

US RELEASES

enhakē thrills in *American* music; Shuann Chai plays authentic *Beethoven*; Trudelines Leonhardt gives vivid life to *Mozart*; plus a *Copland* re-discovery

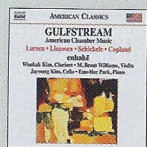
BBC MUSIC US CHOICE

Small but mighty

enhakē are a terrific quartet with a keen instinct for exciting programmes, says *Anthony Burton*



TAKE FOUR: (l-r) Wonkak Kim, M Brent Williams, Katherine Geeseman and Eun-Hee Park



GULFSTREAM: AMERICAN CHAMBER MUSIC

Copland: Sextet for Clarinet, Piano and String Quartet; Schickele: Quartet for Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano; Lieuwen: Gulfstream; Larsen: Rodeo Queen of Heaven

enhakē, Corinne Stillwell (violin), Pamela Ryan (viola)

Naxos 8.559692 55:08 mins

Available from arkivmusic.com/bbcmusic

enhakē is a quartet of clarinet, violin, cello and piano which here gives tight, well-characterised performances of four American

works. The first two were written for the group. Libby Larsen's *Rodeo Queen of Heaven*, inspired by a wooden sculpture of the Madonna and Child in rodeo outfits, ingeniously twists plainchant into jazz and country idioms. Peter Lieuwen's *Gulfstream* uses ostinato patterns to evoke water. Peter Schickele's 1982 *Quartet* is full of invention, consisting of a flowing opening movement, a jazzy *scherzo*, a rapt slow movement and a central European hoedown. Finally, adding two string players, there's an exemplary performance of Copland's sinewy *Sextet*, arranged in 1937 from his *Short Symphony*, making it sound the masterpiece it is. With a good recording and helpful notes, a highly recommendable issue.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonata Nos 2, 8, 14 & 23

Shuann Chai (fortepiano)

Postern Park Digital PPD 011 59:00 mins

Available at arkivmusic.com/bbcmusic

This release is, at once, stimulating, frustrating, satisfying and controversial. Shuann Chai plays three of Beethoven's most famous piano sonatas on a copy of a 1798 Michael Rosenberger fortetiano tuned to unequal temperament that makes the hammered diminished seventh chord at the beginning of the *Appassionata's* finale sound especially dishevelled. Chai has a keen sense for the colouristic possibilities of her instrument – the opening movement of the *Moonlight* creates an evocative, watery sound world – and she generally plays with decent forthright energy. But the accompanying figuration regularly emerges with crude prominence, and there is not enough variety of dynamics, even among the themes – hear how lustily Chai launches the *Allegretto* (marked *piano*) of the *Moonlight*. Many of her rhetorical touches are more pedantic than eloquent, and at three minutes in to the *Pathétique's* opening movement, a D flat in the bass sounds harmonically problematical.

David Breckbill

PERFORMANCE ★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★



MOZART

Sonatas; Fantasia K475

Trudelines Leonhardt (fortepiano)

Musica Omnia MO 0409 66.64 mins

Available at arkivmusic.com/bbcmusic

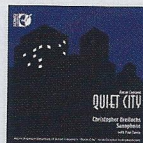
The name 'Leonhardt' might be synonymous with penetrating clarity,

rigour and integrity, but the traits are not solely the province of the late harpsichordist Gustav. Deploying a copy of a 1795 Walter fortetiano (with a rich resonant bottom register), his sister Trudelines applies the trademark patrimony to Mozart with similarly lucid results. Having made a period instrument name for herself in Schubert and Beethoven, it's perhaps no surprise that she tackles Mozart at his most 'Beethovenian' in the great C minor Sonata – prefaced by its sibling *Fantasia*, a work that distills the essence of Mozart in a single extended span. K475 is scrupulously modulated, and if the feverish energy of the Sonata's first movement is sometimes compromised by Leonhardt's slightly constricting fastidiousness, the finale is vividly characterised. Articulation is crisply defined, while C minor foreboding is discharged in a fiery concluding assault on K332's F major ebullience.

Paul Riley

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★



COPLAND

Quiet City; plus works by Barab, Lunde, Hartley, Aldridge and Ornstein

Christopher Brellochs, Paul Cohen (saxophones), Donald Batchelder (trumpet), Mitchell Kriegler (clarinets), Richard Clarke (viola), Allison Brewster Franzetti (piano)

Sono Luminus DSL-92135 58:38 mins

Available at arkivmusic.com/bbcmusic

Copland's *Quiet City*, for cor anglais, trumpet and strings, was adapted from his 1939 incidental music for a play by Irwin Shaw. Christopher Brellochs has gone back to the original score, restored its instrumentation of trumpet, saxophone, clarinet and piano, and made a new suite incorporating all the material written for the play – showing how much Copland reshaped the concert piece, with a new introduction and ending. As well as contributing to a fine performance of this rediscovery, Brellochs shares sax duties with Paul Cohen on the rest of the disc, in first recordings of five American works: duos with piano by Leo Ornstein and Lawson Lunde, trios by Robert Aldridge, Walter Hartley and Seymour Barab. They're diverting enough, and of interest to saxophone enthusiasts. *Anthony Burton*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★