

with over 100 recordings on various labels released during his tenure.

Happily for this orchestra it seems that history is destined to repeat itself. The Swiss conductor Thierry Fischer arrived in Utah in 2009 and holds a contract there until 2022. After a long silence the orchestra is again releasing recordings under Fischer's direction on the audiophile Reference Recordings label. The present recording of the *Eighth* was preceded by a well-received disc of Mahler's *First Symphony*; both of these constitute the beginnings of this orchestra's 75th Anniversary Mahler Cycle project. The results are impressive to say the least.

The *Eighth Symphony* is Mahler's most gargantuan and atypically affirmative symphony, oftentimes hyped as the "Symphony of a Thousand," though in the present case the forces involved number closer to 500 performers. The legendary Mormon Tabernacle Choir, along with the Madeleine Choir School Choristers, form the nucleus of the mighty choral forces; both are exceptionally well prepared and project an admirable diction. The cast of eight superbly matched vocal soloists includes sopranos Orla Boylan, Celena Shafer, Amy Owens and Charlotte Helekant, mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford, tenor Barry Banks, baritone Markus Werba and bass Jordan Bisch. The tenor soloist Banks in particular is outstanding, able to project without straining in the extremely demanding *heldentenor* part which has proved a stumbling block in many a performance of this work.

The production team from sound/mirror has worked miracles in this live performance from the acoustically quirky Salt Lake Tabernacle, utilizing a minimalist core of five microphones. I can only imagine the impact the SACD layer of this double CD recording might have. Fischer's interpretation is flexible and affectionate, a winning formula in a work that can easily feel bombastic in the wrong hands. This is an outstanding performance that deserves pride of place in the discography of this work.

Daniel Foley

Pride of Performance The Concert Band of Cobourg Independent (theconcertbandofcobourg.com)



▶ The Concert Band of Cobourg is one of the most prominent community bands in Ontario. As was the case with many bands in the country, the band planned on sesquicentennial-year celebrations. However, the year 2017 was a special year in a very different way for them. It was the 175th year for the band to play for their town. While the town band had been playing

continuously over that time period, it had fallen into difficult times by 1970 when Roly White, formerly of the Royal Marines bands, became director of music. Since then, and now under the baton of White's successor, Paul Storms, the band displays its depth of performing, composing and arranging talent.

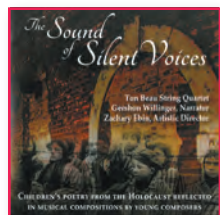
This record is unique in that every selection was either composed or arranged by members of the community. Of these, at least six are original compositions. There are very special arrangements by band members of a wide range of genres from *Sugar Blues* to Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. The name David Tanner, in particular, appears regularly with four original compositions, eight arrangements and one solo to his credit. All solos, by Tanner and the seven other soloists, show great sensitivity and musicality.

This CD, *Pride of Performance*, has a most appropriate title. All members of the band should rightfully be proud of this performance. Throughout, all numbers display a high level of musicianship, and recording quality which matches that standard.

Jack MacQuarrie

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

The Sound of Silent Voices – Children's Poetry from the Holocaust Reflected in Musical Compositions by Young Composers Ton Beau String Quartet; Gershon Willinger; Zachary Ebin Independent (silentvoicesproject.zacharyebin.com)



▶ A few years ago, violinist, music educator and founder/artistic director of the Silent Voices Project, Zachary Ebin, was doing some research at

York University and happened upon *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, a collection of Jewish children's drawings and poems, created from 1942 to 1944, during their imprisonment in the Theresienstadt concentration camp.

With the knowledge that only about 100 of the 15,000 children sent to Theresienstadt survived, combined with being deeply affected by the children's heart-wrenching poetry, Ebin was inspired to find a way to keep their voices alive. His idea of having contemporary, young composers create musical works based on that poetry was the genesis of the Silent Voices Project and this ensuing CD.

Fourteen composers, from Toronto, Waterloo, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Chicago, aged 10 to 20 (not unlike the young poets in Theresienstadt) participated. With their astonishing and profoundly moving works, each of them has demonstrated

remarkable skill, dignity and maturity beyond their years. Performing their stirring trios and quartets on *The Sound of Silent Voices* is Toronto's outstanding Ton Beau String Quartet. Gershon Willinger, who at age two was among the youngest children liberated from Theresienstadt, provides another layer of gravitas, reciting each poem prior to its musical reading.

This is an exceptional project, a heartfelt labour of love and respect. These evocative young voices – both the poets and the composers – deserve our attention. Set aside some quiet time to listen to *The Sound of Silent Voices*.

Sharna Searle

To Dream of Silence Jeff Reilly Sanctuary Concerts SCCD005 (jeffreilly.ca)



▶ *To Dream of Silence*, featuring Jeff Reilly both as composer and bass clarinetist, and including one new work by Christos Hatzis, defies easy categoriza-

tion. The music was inspired by a series of dreams, described in brief prose poems that are narrated as part of the tracks. There is no obvious rhythmic/melodic reference between the words and Reilly's music, which is often gauzy background harmony supporting rhythmic melodic fragments played by Reilly and punctuated by bells and other percussion. The notes mention accompanying "sound sculptures," the work of blacksmith John Little. It isn't clear where Reilly's music leaves off and the sound sculptures pick up, but perhaps it doesn't matter.

The work on this disc is highly listenable, and the narrative of the dreams is cryptic enough to grab my interest. I'm unsure whether I'd prefer to simply read the narration, though I am sincerely put off by the announcements of the dream titles, which distract from rather than enhance the music. *Your Dark Beauty* is rife with Freudian overtones. *Eighty Steps*, *Endless Chambers*, and *Food for a Soul* are dreams that seem to conjure a child's memories of his home, from a variety of perspectives. Taken together, the series verges on nightmare, with a particular fixation with death. That's not to say there is only terror; there is some serenity, but unease overrides. What does one imagine *Fishing* to mean, when what one hooks is an angel?

Reilly, as performer of his own works, creates curious and beautiful effects within a mist of studio-produced sounds. In Hatzis' *Extreme Unction* the production is cleaner and the narrative element is entirely musical. This remarkably beautiful elegy for the composer Gustav Ciamaga fits in well with the sombre tone of the disc.

Max Christie