

## A roundup of recordings



As a guide to gift-giving (and don't we all need a little help!), enjoy a chronological look over the CD reviews our correspondents have written over the last twelve months — plus a look ahead at some reviews to come in early 2022.

Note that many of these recordings are available as downloads rather than physical discs. And while streaming platforms are invaluable resources, it's important to remember that payments received by the artists are generally small (and ridiculously confusing to calculate in some cases!)

Finally, don't forget to make an end-of-year gift to your favorite local performing organization to support our musicians. Happy holidays!

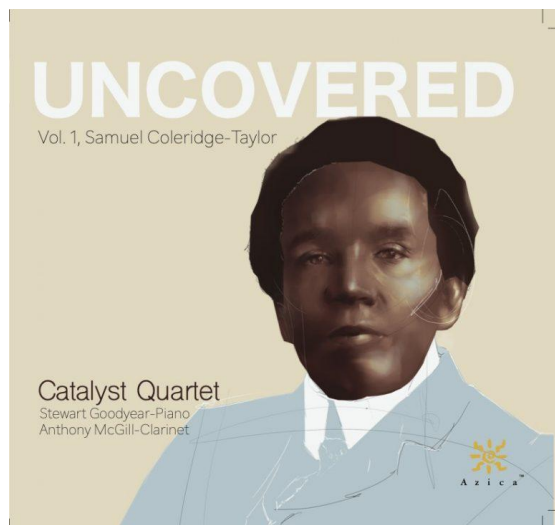
### ***SonataPalooza I – Vol. I* — trumpet sonatas from Sutte & Fuoco**

by Jarrett Hoffman



Trumpeter Jack Sutte and pianist Christine Fuoco are on a mission to bring trumpet sonatas into the mainstream classical music conversation, beyond just the dialogue of trumpet players. To that end, they've embarked on a long-term collaboration, both onstage and in the recording studio. *Mettle: SonataPalooza I – Vol. I* is the first disc to come of this project, and represents quite the convincing opening argument. [Read the review](#)

## ***Uncovered Vol. 1: Catalyst Quartet in music by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*** by Jarrett Hoffman



If an album has a musical half-life, which we'll define here as the amount of time its impact will remain to be felt, it's likely longer than that of a concert performance. So in order for the classical music world to diversify in a lasting way, programming has to change not only on the concert stage, but also in the recording studio.

The Catalyst Quartet and Azica Records have taken that to heart with the *Uncovered* series, conceived in 2018 and devoted to music by Black composers. The first volume, released in February, focuses on Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, spanning

three beautifully performed, remarkable pieces: quintets on either end featuring pianist Stewart Goodyear and clarinetist Anthony McGill, and a quartet in the middle. [Read the review](#)

## ***Fantasy — Oppens plays Kaminsky*** by Caitlin Winston



The 2021 album *Fantasy* is the culmination of more than a decade of professional collaboration and friendship between composer Laura Kaminsky and pianist Ursula Oppens. In *Fantasy*, Kaminsky invites reflection on the current social and political landscape through an impressive variety of genres. The throughline is Kaminsky's exciting sense of rhythm and expressive harmonic language, perfectly executed by Oppens, a master of new music.

*Fantasy* begins with a piano quintet in which Oppens is joined by the Cassatt String Quartet.

The first movement, "Anthem," is driven forward by rhythmic material inspired by the West African drumming patterns that Kaminsky studied during her time in Ghana. In "Anthem," musical motives are layered on top of one another, creating a thrillingly complex rhythmic world. By contrast, the harmonies remain expansive and largely consonant. [Read the review](#)

## Verona Quartet: *Diffusion*

by Caitlin Winston



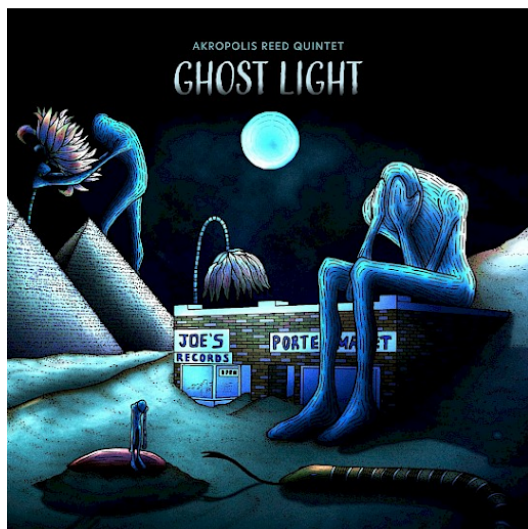
In their debut album *Diffusion*, the Verona Quartet celebrates folk music's influence on string quartet language at the beginning of the 20th century — a style that reflects their values as an international ensemble with members hailing from all across the globe.

