Favourite Harp Concertos (1998)

CD1 Handel: Harp Concerto in B flat, Op.4, No.6, HWV 294 - Transcr. from Organ Concerto No. 6 *1. 1. Andante allegro Ursula Holliger 6:00 2. 2. Larghetto Ursula Holliger 4:42 3. 3. Allegro moderato Ursula Holliger 2:33* André Pépin (Flute), Jean-Claude Hermanjat (Flute), Ursula Holliger (Harp) I Musici Mozart: Concerto for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra in C, K.299 *4. 1. Allegro Hubert Barwahser 9:42 5. 2. Andantino Hubert Barwahser 9:11 6. 3. Rondo (Allegro) Hubert Barwahser 9:28*
Osian Ellis (Harp), Hubert Barwahser (Flute) London Symphony Orchestra Sir Colin Davis - conductor Eichner: Concerto in C major for harp and orchestra
7. 1. Allegro Annie Chalan 5:28 8. 2. Andante Annie Chalan 4:31 9. 3. Tempo die minuetto Annie Chalan 4:14 Annie Challan (Harp) Antiqua Musica Marcel Couraud - conductor
Boiëldieu: Concerto for Harp and Orchestra in C - Arr. C. Stueber
10. 1. Allegro brillante Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo 10:50 11. 2. Andante lento Catherine Michel 3:46 12. 3. Rondo (Allegro agitato) Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo 6:02
Catherine Michel (Harp) Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra Antonio de Almeida - conductor CD2 Villa-Lobos: Harp Concerto
1. 1. Allegro Catherine Michel 4:40 2. 2. Andante moderato Catherine Michel 9:04 3. 3. Scherzo Catherine Michel 10:52 4. 4. Allegro - Più mosso Catherine Michel 3:26
Catherine Michel (Harp) Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra Antonio de Almeida - conductor Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Concertino for Harp and Chamber Orchestra, Op.93
5. 1. Moderato (Quasi passacaglia) Catherine Michel 6:21 6. 2. Andante (Quasi recitativo) Catherine Michel 3:48 7. 3. Finale spagnolo (Ritmo di jota) Catherine Michel 4:49
Catherine Michel (Harp) Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra Antonio de Almeida - conductor 8. Rodrigo: Sones en la Giralda - Sones en la Giralda Catherine Michel 7:56

Rodrigo: Concerto Serenade for Harp and Orchestra
9. 1. Estudiantina (Allegro ma non troppo - Andante) Catherine Michel 8:10 10. 2. Intermezzo con aria (Adagio - Allegro moderato) Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo 9:03 11. 3. Sarao (Allegro deciso) Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo 6:24
Catherine Michel (Harp) Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra Antonio de Almeida - conductor

There's nothing quite like classical music to soothe the stress of the afternoon commute (especially on Greater Boston's Rt. 128 or your local equivalent). Harp music, in particular, has an extraordinarily calming effect. I'm not exactly sure why that is (darnit Jim, I'm an engineer not a behavioral psychologist) but I can personally vouch for the results. This two-disc set contains some of the finest music for harp and orchestra ever composed.

Disc 1 contains familiar harp concerti by Handel and Mozart, followed by a lesser known work by Eichner. The melodies and performances are guaranteed to work their way deep into your soul. Ursula Holliger (oboe virtuoso Heinz Holliger's wife, in case you were wondering) produces a stellar performance in the Handel concerto. Her technique and interpretation are both insightful and strongly delivered. The orchestras in question should by no means be ignored. I Musici, The London Symphony, and Musica Antiqua Koln (for the Handel, Mozart, and Eichner, respectively) are all names to be reckoned with in the field and they do not disappoint.

Disc 2 consists of more modern works by composers less familiar even to classical music fans except, of course, those who know Villa-Lobos and Rodrigo for their classical guitar music. The works on the second disc are somewhat less accessible to the casual listener, but after repeated listenings, I find them well worth the effort.

In short, stuffing this CD into your car stereo system (or, as in my case, the passenger-seat boombox) will make that jerk in the Beemer who just cut you off, far less relevant.
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