

Mozart. Scott St. John, violin and viola; Lara St. John, violin; the Knights, Eric Jacobsen, cond. (Ancalagon)



This is a match made in heaven. The gifted Canadian siblings Scott and Lara St. John team up with the often cutting-edge New York chamber orchestra the Knights (see Center Stage, page 29 of October 2010 issue), who are best known for modern fare ranging from Shostakovich to Jimi Hendrix. They're led here by Eric Jacobsen, also of Brooklyn Rider. Together, these gifted young players have created a flawless recording of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola in Eb major, K. 364; Violin Concerto No. 1 in Bb major, K. 207; and Violin Concerto No. 3

in G major, K. 216.

Lara St. John is probably best known as for her intelligent interpretations of Bach and, more recently, Vivaldi. Her 1996 debut, *Bach Works for Violin Solo*, won rave reviews, but generated controversy when she was depicted on the cover with just a fiddle masking her nude torso, an image that has dogged her. Yet, she is a skilled and disciplined player who has shown her musical talent time and again. Scott St. John, equally gifted, is perhaps less well known, though since 2006 he has served as second violinist in the critically acclaimed St. Lawrence String Quartet, the quartet-in-residence at Stanford University.

Lara, especially on the Violin Concerto No. 1, gives a wonderfully confident performance bristling with refined technique and a delightful sense of musicality that brilliantly captures Mozart's humor and light-heartedness.

Bravo!

This recording is available on iTunes. On October 12, it will be available as a hi-def hybrid SACD/CD.—*Greg Cahill*