

the full-orchestra scoring used in some other recordings. If it is the soloists that interest you, these are outstanding.

Nino Rota, like Piazzolla, is a well-known 20th Century composer whose operas include *Ariodante* and *Torquemada* and film scores include *The White Sheik*, *La Strada*, and *The Godfather*. This four-movement 26-minute work pits the bass against the orchestra in a friendly fashion, letting him talk to all the instruments with some depth as well as amusement.

Racz smirks at us with his instrument in several photographs in the liner notes. The double-bass is taller than he is, though he is perhaps a little wider. His playing is polished and effective, and the orchestra appears to be enjoying it as well. The recording is beautifully balanced. The only real competition for the Rota Divertimento in my collection is by Artem Chirkov (May/June 2016), but this one is much better played and recorded. The major point here is the beautiful playing and personality of Racz, and he comes across with great aplomb and to great effect.

D MOORE

### *Contemporary Baroque Flute*

Mili Chang & Iva Ugrcic; John Stowe, hpsi  
Oasis 45168—42 minutes (7905 N Route 130,  
Delair, NJ 08110 or 800-BUYMYCD)

In a January 2017 interview with fellow flutist Immanuel Davis, the first person to earn a doctorate in music in Belgium—Barthold Kuijken—says, “I have the idea that learning the baroque flute is like learning another language. You need to become fluent in it before you can say something.”

French bassoonist-composer Marc Vallon (b 1955) wrote *Ami* for solo baroque flute in 2014. It’s a ten-minute piece in a single movement or section “constructed as a free set of variations interspersed with segments using extended techniques such as whistle tones, flutter tonguing, and breathing sounds, to explore some rarely-used possibilities for the instrument”. You might suspect that the title is the French word referring to a friend. The *Ami* people are one of nine tribes indigenous to Taiwan. This composition has been imbued with an Asian spirit that might remind listeners of Takemitsu, mostly because he is one of the most recognized exponents of that style. It’s not particularly Japanese.

American composer Robert Strizich (b 1945) wrote his duo *Tombeau* for baroque flute and harpsichord in 1982. It too is a single

movement that lasts about ten minutes beginning with a soliloquy for the flutist. Once they play together the writing isn’t really dissonant, but it’s not tonal either. The spirit here is more of the academic postmodernism of the late 20th Century, and it includes elements of so much else, from medieval music to jazz. *Tombeau* gets quite busy and builds up more power than I expected to encounter. The concepts behind the writing might help take you into it. Strizich’s piece does commemorate a death—the death of a musician, gambist Jason Paras, near Basel the same year. A ten-note theme derived from his name serves as the basis for a three-part form reminiscent of a pavane. This *soggetto cavato* approach recalls what Josquin des Prez once did and was later named by Gioseffo Zarlino. There’s also a quotation from *Wozzeck*, which the deceased really admired, and the ostinato from *The Bells of St Genevieve*. It all strikes me as an odd and disparate mix. I would not want to be musically commemorated like this. Most musicians may have interests as rich and varied as the man who died, but putting them all into a composition—and compressed in the space of a few minutes rather than over hours, months, and years—won’t necessarily yield a result that works, and could well work against its chance for success (unless you’re Michael Colgrass).

American composer and jazz woodwind performer Les Thimmig (b 1943) began his series *Stanzas* in 1975 and tells us they are sets of 6 to 9 small pieces. Book 18 for solo baroque flute was written in 2014 for our present player and was inspired by the ancient Roman concept of the seven phases of night. They take us from dusk to dawn, but you should probably know that a division of the night into 12 hours in Roman times was standard. We have terms for several nocturnal periods that vary from people such as Varro or Marcus Aurelius. It’s these terms that Thimmig draws on. This set of miniatures is pleasant and simple—and very effective. It’s Thimmig’s sense for rhythm that really helps animate these lightly jazzy sketches, and they proceed without any techniques from the postwar avant-garde.

Italian composer Filippo Santoro (b 1971) has created a provocative mosaic or collage of sounds in *Mili* (2014) for baroque flute and tape. The sounds come from the four standard members of the modern flute family that range from piccolo to bass. He tells us “The baroque flute and the other flutes never play together but fill each other’s empty space through the eight variations like the continuous discourse

between modern and old." The result is something you might want to hear again and tell somebody about.

