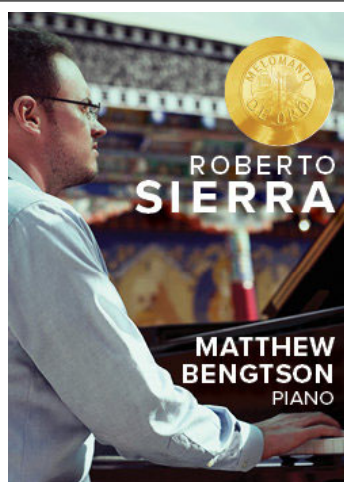




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CD Review by Arthur Lintgen

ELFMAN Violin Concerto, "Eleven Eleven".¹
HAILSTORK Piano Concerto No. 1² • JoAnn Falletta, cond; ¹Sandy Cameron (vn); ²Stewart Goodyear (pn); Buffalo PO • NAXOS 8.559925 (65:20) Live: Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo ¹10/18–19/2019, ²2/18–19/2022

Danny Elfman became successful initially as a singer/songwriter for the band Oingo Boingo. He then went on to become a very famous film music composer of over 100 scores despite limited technical expertise, at least initially. His most famous film scores include *Batman*, *Batman Returns*, *Beetlejuice*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. He also has written music for TV, including themes for *The Simpsons* and *Desperate Housewives*. His large-scale orchestral film music is influenced by Golden Age composers such as Bernard Herrmann and Franz Waxman. Elfman has also composed some concert music, including the *Serenada Schizophrenia* and the Violin Concerto (written for violinist Sandy Cameron).

The 41-minute Violin Concerto is a major work that reflects Elfman's background in film music, rock, and TV, along with the primary influence of Shostakovich and Prokofiev. It is scored for a large (especially for a violin concerto) percussion-dominated orchestra. In the program notes, JoAnn Falletta is quoted, saying, "The colors of the amplified solo violin bring enormous radiance and great shading and nuance to the work. In keeping with Danny's famous *Batman* score, the piece has the definite feeling of a voyage through a dark cityscape and is a true concerto noir." In other words, Elfman effectively combines dazzling virtuosic violin solos with passages more reminiscent of his film scores. It is good that he does not veer too far from his basic cinematic style because of its popularity and easy accessibility. The surprising thing is that he was able to combine all of this into a formally structured concerto with extreme dynamic contrasts. The soloist plays almost constantly throughout the concerto, and Sandy Cameron gives a dazzling performance.

The Piano Concerto by Adolphus Hailstork is a generally lyrical work with a dramatic first movement followed by a central *Adagio* that is the heart of the piece and a more animated, virtuosic finale. The concerto is worth hearing, but I would have preferred that Falletta include another work by Elfman or perhaps another film composer.

The Elfman Violin Concerto is a major work written in a distinctive personal sound that deserves a place in the mainstream repertoire. The sound and balance between the soloist and large orchestra are very good. **Arthur Lintgen**

This article originally appeared in Issue 47:1 (Sept/Oct 2023) of *Fanfare Magazine*.

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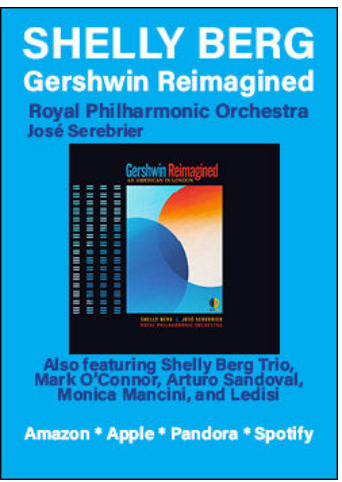
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