University of Texas at El Paso

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follows this with an *Appassionata* remarkable for its tremendous power in I and its delicate restraint in II. In that andante he refuses to ramp up the tempo in the final variations, using the extra time to delve fully into the melodic potential of the left hand. The other segments of these first two sonatas, while far from objectionable, are more dispensable.

The second disc, on the other hand, merits a full hearing. Lang Lang's *Iberia* is a masterpiece of beauty and quiet intensity. The first movement is the best, full of drawn-out gestures and half-starts that are all rendered through rounded, lush tones—fantastic storytelling here. The jaunty II leads to a sturdy and satisfying finale that Lang Lang brings off with a bang at the opening and then tiptoes gracefully away from at the end. The Prokofieff is very good, too. This sonata has never been a favorite of mine, but I enjoyed hearing him deliver the first movement with laser-like precision. Although the precipitato movement doesn't quite fall off the cliff, tempo-wise, it does build to an enjoyable, huge finish. Three short Chopin numbers round out the program, the polonaise and waltz coming off with particular brilliance.

No one performance on this release qualifies it as a must-have for collectors. It is a very good recital, though, and hearing it on such a bright, "hot" stage piano helps create the illusion that you are actually there. Fine playing, great sound, and strong programming.

**AUERBACH**

**Mostly Tangos**
*by* Barber, Bolcom, Villa-Lobos, Castro, Ponce, Piazzolla, Ginastera
*Oscar Macchioni, p*
Eroica 3442—57 minutes

This is a collection of South American-style, Europe-influenced pieces by North- and South-American composers. Samuel Barber's whimsical 'Hesitation Tango' (from *Souvenirs*, 1951) was originally scored for piano duo, so this solo version has a clearer texture. A number of William Bolcom's works include tangos. The one presented here, 'Dead Moth Tango' (from Three Dance Portraits, 1984), takes unexpected harmonic turns and is full of delicious details. Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras* 4 (1930-41) is not a tango, of course, but a suite that mixes melodies and flavors of Brazil with techniques and flavors of Bach. All four movements are wonderful; my favorite is the whirling finale, 'Danca (Miudinho)'.

After that spirited dance, Mexican composer Manuel Maria Ponce's 'Preludio Mexicano'—a 1914 setting of the song 'Cuiden su Vida' (Of me, don't worry)—is like a lazy siesta in the afternoon shade. So is the Intermezzo (1912).

The program then turns to luan Jose Castro's four-movement collection (Tangos, 1941) that deals with different male tango characters. A quiet, portentous introduction ('Evocation') leads to 'Lloron' (Whiner), which "portrays the general and common character of the tango poems: a whining and crying male complaining about love, family, and politics". 'Compadron' is about a neighborhood criminal; 'Milonguero' is the dance of the gauchos; and 'Nostalgico' is "an unsatisfied man who continuously remembers better times".

The album would not have been complete without something by Astor Piazzolla, whose innovations did not endear him to tango lovers in Argentina, but whose works have become concert favorites here. *Adios Nonino* (1955), a nine-minute tribute to Piazzolla's father, runs the gamut of emotions. The program ends with a Malambo (1940) by Alberto Ginastera, the most famous Argentinean composer. This is the first version of this piece, which includes a free introduction that Ginastera later deleted. Pianist Macchioni thinks the deletion was a mistake, and I completely agree—the introduction's thoughtful introspection is a perfect prelude to the wildness of the malambo.

Argentine-born pianist Oscar Macchioni became a piano professor at the University of Texas-El Paso in 2003. He plays these endlessly evocative works with understanding and seeming ease—bringing out their lovely melodies, finding tempos that seem quite right, and expertly balancing their wit, gravity, and passion.

**KILPATRICK**

**Meditation & Overtones**

**BEACH: 5 Improvisations, op 148; SCHONTHAL: Sonata Breve; COATES: Sonata 1—Tones in Overtones; FEIGIN: 4 Meditations from Dogen; Variations on Empty Space**
*Margaret Mills, p*
Cambria 1195—54 minutes

Mills is one of those pianists that, on hearing for the first time, you wonder how you could have missed all these years. A busy pianist (both solo and chamber), teacher, and music administrator in the Northeastern US for over 35 years, she has been an advocate of contemporary American music and music by women composers. This release grew out of a lecture-recital given at the University of California in 2009 and includes works by American composer Joel Feigin (b. 1951), whose teachers included Roger Sessions and Nadia Boulanger. His notes on the pieces are quite illuminating, as are the performances (the Variations are dedi-