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### CLASSICAL MUSIC; These prodigies have legs

Los Angeles Times - Los Angeles, Calif.  
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The first flush of youth, and then what? Will a wrinkle or two mean the end of a recording contract? Will burnout come early, maturity not at all? No one, of course, knows, but current CDs from soloists who were hot a decade or more ago and are now in their 30s offer encouragement, even if yet another recording of the Schumann Piano Concerto by Evgeny Kissin hardly seems like news.

In 1992, the Russian pianist, then 20, made a live recording of the Schumann with a 79-year-old Carlo Maria Giulini conducting the Vienna Philharmonic. Now he has re-recorded it along with Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 with Colin Davis and the London Symphony for EMI. Kissin was remarkably mature for years and has now mellowed even further. There is no hint of impetuosity here, but the playing is deeply satisfying and very beautiful.

The violinists Vadim Repin, Nikolaj Znaider and Gil Shaham, comers in the '90s, are now medium-old masters. Repin gets deluxe treatment in a two-CD Beethoven package on Deutsche Grammophon of the Violin Concerto (with Riccardo Muti and the Vienna Philharmonic) and the "Kreutzer" Sonata (with pianist Martha Argerich). These are muscular performances, aggressive and astounding.

Not to be outdone at the violin gym, Znaider also flexes his technical muscle in the three Brahms violin sonatas with pianist Yefim Bronfman, which fit onto a single RCA CD. Going his own way on his own label, Canary Classics, Shaham, who just keeps adding more deliciously sweet honey to his tone, is joined by Lan Shui and the Singapore Symphony for the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto and something called "The Butterfly Lovers" by Gang Chen and Zhanhao He.

More standard repertory comes by way of two women who got perhaps too much initial attention for their attractiveness. Both, though, have gone places as artists. The French pianist Helene Grimaud gives sparkling accounts of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto (with Vladimir Jurowski and the Staatskapelle Dresden) and the Sonata No. 28, Opus 101, on her latest Deutsche Grammophon release.

Lara St. John stands fully clothed by the beach on the cover of her new Ancalagon CD, but the Canadian violinist has become an even more impressively untamed Bach player than when her publicity photos were more provocative. Her account, in excellent SACD sound, of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas is wild, idiosyncratic and gripping.

-- M.S.