



Mark Davis Scatterday:  
Manhattan musician



Elegant, laid-back performances and sonorous recordings sum up the spirit of a city

## 'Manhattan Music'

**Bernstein** Mass – Suite (arr Sweeney)  
**B Tovey** Manhattan Music  
**R Wright** Shaker Suite (arr Scatterday)  
**Tyzik** New York Cityscape  
**Canadian Brass; Eastman Wind Ensemble / Mark Davis Scatterday**  
**Opening Day** © OD7368 (65' • DDD)

It's an illustrious crew that gathered to pay unrelated homage to New York City and the legendary Mercury "Living Presence" recordings of Frederick Fennell and his Eastman Wind Ensemble (EWE). There's Bramwell Tovey, music director of the Vancouver Symphony, and Jeff Tyzik, popular pops conductor in Vancouver, Rochester and Portland. And, of course, the combined forces of Canadian Brass and the current EWE conducted by the ensemble's fourth conductor, Mark Davis Scatterday.

It's an odd combination of retro and current music-making and technology. The recordings, produced by Dixon Van Winkle and made in the Eastman Theater in Rochester, the location of the 1950 Mercury recordings of the EWE and a beautiful 1920s concert hall in the second stage of a major renovation to be completed in 2010, have extraordinary depth and impressive deep bass, qualities which to some might seem the antithesis of Mercury's outrageously up-front, almost self-consciously audiophile analogue sound in the 1950s. The performances, too, are more elegant and laid-back than Fennell obtained from his bands. Perhaps it's the music,

each of the arrangements and original compositions created specifically for the project. Tovey's 18-minute *Manhattan Music* has, appropriately enough, the sleek, sophisticated feel of Manhattan chic, cool and jaunty. The arrangements of Bernstein and Rayburn Wright, a beloved figure in the history of jazz studies and performance, are beautifully if a bit anonymously played.

Fortunately, the concluding work, Tyzik's five-movement, 23-minute *New York Cityscape*, which begins with a rag and a tango and ends with a tarantella that whirls away into the night, is anything but anonymous. The most beautiful moment on the disc, in fact, is the work's fourth movement, "African Dance (Wall Street & East

*'New York Cityscape is the most beautiful moment on the disc with an unexpected, almost subliminal hypnotic power'*

River c1709)", which, considering the massed brass forces, has a totally unexpected, almost subliminal hypnotic power.

Much of the excellent liner-note explains how this project came to be, provides background on the history of and the relationship between Mercury and the EWE, and details **ArkivMusic.com's** part in the proceedings with a plug for the website's increasingly invaluable "print on demand" service. **Laurence Vittes**

Smith's care in regard to nuance and timing. Similar words describe Smith's polyphonically astute, sensitively sculpted Chopin Barcarolle: it is introspective and gentle without ever turning flaccid or static. Smith's brilliantly researched annotations entertain as much as they teach, and the full-bodied, warmly detailed engineering faithfully captures the ripe sonority he produces in the concert hall that I've long admired – and envied! An outstanding release. **Jed Distler**

## 'Unsleeping'

**Hajdu** Bestiary **Harvey** Lullaby for the Unsleeping  
**Killmayer** Härting Lieder **Laitman** Mystery  
**RM Schafer** Kinderlieder **Sierra** Rimas  
**Patricia Green** *mez* **John Hess** *pf*  
**Blue Griffin Recordings** © BGR177 (72' • DDD)

**No chance of nodding off during this imaginative, fervently sung recital**



The title of Patricia Green's new disc, "Unsleeping", is a bit of resourceful wordplay. The Canadian mezzo-soprano's recital of art songs pays tribute to living composers

from England, Canada, Hungary, Germany, Puerto Rico and the United States. And there's no danger that a listener will doze off while Green is wrapping her Wagnerian-sized mezzo and keen story-telling skills around this appealing and varied repertoire.

Beyond providing the impetus for the recording's name, Jonathan Harvey's "Lullaby for the Unsleeping" is a lovely, lilting ode to youthful procrastination at bedtime. The barcarolle rhythm and interplay of accessible and mysterious harmonies provide just the right aura for John V Taylor's verses, especially as rendered with such fervent delineation by Green and her vivid collaborator, pianist John Hess. Among the many attractions of R Murray Schaefer's *Kinderlieder* are the German texts by Bertold Brecht, at once tender (surprise, surprise) and tart (as might be expected from this potent Socialist poet). The Canadian composer's responses to Brecht's words abound in thematic allure and harmonic intrigue. Hungary's Andre Hajdu travels through creepy territory in *Bestiary*, his quartet of al fresco scenes set to English poems by Ted Hughes and cast in dark colours and soaring, novel vocal lines. The finale, "The Rat's Dance", is partly sung, partly spoken, entirely eerie. Wilhelm Killmayer's *Härting Lieder* comprise nine engaging songs about nature and identity, while Roberto Sierra's *Rimas* employ verses by Gustavo A Bécquer to exotic, turbulent and haunting effect. The teaming of composer Lori Laitman and poet Sara Teasdale in *Mystery* results in five songs of generous lyricism and propulsive ardour.

Green brings urgency, detail and drollery to the repertoire's myriad demands. John Hess's pianism helps mightily in awakening the music's inner voices. **Donald Rosenberg**