

**MOZART:** *Violin Concertos 1+3;*  
*Symphonie Concertant*  
Lara St John, Scott St John; The Knights/  
Eric Jacobsen

Ancalagon 136 [SACD] 74 minutes (212-974-1917)

Lara St John and her brother Scott have made another duo recording, this time of Mozart. Lara plays violin and Scott plays viola in the Sinfonia Concertante. The kind of stylistic and technical unity you would expect from gifted siblings is definitely here, and it is clear that the St Johns know this piece inside out. This is

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not just a mechanical run-through, and their performance has lots of subtle, personal touches. An important note: Scott plays a viola with a very pleasing tone. I mention that because so many violas don't have it. I remember back in the 1970s when I went shopping for my viola, it was nearly impossible to find an instrument that didn't sound like either an overgrown violin or a small cello. It is very difficult for violin makers to create a true viola sound.

Scott plays Violin Concerto 1, and I haven't enjoyed this concerto this much before. I actually never much cared for Mozart's first two violin concertos, but Scott has won me over to the first; his enjoyment of the music is so palpable that my interest never waivers. Lara plays the more famous No. 3, and you can hear that, while obviously Scott's sister, she has a more sly way of finding her way around a phrase. The pair is very well supported by The Knights (do they call themselves this because they're freelancers?) under Eric Jacobsen, who adopt a somewhat chaste, period-performance-influenced sound. Beautiful, smooth SACD sound as usual from Ancalagon.