



## 'Fantaisie'

**Borne** Fantaisie Brillante on themes from Bizet's Carmen **F Doppler** Fantaisie pastorale hongroise, Op 26 **Fauré** Fantaisie, Op 79 **Gaubert** Fantaisie **Hübner** Fantaisie **Taffanel** Fantasy on themes from Weber's Der Freischütz  
**Mathieu Dufour** *fl* **Kuang-Hao Huang** *pf*  
 Cedille © 90000121 (57' • DDD)

**French lyricism is the dominant tone, but is there a lack of musical contrast?**



A German may have invented the modern flute but the French invented its repertoire, introducing a lyrical grace, tonal incandescence and poetic evocativeness that still remain inextricably bound to the instrument today. Mathieu Dufour, the principal flautist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, has assembled a thematic programme tracing that phenomenon – the product of a stylistic collusion between music-writing flautists and non-flautist composers based mostly at the Paris Conservatory. From Fauré's much-recorded *Fantaisie* to the legendary pedagogue Paul Taffanel's underperformed *Fantaisie on Themes from Weber's Der Freischütz*, the results uncover a clear chain of influence, and reveal a musical tradition largely unbroken through the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

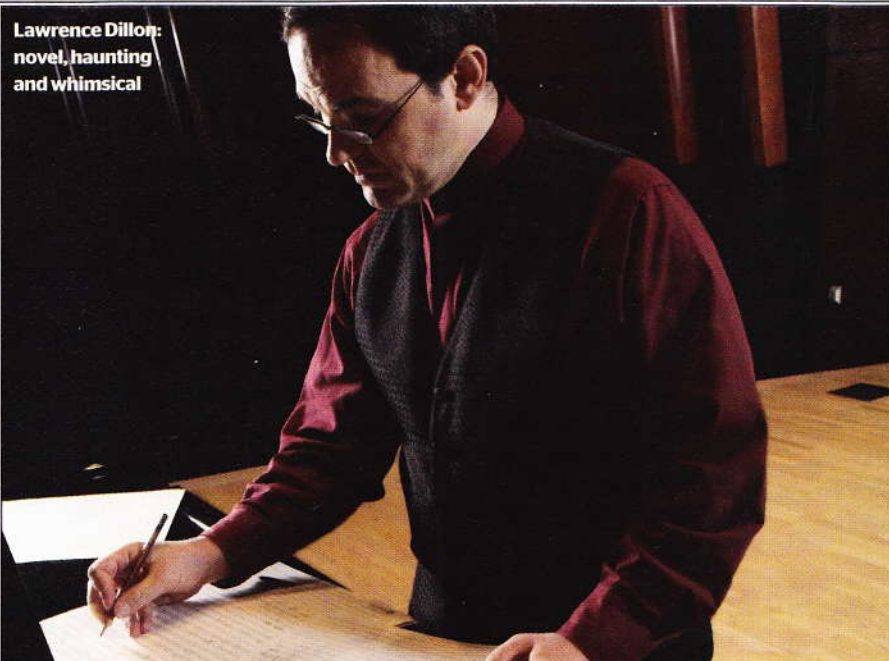
Dufour, for his part, avoids showy virtuosity. Nor, unlike many players, does he impose on the music a dramatic arch. His performances flow in an even manner, much like the French language, with Dufour making his mark solely through crystalline articulation and a keen attention to timbre. Supremely matched by pianist Kuang-Hao Huang, Dufour's rendering of Françoise Borne's *Fantaisie Brillante on Themes from Bizet's Carmen* is true to the French salon, resisting any urges to be overly operatic or pictorially Spanish.

However welcome that sense of restraint may be, though, it eventually presents a problem. Little of the music here resonates in the memory for very long, and by not making an overt "case" for it – essentially letting each piece speak for itself on the respective composer's terms – Dufour's hour-long programme ultimately becomes less than the sum of its parts. **Ken Smith**

## 'I Mercanti di Venezia'

**A Bassano** Fantasia decima. Pavana and Galliarda **G Bassano** Ricercata Ottava. Ricercare terza. Divisions on 'Anchor che col

**Lawrence Dillon:**  
 novel, haunting  
 and whimsical



# Sly and MYSTERIOUS

Daedalus Quartet relish Dillon's novel use of the genre

## L Dillon

'Insects and Paper Airplanes'  
 String Quartets Nos 2-4. What Happened<sup>†</sup>  
**Daedalus Quartet** (Kyu-Young Kim, Ara Gregorian *vs* Jessica Thompson *vs* Raman Ramakrishnan *vs*) **Benjamin Hochman** *pf*  
 Bridge © BRIDGE9332 (73' • DDD)



Just when you thought the string quartet may have reached the edge of sonic possibilities, along comes a composer who makes something novel, haunting and whimsical of the genre. Lawrence Dillon has been helping to flex the ensemble's muscles since the late 20th century, when he began his "Invisible Cities String Quartet Cycle", which will comprise six works upon completion.

Dillon's Second, Third and Fourth Quartets share this new disc with *What Happened*, for violin, viola, cello and piano. Each score is an arresting and appealing creation, full of fanciful and lyrical flourishes within traditional forms that are brightly tweaked. The forms are rondo,

aria and fugue, which Dillon explores to inventive effect, without a whiff of academic reverence.

The disc's title, "Insects and Paper Airplanes", comes from the second movement of String Quartet No 2 ("Flight"), six colourful and vibrantly crafted fugues evoking myriad images, from such soaring entities as birds and those onerous insects (which the cellist slaps to oblivion) to stars and the mythological figures Daedalus and Icarus.

String Quartet No 4 ("The Infinite Sphere") comprises two movements built of rondos of many stripes, with rock rhythms occasionally propelling the narratives. In String Quartet No 3 ("Air"), Dillon is at his most poetic in aria-like phrases and contrasting moods, while the three movements of *What Happened* abound in simple, song-like gestures and nimble spurts.

The Daedalus Quartet inhabit every mysterious, tuneful and sly corner of Dillon's music, and pianist Benjamin Hochman joins members of the ensemble in an eventful and detailed account of *What Happened*. Highly recommended.

**Donald Rosenberg**