

Gauvin demonstrates her vocal abilities as both the angry Sarah and the Angel who saves the exiled pair. Nathaniel Watson ably sings Abraham, torn between the wishes of Sarah and the fate of his son, Ishmael. Equally fine interpretations are offered by Melissa Fogarty as Ismaele and Jennifer Lane as Agar. In addition to praising the overall accompaniment by the Seattle Baroque, the continuo must be mentioned; Margriet Tindemans (viola da gamba), Stephen Stubbs (chitarraone and Baroque guitar), Maxine Eilander (harp), and artistic director Byron Schenkman (harpsichord) perform with integrity and certainty. This is a noteworthy recording of a work that hints at what would come from the pen of a more mature Scarlatti in later compositions for the operatic stage. —Denise Gallo

Nicolas Vallet *Le Secret des Muses*

Paul O'Dette, lute
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907300
74:02 minutes

According to lutenist Paul O'Dette's delightfully readable booklet notes, Nicolas Vallet was one of the finest lute composers of the early 17th century. Born in France, Vallet (1583–after 1642) moved to Amsterdam around 1613 and lived there for the remainder of his life. A lutenist, teacher, and owner of a dancing school (an unusual life choice for a Calvinist), Vallet published four volumes of lute music that were printed in both French and Dutch. Vallet was also blessed with an entrepreneurial spirit and formed a lute quartet (three expatriate Englishmen rounded out the ensemble) that performed at weddings, banquets, and private concerts.

Vallet's published music is eclectic, with French dances, variations on folk songs (in the style of Sweelinck), arrangements of Elizabethan ballads, and preludes and psalm settings in the North German/Dutch organ style. Thankfully, O'Dette's recital dips into each of these styles. The Sweelinck influence is most evident in Vallet's "Onse Vader in Hemelryck," a stunning arrangement of Martin Luther's hymn that's magnificently

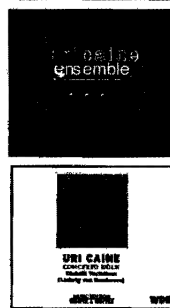
Continued on page 25

Raising Uri by David Lasocki

This is an unorthodox review of two unorthodox recordings and an unusually brief interview with an unusual musician. **Uri Caine's** *Goldberg Variations* consists of the aria played by himself on fortepiano followed by 70 variations: 30 of Bach's and 40 of his own, for various performing forces and in various styles and genres, classical and popular, some featuring solo or group improvisation. Caine's *Diabelli Variations* is scored for himself as improvising fortepianist with a taste for quotation, against an orchestra playing on original instruments of the Classical period.

Caine is a jazz pianist with a degree in composition. Interviewed before a concert in Bloomington, Indiana (playing Fender Rhodes with the Dave Douglas Quintet), he was open, humble, calm, and full of joy. I asked him whether in these recordings, as Norman Lebrecht has suggested, he was trying to put the spirit of improvisation back into classical music. No, he answered, he was doing what jazz musicians have always done—reaching out to all types of music that they know and love to find vehicles for improvisation. "What I'm trying to do is to take a type of form or structure and find places within that where appropriate improvisation can be combined with written material—by rewriting, arranging, sometimes not changing much, sometimes changing radically—to elaborate the feeling of the music." He gained a taste for sampling different styles when he was studying

The Goldberg Variations. Aria and 70 Variations for Various Ensembles Adapted, Arranged and Composed by Uri Caine after Johann Sebastian Bach. 2 CDs. Music Edition Winter & Winter 910 054-2, 2000.
Diabelli Variations: Theme and XXXIII Variations. Arrangements and Improvisations: Uri Caine after Ludwig van Beethoven. CD. Uri Caine, fortepiano; Concerto Köln. Music Edition Winter & Winter 910 086-2, 2002.



for his final examination at the University of Pennsylvania, listening to the first twenty seconds of thousands of compositions for six hours a day over a period of several months. The concept of the *Goldbergs* grew from solo piano to encompass his traveling group that was improvising on Mahler symphonies and songs, the DJs he was hanging out with, and the early music group with recording studio offered by West German Radio. Did he draw on his composition lessons with George Rochberg, learning to write Bachian fugues or Mozartian development sections, for some of the Classical-style variations? Definitely, "but I didn't want them to sound too academic." They don't.

The following poem is an attempt to capture the flavor and spirit of the recordings, Uri the man, and the appeal of jazz itself. Two of the puns are explained in the citations at the end. Do please listen.

Stefan Winter cover
Red on blue or pink on drab
Etchings, drawings
Pear-shaped slot to store the disc
Almost an afterthought, it seems, and quite impractical.
No notes, no hint within of who he is
This able Caine, who masterminds postmodern Bach or Beethoven.
A Jew like Goldberg, have no doubt
From Philadelphia, that town of jazz which nurtured John Coltrane (Amen to that).
A Love Supreme for masters old
Now shaping them according to the styles of every year
Electric red blue jazz Baroque (oh yes, Concerto Köln, they're HIP)
Rachmaninoff (Rachmaninoff?) Debussy not but OffenBach.
Arrangement: far too crude a term to limn
These Parodies, delightful skits
Revealing Spirit everywhere, a true confession of rapport
With Ludwig, 'Bastian, and God.
The Variationen' mode quite suits
This sort of play. Two discs reduced
From four, you say, no sweat!
He samples voices, locomotives
Swingled ragtime blues takes in his Stride
A composition class on fire, a trill of thirds

A gospel klezmer cantillation
Pomegranate inflagation
Diavolo-belli machination
Fortepian-eau de Cologne.
He takes the Fifth, resisteth not the Ninth (Taruskin would be proud)²
Incorporates the Eighth, an Emperor's concerto feast
And jazz bursts out the seams.

Restaurant Casablanca
Indiana, Bloomington
Thirteenth, Friday, Lucky Day
Sharmoula sauce on seafish rebop
Couscous hiding under, scalding hot
With greens and reds and steams and threads
All lightly sauteed on the side.
Is jazz a state of being, Mr. Caine?
To bring to every sound you've heard since childhood
And go on, relaxed and shining
Fender Rhodes piano cool in contrast to
The scalding couscous of the mind
Piping fusing musing bluesing never using
paying your dues-ing
Improvising, bringing back the soul on soul³
of essence
Ever present, here's the Presence, only Now
and Now and Now?
It is, my friend — no more to say
Let's dine.

¹Beyond the variation Caine has tried / His hands at Schumann, Wagner, Mahler, Mahler, Mahler, music hall, Brazil / No end to his creative art / You dig? See www.uricaine.com.

²Richard Taruskin, "Resisting the Ninth," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 12, no. 3 (September 1989): 241–56.

³Dave Douglas, *Soul on Soul*, RCA Victor 09026-63603-2, 2000.