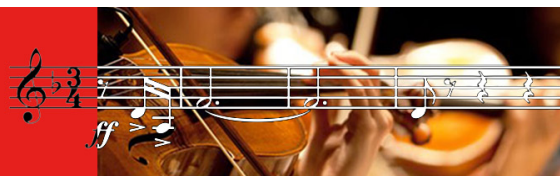


# Classical CD Choice

The pick of the latest classical CDs and SACDs



November 14, 2019 by Barry Forshaw

## **WILLIAM SCHUMAN: THE WITCH OF ENDOR, JUDITH, Night Journey/Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose/BMOP/sound SACD**

This is an accomplished disc, essential for admirers of the talented American composer William Schuman. His ballet suites Judith and Night Journey have been recorded before but never in the kind of wide-ranging surround sound that they are accorded here. As a further incentive to purchase, the disc also contains what is (as far as I can tell) the first recording of another Schuman ballet for Martha Graham, the knottier *The Witch of Endor*. Admirers of Schumann will know that his music does not always give up its secrets immediately (Judith is the most approachable ballet here), but the sheer physical impact of the scores is considerable and for aficionados of key American Symphonists of the 20th century, it's a desirable purchase. Performances by Gill Rose and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project do full justice to the music.

## **SANFORD: BLACK NOISE, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose/BMOP Sound Boston**

Not for the casual listener, but those with a taste for the adventurous might give this unusual disc a try. BMOP is recognised as the USA's foremost label launched by an orchestra and devoted exclusively to new music. *Black Noise* is performed by the enterprising musicians of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) and led by conductor Gil Rose. This disc will, in Sanford's words, "promote and normalize the contribution and participation of Blacks in classical music." Spanning 20 years of the composer's career, the album features three pieces that have significantly contributed to the expansion of Sanford's career and reputation: *Black Noise*, *Prayer: In Memoriam Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*; and the orchestral version of the genre-bending cello concerto, *Scherzo Grosso*, with soloist Matt Haimovitz. The patient listener will be rewarded, though this will not be to every taste.

## **COLGRASS: SIDE BY SIDE, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose /BMOP/sound Boston**

Large-scale works referencing the past are on offer here, music that will be unfamiliar to most listeners. Michael Colgrass: *Side by Side* features three of the composer's works for large ensemble performed by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) and led by conductor Gil Rose. An American-born Canadian living in Toronto, the Pulitzer Prize-winning and Emmy Award-winning Colgrass holds the unique distinction among prominent classical composers in North America of being the only one whose music is well known equally on both sides of the Canadian-American border. The album begins with the complex *Letter from Mozart* that takes listeners on a journey asking them to imagine a fictional letter from Mozart to the composer ("Michael") imploring him to write a piece of music using one of Mozart's themes as a point of departure.