

CD Review — Sutte & Fuoco's "SonataPalooza" continues with Vol. II

by Jarrett Hoffman



Two players, twelve sonatas, four recitals, eleven days. That was the formula for *Mettle: SonataPalooza I*, a project from trumpeter Jack Sutte and pianist Christine Fuoco that was first heard in January 2019 at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, where they both teach — and that continues to be heard in the recordings that came from those recitals.

The halfway point of this ambitious endeavor came last year with the release of Volume II, another rewarding listen whether you're

looking to bone up on trumpet sonatas or just here to enjoy a finely tuned duo.

It begins with Paul Hindemith and a complex journey of emotions in the first movement of his 1939 *Sonate für Trompete in B und Klavier*. From booming proclamation to yearning and disquiet, one mood often slides slyly to the next in such a way that you find yourself wondering when that change even took place. A starker contrast emerges at the end of the movement, when the two instruments diverge in feeling: the trumpet firm in its declaration of the theme, the piano brimming with anxiety underneath, and the two players reveling in that rift.

If the first movement is a story of emotional complexity, the third — marked "Trauermusik," or "Mourning Music" — is one of emotional potency. Fuoco captures something personal in her brooding introduction, and when Sutte enters, he absorbs her energy, gaining greater and greater urgency enroute to a riveting climax. Chamber music at its best.

Harold Shapero's 1940 Sonata presents a strong contrast with its uniquely jazzy neoclassicism. During the second of its two movements, Sutte and Fuoco delight in the off-kilter rhythms and the tossed-off style, and they inject plenty of verve into the final notes to send us off cheerily to "intermission."

The album concludes with its most accessible work. Sutte and Fuoco lean into the expressivity of Eric Ewazen's 1995 *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*, and it shines, from the melodic elegance and playful staccato of the first movement to the heartfelt storytelling of the ballad. And in the finale, the duo is out of the gates from the get-go. Forget Hamlet's "sea of troubles" — how about Fuoco's sea of notes, navigated without a note of trouble?

In the last bars, trumpeter, pianist, and composer are all electric, more than enough to make an audience roar.

Read our review of Vol. I [here](#).

Published on ClevelandClassical.com December 21, 2023.

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