

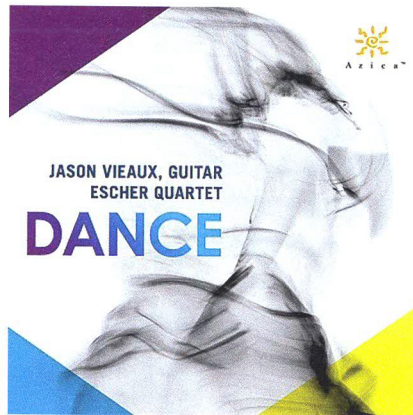


MUSIC ●●●●○ SONICS ●●●●○

Symbiosis. Vercammen, Ivanova. Gutman.

There are plenty of recordings of the Franck sonata. While this one doesn't supplant those of Perlman, Chung, or Bell, it's worth a listen, both as an interpretation and for its unique coupling of that fulminant warhorse with works by two female composers otherwise little represented on disc—both of whom happen to have been born, as was Franck, in the Low Countries. The single-named Poldowski, who hailed from Brussels, was in reality Irene Regina Wieniawska (1879–1932), daughter of the great Polish violinist Henryk Wieniawski. Her Sonata in D Minor is appropriately Franckian, but written with an awareness of Brahms and the fragrant idioms of Fauré and early Ravel. The reading, like the piece itself, is quite accomplished. The Dutch composer Mathilde Wantenaar, born in Amsterdam in 1993, is here represented by her *Sprookjes: Musical Tales for Violin and Piano*. Vercammen aced it in a 2014 composition competition held in Utrecht, and gives it an excellent ride here, her thin, wiry tone perfect for the piece's dreamy atmosphere. The program benefits from a very close-up recording in an ample and reverberant space that gives considerable weight to Ivanova's piano. Thoughtful liner notes by the violinist. In all, quite a find! **Ted Libbey**

Further Listening: *Zoo* (Vercammen/trptk)



MUSIC ●●●●● SONICS ●●●●○

Dance. Vieaux, Escher Quartet. Azica.

Any new record from guitarist Jason Vieaux is cause for celebration. He's one of the greatest virtuosos in the history of the instrument, and a uniquely interesting artist and interpreter to boot. This latest, *Dance*, offers a romp across the centuries with works by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968), Aaron Jay Kernis (who just turned 60), and Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805). The Guitar Quintet by Castelnuovo-Tedesco is a brilliant piece written in 1950 for Segovia and the Paganini Quartet. Its four movements are full of the breezy rhythms and bracing freshness we associate with the composer, and the performers give it quite a ride. Next, Kernis' *100 Greatest Dance Hits*, a lively, wonderfully imaginative score whose title is a tip of the hat to those old K-Tel commercials on late-night TV. The opening movement of this four-movement suite uses a lot of percussive effects on the guitar, which Vieaux does better than anyone. Boccherini, in his dreams, might have imagined a performance of his Guitar Quintet No. 4 in D (*Fandango*) as good as this one from Vieaux and the Eschers. Here it is, for real. The CD's sensational audio presence is exactly what we've come to expect from Azica. **TL**

Further Listening: *Play* (Vieaux, Nashville SO/Naxos)



MUSIC ●●●●● SONICS ●●●●○

If You Love for Beauty. Sasha Cooke. Colburn Orchestra, Gilad. Yarlung (LP).

"Every once in a while, there come along singers who have a quality of singing so beautifully, and touchingly, that it kind of makes you cry, just the sound of their voice," observed Michael Tilson Thomas. "I think Sasha Cooke is one of those people." He's right, so it's curious Cooke isn't better known after performing with many of the leading opera companies, symphony orchestras, and conductors; winning two Grammys; and boasting repertoire from the baroque to contemporary avant-garde. Recorded in analog with minimal miking, Cooke's debut album has been available on CD since 2012, but Yarlung has now released it on vinyl. Cooke's ravishing voice is complemented by her sensitivity and imagination, apparent in the depth of feeling and lyricism she imparts to Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*. Also on the program are two Handel arias, including a powerful performance of "Ombra mai fù" (from *Xerxes*), and the teasingly erotic "Am I in Your Light?"—Cooke's signature piece from John Adams' opera *Doctor Atomic*. Gilad and his Colburn Orchestra provide accompaniment of exemplary point, purpose, and sympathy, and sonics are extraordinary in their naturalness and integrity. **Paul Seydor**

Further Listening: *Sasha Cooke Live; L'enfance du Christ* (Berlioz)