



Explosions of power: Paul W Popiel and his highly expressive University of Kansas Wind Ensemble play Glass's percussive concerto and Fairouz's dramatic symphony

Despite the impressive dimensions and ambitions of *Lamia* and Lucy Shelton's inspired, intrepid singing, pride of place goes to one of Druckman's most heartfelt landscapes, *Nor Spell Nor Charm*, 'an extension and elaboration' of an earlier song to Shakespeare's 'You spotted snakes' snippet, written for DeGaetani while she was suffering from leukaemia. Throughout, it's the casual virtuosity of Druckman's writing which carries the day, even in the well-meaning, old-fashioned adaptations of music by 17th-century composers Francesco Cavalli and Marc-Antoine Charpentier. Good sound throughout, and detailed booklet-notes by Daniel Albertson.

Laurence Vittes

Fairouz • Glass

Fairouz Symphony No 4, 'In the Shadow of No Towers'^a Glass Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra (transcr Lortz)^b

^aJānis Porietis *tp* ^bJi Hye Jung, ^aGwendolyn Burgett *tim* University of Kansas Wind Ensemble / Paul W Popiel

Naxos Wind Band Classics © 8 573205 (58' • DDD)



From Naxos's Wind Band Classics series come two explosions of wind-ensemble power.

Positively hallucinogenic at times, the multi-dimensional writing in both hints at what

future 3D sound pleasures might be like.

In Mohammed Fairouz's new dramatic symphony, about experiences at ground level during 9/11 inspired by selected panels from Art Spiegelman's controversial comic book *In the Shadow of No Towers*, it's about harnessing the expressive power and colour of a major university-level ensemble. Fairouz's tone is softer than Spiegelman's but is still often gaunt and terrifying. In trying to catch the full New York panoply of life, Fairouz uses colour liberally, tinged occasionally with Middle Eastern harmonies; he seems to be at his most authentic, however, in meditative moments such as the drawn-out fog in 'Notes of a Heartbroken Narcissist', the symphony's second movement.

Philip Glass's *tour de force* from 2000 explores the depths of percussive impact and texture, conjuring up extraordinary musical fantasies out of simple pulses and their divergence. The third movement is a dream for percussionists, consisting of a spectacular five-minute cadenza that segues addictively into the final movement.

The eloquent, disciplined performances come across with stunning dynamic range and almost dimensional transparency. Paul R Laird's booklet-note enhances the listening experience, although I would wait until I had heard the music a few times before venturing to match up what he describes with what you are hearing.

Laurence Vittes

McTee

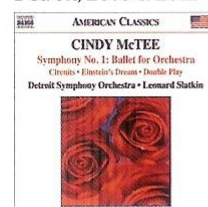
Symphony No 1, 'Ballet for Orchestra'

Circuits. Double Play. Einstein's Dream

Detroit Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Slatkin

Naxos American Classics © 8 559765 (67' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Max M Fisher Music Center, Detroit, 2010 & 2012



When asked if she enjoys writing for orchestra, Cindy McTee (b1953) likely

would be unable to put on a poker face. At least, that's the impression one gets after listening to the vivacious and fertile works on this disc. Each shows a different aspect of McTee's orchestral love, whether she's conjuring whirlwind colours, arresting jazz riffs or kaleidoscopic computer sounds.

The repertoire spans two decades, starting with *Circuits* (1990), which jumps from place to place with almost non-stop, acrobatic energy. It's propulsive and percussive, full of irresistible textures and details, a burst of orchestral whimsy that's gone in little more than five minutes.

On a more expansive scale is McTee's captivating Symphony No 1, *Ballet for Orchestra* (2002), whose four movements embrace various dance styles and draw inspiration from famous scores of balletic pedigree or otherwise. The composer explores another world entirely in *Einstein's*