The unlikely combination of baroque and modern flute as a duet might seem doomed to failure, or at least fraught with serious quirks and problems. Consider that the most basic form of each is not constructed at the same pitch! Stephen Dembski (b 1949) is the adventurous soul who has given us just that combination in *Gists and Piths* (2014). The title comes from an anecdote in Ezra Pound's *ABC of Reading*. A Japanese student in America was asked the difference between prose and poetry. "Poetry consists of gists and piths." Dembski's duet for old and modern flutes uses the baroque instrument as the lower part and the contemporary one as the higher part. They get along well this way, and the piece becomes just another flute duet—a deceptively difficult accomplishment.

The booklet tells us about the pieces and composers but nothing about the performers. If someone's going to be left out, perhaps that's as it should be, but music is created by both its writers and its players, so both deserve to be recognized. We are invited in tiny print at the bottom of the back cover to visit [www.milichang.com](http://www.milichang.com) but it no longer seems to operate. Her baroque flute is a copy of a Grenser instrument made in ebony and pitched at 415. She has earned degrees in flute performance and historical performance from National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei National University of the Arts, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the Juilliard School. How contemporary composers can write for baroque flute was the topic of her doctoral thesis, so this recording has grown out of that project. It's not about adapting contemporary composition to the baroque flute as much as it's about bringing the playing techniques of the postwar avant-garde to this instrument and so create music you've never heard before. It works, and it might even appeal to people who usually don't like the approach.

For most of the program, she plays without vibrato with a pleasant and full sound that doesn't always sound like a baroque flute. In duets that put old and new flutes together she uses vibrato and her instrument sounds very much like the modern one. Her command of extended techniques is sure and impressive. These pieces are played with conviction that puts them across superbly.

There isn't always a clear separation

between the tracks, so one selection runs right into the next.

GORMAN

*Patricia Lazzara, flute*

**BALZOLA:** *Adagio & Allegro*; **CACCINI-VAVILOV:** *Ave Maria*; **DORFF:** *3 Lakes*; **FRANZETTI:** *Serenata*; **KORB:** *A Muse*; *Woodland Sonatine*; **PARADIS:** *Sicilienne*; **PLAYFORD:** *Never Love Thee More*; **PIAZZOLLA:** *Oblivion*; **SCHOCKER:** *Regrets & Resolutions*; **SEMENZATO:** *Wandering*; **VARELAS:** *Reflections of Radiance*; **YOSHIMATSU:** *Tender Toys*

Lazzara 0—74 minutes (800-BUYMYCD)

Patricia Lazzara plays on flute and alto flute with a clear, beautiful sound and excellent command of registers. Any flaws or rough moments in the playing are momentary; sometimes her double tonguing is a little uneven, but harmonics and flutter tonguing here sound fine. The duets with Steve Markoff on flute and alto flute are lovely, as are ones with her other partners: piano, guitars, harp, soprano, and cello. The soprano is her daughter.

The purpose of this program is at least as spiritual as musical, if not more. This means in part that its intended audience is the average person, not the musician or keen amateur who might typically subscribe to a publication like *American Record Guide*. All the selections are pleasant, mellow, or comforting. Most are relatively recent, and a couple are new to records.

The front cover shows us a gorgeous morning view of a sunlit European woodland with bluebells carpeting the floor as leaves are just starting to emerge on the trees above. The back cover shows a sunset over a lake or the ocean, and the implication from the daytime sky backgrounds on the inside is that this music can take us through the day from its beginning to end. As the musical equivalent of a greeting card it serves that purpose. You surely know someone who might appreciate this.

There is much more about the program on the flutist's web site, including the fact that purchases will help support the Macular Degeneration Research Institute.

The tracks play without pause and are not numbered on the back cover, so you know what you're getting, but you may have to count to find it. Two selections are sung: the *Ave Maria* by "Giulio Caccini"—in fact by Vladimir Vavilov and arranged here by Darren O'Neill—and 'Oblivion' by Astor Piazzolla. The Piazzolla is encountered so often as an instrumental