refracted light”), Sutte writes that “solo works for trumpet are bent for the performer and listener; each requiring a willingness to fully participate in the unusual musical format.” [Read the review](#)

## *Paddle to the Sea*: Third Coast Percussion

by Jarrett Hoffman



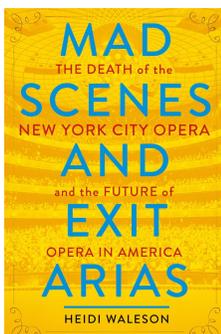
Third Coast Percussion went bold with their latest project, a sprawling marine ecosystem of an album titled *Paddle to the Sea*. The name comes from a 1966 film about a wooden toy boat floating its way from Lake Superior to the Atlantic Ocean. After the half-hour film was brought to the group’s attention, they group-composed a new score to it, here receiving its world-premiere recording. [Read the review](#)

## Book Review —

Heidi Waleson, *Mad Scenes and Exit Arias:*

*The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America*

by Daniel Hathaway



The saga of New York City Opera, the company founded in 1944 at the behest of mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to act as a populist foil to the socially elite Metropolitan Opera, is largely peculiar to New York, but its multiple near-death experiences and ultimate filing for bankruptcy in 2013 flash some warning signs across the industry. Will the most expensive of art forms continue to be viable as audiences and financial resources undergo gradual but seismic changes? [Read the review](#)

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