Related Articles

First Prev — *Issue 38:1 Sept/Oct 2014* — Next Last

First Prev — Composers — Next Last

First Prev — Raymond Tuttle — Next Last

First Prev — FELDMAN — Next Last

First Prev — BRILLIANT — Next Last

Paola Ronchetti — Next Last

Giancarlo Simonacci — Next Last

First Prev — cello — Next Last

First Prev — horn — Next Last

First Prev — piano — Next Last

First Prev — soprano — Next Last

Listen to Audio Samples

Barry Araújo Kolman: Collected Works

Eaken Trio: Most Wonderful Time of the Year

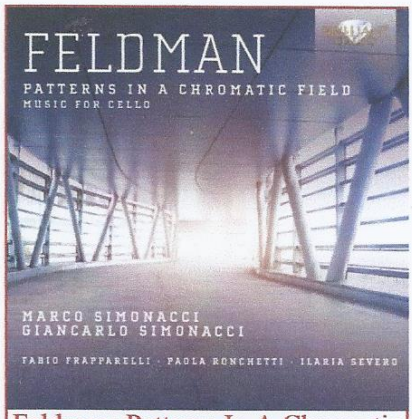
Florestan Duo: Beethoven for Cello & Piano

Frank Brickle, Busoni, Pérotin: Ab Nou Cor

Jonathan Little: Polyhymnia

CD Review by Raymond Tuttle

FELDMAN *Patterns in a Chromatic Field.*[1] *Two Pieces.*[1] *Projection 1. Intersection 4. Four Songs to Poems by E. E. Cummings.*[1, 2] *Two Instruments.*[4] *Durations 2.*[1] *Voices and Cello*[2, 3] • Marco Simonacci (vc); [1]Giancarlo Simonacci (pn); [2]Paola Ronchetti, [3]Ilaria Severo (sop); [4]Fabio Frapparelli (hn) • BRILLIANT 9401 (2 CDs: 119:27)



Feldman: Patterns In A Chromatic Field
Audio CD
Brilliant Classics
Buy from amazon.com

This set is titled *Music for Cello*, and as such, Marco Simonacci participates in every selection. Its other title, however, is *Patterns in a Chromatic Field*—as well it should be, because this is the dominant work in this set. With a duration of almost 90 minutes, it was too long to fit on a single CD, so the first 25 minutes of it are on the first disc, and the remainder comfortably fits on the second. It is a shame to break up this work in such a manner, but it was unavoidable … or not, because I know of one recording of this work that times in at 72

Josef Peter Heinzer: music for orchestra

Laura Schwendinger: Collected Works

Luisa Guembes-Buchanan: Beethoven in D, E. T. A. Hoffman Sonatas / Robert Schumann Kreisleriana, Late Beethoven

Melba: Benaud Trio, The Romantic Clarinet, The Virtuoso Piano Music of George Frederick Boyle, The Art of Nance Grant, Arcadia Lost, Elan Ballet Music from Operas of Saint Saëns, RAKHMANINOV: Leslie Howard, WAGNER: Das Rheingold, WAGNER: Die Walküre, WAGNER: Siegfried, WAGNER: Götterdämmerung, FERDINAND HÉROLD: La Somnambule

Michael Antonello: Collected Works

Open Goldberg: Open Goldberg Variations

Peter Halstead: RACHMANINOFF: Moments musicaux: No. 5 in D♭

Rick VanMatre: Gray Then Blue

Serafin String Quartet: Selected Works

Susan Merdinger: SCHUMANN & DEBUSSY

The Crossing: Selected Works

Ursula Bagdasarjanz: Mozart & Schoeck

minutes (Berman and Wieringa on Attacca Babel) and another that requires 80:42 (Curtis and Karis on Tzadik).

Patterns in a Chromatic Field, composed in 1981, is late Feldman, but it is not as demanding (at least in scale) as other works from his last years. In fact, in a curious way, I find it to be a gently provocative work, not without humor, and not without narrative, at least of a sort. The cello and piano walk and talk together, usually listening and complementing each other, as they set out on a journey to find … well, who knows what. In explaining this work, annotator Marco Lenzi invokes the oriental rugs that Feldman collected, referring to the "crippled symmetry" of designs within those rugs. No two designs in a rug are exactly alike, and the designs' placement, in relation to each other, is only approximately regular. Think of the designs as musical phrases and the relationship of the designs to one another as the work's macro-structure, as well as the interrelationship between the cello and piano, and you will begin to have an idea of what *Patterns in a Chromatic Field* is like. (Its alternate title is *Untitled Composition for Cello and Piano*, which is somewhat like approaching an individual and announcing, "My name is Anonymous.") What isn't immediately obvious about this work, no matter what you call it, is the idea that it is a little sad and a little funny. The cello and the piano seem to be waiting for a Godot who, like Samuel Beckett's, never arrives. In the meantime, they mark time, occasionally argue, and even occasionally panic. (Fairly late in the work, there is a brief passage that sounds like an alarm, as if one of the instruments, in a fit of despair, had called 911.) Sometimes, the music really does seem to be going around in circles (on both the macro and micro levels) and sometimes it sounds as if the musicians have run out of options and have painted themselves into a corner. One then thinks of another play by

Ysmael Reyes: Incanto: Contemporary Venezuelan Music

Fanfare Archive Advertisers

Melba

Michael Antonello

Beckett: *Endgame*. Arguably, it is not necessary to interpret this music, and the two Simonaccis (brothers? Siamese twins?) play it, with a few momentary exceptions, impassively, which seems exactly right. In so doing, they make *Patterns in a Chromatic Field* sound fragile, tragic, and yet also weirdly comical.

The *Two Pieces* from 1948 are unpublished, and not very interesting. Feldman, then only 22, was feeling his way down hallways other composers before him had traveled. *Projection 1* and *Intersection 4*, both for solo cello, are a step forward, but I don't hear Feldman's voice in them. *Four Songs to Poems by E. E. Cummings* is better, although no more than a pencil sketch. (The longest song requires 71 seconds, and the shortest just 28.) Soprano Paola Ronchetti sings them with purity. In the much later (1973) *Voices and Cello*, she is joined by Ilaria Severo, whose voice is well matched to Ronchetti's. This is a rather ethereal work, in the manner of *Rothko Chapel*, which Feldman composed two years earlier. *Two Instruments*, for cello and horn, and *Durations 2*, for cello and piano, are examples of Feldman's free durational music, meaning that performers play at the same time, but not necessarily "together," because each performer chooses his own durations within a given general tempo. They are fragile and relatively short, but again, I don't find them as interesting as Feldman's later works, although I admit that the combination of cello and horn in former work is interesting in and of itself.

Very fine performances here, not just from the two Simonaccis but from the other performers as well, for the same reasons already stated. This release, centered as it is on Feldman's music for cello, fills a niche, and lucky for us, it fills it well. This is a worthwhile addition to the Feldman discography. **Raymond Tuttle**

This article originally appeared in Issue 38:1 (Sept/Oct 2014) of *Fanfare* Magazine.