In a statement on their website, violinists Jonathan Ong (Singapore) and Dorothy Ro, (Canada), violist Abigail Rojansky (U.S.A.), and cellist Jonathan Dormand (U.K.) establish the idea of “cultural migration” as central to their identity as a quartet. They describe *Diffusion* as embracing “the spirit of intercultural exploration that permeates

many of the great works of the string quartet canon.” [Read the review](#)

## Akropolis Reed Quintet explores life and death in fifth album, *Ghost Light*

by Stephanie Manning



In darkened theaters around the world last year, just one small sign of life remained — the ghost light, a single bulb traditionally placed onstage overnight while the space is unoccupied. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, these ghost lights became small symbols of hope, keeping the lights on until the performers and the audience could return again.

It's particularly fitting, then, to make *Ghost Light* the title of an album that explores the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. In the Akropolis Reed Quintet's latest release, oboist Tim Gocklin, clarinetist Kari Landry, saxophonist Matt Landry, bassoonist Ryan

Reynolds, and bass clarinetist Andrew Koeppe present five captivating pieces that embrace the ghosts of the past while looking towards the future. [Read the review](#)

## Frank Huang explores Solo Piano Works of Nikolai Medtner

by Mike Telin





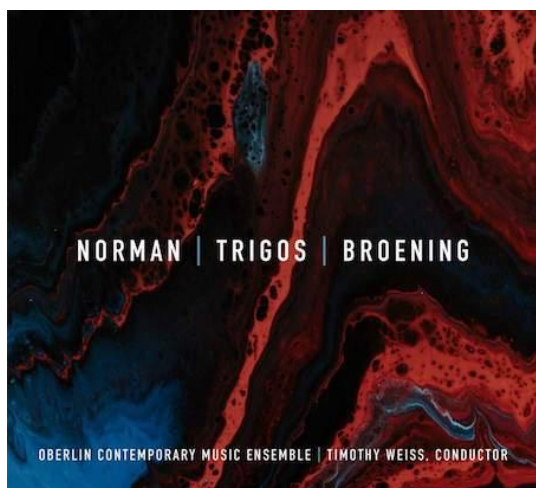
Although Rachmaninoff is said to have called him the greatest composer of his lifetime, the music of Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951) has never achieved the notoriety of his friend and constant supporter.

With the release of the first of his nine-disc recording project of the Russian Romantic composer's works for solo piano on the Centaur Records label, Frank Huang leaves you anticipating the next eight with adroit performances of three of Medtner's beguiling compositions.

The recording also leaves you asking yourself why Medtner's music isn't programmed more often. [Read the review](#)

### **Oberlin CME: *Norman* | *Trigos* | *Broening***

by Jarrett Hoffman



After highlighting music by three members of the Oberlin composition faculty, Timothy Weiss and the Conservatory's Contemporary Music Ensemble (CME) have continued their Oberlin Music label offerings with another triptych of works by composers from the present day.

*Norman* | *Trigos* | *Broening*, released in May, begins with Andrew Norman's *Gran Turismo* for eight violins. And if you're familiar with the auto-racing video game series that gave the work its title — one among a few inspirations — you won't be surprised

by the blazing speed. Even the few slow sections, beautifully written and sensitively phrased, provoke a sense of suspense: thrills await around the corner. [Read the review](#)

Reviews coming in early 2022:



**Jesse Jones: *In Profile*** - The Oberlin faculty composer is featured in five world-premiere recordings from the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble (directed by Timothy Weiss), the Oberlin Orchestra (directed by Raphael Jiménez), and a host of faculty members, guests, and students.

**Adam Roberts: *Bell Threads*** - Kent State faculty composer Adam Roberts releases a collection of his chamber music, featuring performances by andPlay, harpist Hannah Lash, Bearthoven, oboist Erik Behr, and the JACK Quartet.

**Fire and Grace: *Alma*** - In their third album as a duo, violinist Edwin Huizinga (Oberlin graduate and member of the Baroque band ACRONYM) and guitarist William Coulter pair the music of Bach with folk melodies from around the Iberian Peninsula.



**Pianist Xak Bjerken: *The Oberlin Concertos*** - Bjerken joins Timothy Weiss and the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble in three commissioned works by faculty composers Jesse Jones, Stephen Hartke, and Elizabeth Ogonek.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com December 7, 2021.*

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