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# Spring Into Five New Classical CDs!

By [MARK PINTO \(/PEOPLE/MARK-PINTO/\)](/PEOPLE/MARK-PINTO/) • JUN 2, 2015

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The result is simply sublime.

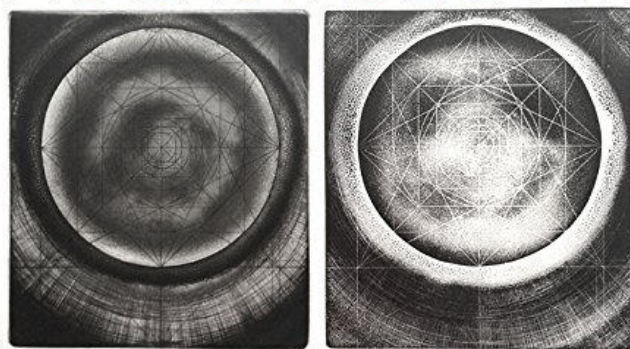
*Flutist Robert Stallman's latest CD*

The transcription to flutes sounds so natural and fitting for the instruments, and the expansion to orchestra is so idiomatic, you'd swear Mozart wrote it that way himself. Similarly and just as effective, Stallman transcribes two movements from Mozart's "Haffner" Serenade from solo violin to solo flute and orchestra, with delightful results.

And a graceful and splendid rendition of Mozart's Flute & Harp concerto caps off the recording. Stallman and his fellow soloists, flutist Isabelle Chapuis and harpist Katerina Englichova, are consummate musicians and make this one of the most charming Mozart encounters on disc.

**Gregory W. Brown: Moonstrung Air.** One need not know that the recurring motif in Gregory W. Brown's Missa Charles Darwin is based on the genetic sequence of one of Darwin's Finches to appreciate Brown's striking and original vocal writing. The Massachusetts-based composer, who holds a degree from Westminster Choir College, among other institutions, effectively blends rhythmic, harmonic and stylistic techniques of early and contemporary music in ways that use the building blocks of the past to point the way into the future.

## MOONSTRUNG AIR



CHORAL AND VOCAL MUSIC OF **GREGORY W. BROWN**

THE CROSSING II NEW YORK POLYPHONY

Moonstrung Air [long trailer] ...



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This is especially evident in the Missa, the central work on this disc, and whose texts are drawn from Darwin's writings on evolution instead of the traditional Latin Mass. The music unfolds as a modern madrigal, with unorthodox intervals and harmonies following a Renaissance-like structure and progression. It's given a convincing performance by the four men of New York Polyphony (countertenor numbered among them), who chant the melodies with spot-on intonation and clear diction.

Similarly, Brown's ever-ancient, ever-new settings of *Three American Folk Hymns* take on an otherworldly character with the ensemble's performances. Elements of Gregorian chant find their way into some of the other compositions, both secular and religious, on this disc. Philadelphia's own new-music chamber choir, The Crossing, appears too, and delivers a dreamy performance of a Richard Wilbur text (*Five Women Bathing in Moonlight*), whose beguiling music boasts modern dissonances and ancient harmonic resolutions in rapid succession.

**Quire Cleveland: *The Land of Harmony*.** Choral music has flourished in the United States since the time of the Pilgrims. This recording presents an enlightening and entertaining historical survey of short sacred and secular a cappella works by important American choral music composers.

The recording is taken from a 2014 concert performance by Quire Cleveland, a solid band of singers under the firm direction of their Artistic Director Ross W. Duffin. Choral settings are original or arrangements crafted to sound like the period. Opening their concert with all four verses of the *Star-Spangled Banner*, Quire Cleveland convincingly navigates the stylistic evolution of this music composed over a period of nearly three centuries -- from the 1640 Bay Psalm Book (the first book printed in North America) to 1920.



The Star Spangled Banner, a...



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