

## Kemal Cem Yilmaz



### Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations

Johann Sebastian Bach

CD aud 20.035

[iTunes](#) 15.09.2017 ( - 15.09.2017)



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[Piano News 2/2018 März/April](#) (Marco Frei - 01.03.2018)



Ein "Aha-Erlebnis" findet sich in den Gestaltungen von Yilmaz nicht wirklich. Dafür aber berührt die ehrliche, oftmals klangschön verlebendigte Sicht.

Rezensionstext wird aus urheberrechtlichen Gründen nicht angezeigt.

[American Record Guide](#) May/June 2018 (Bradley Lehman - 01.05.2018)



Kemal Cem Yilmaz spends most of his time in Germany and his native Turkey. This is his debut solo recording. His interpretation is forthright. It sounds like he is going mostly for a solemn serenity and achieving it. He takes about 20% of the repeats: Variations 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 19, and the second half of 16. Variations 7, 9, 13, 15, 25, and the Aria are remarkably slow. 25 is so slow that it lasts 6:28 without repeats. Variations 26 and 29 project more joyous character, rivaling the blistering speed in Glenn Gould's 1955 recording. Yilmaz plays main-note trills (instead of starting from the upper note) and there is a mis-learned note in Variation 6, but everything else sounds conventionally pianistic and well prepared. The booklet doesn't say much except that Yilmaz humbly reveres Bach. I respect albums that are made as well as this, but I'm not excited about them.

[...] I've reviewed ten other harpsichord and piano performances of the Goldberg Variations here in the past two years. Despite their excellence of execution, none of these three new recordings displace older favorites mentioned in those reviews.

I don't know how many commercial recordings of the Goldberg Variations come to market each year, but with this batch I will have reviewed 11 in about as many months. It should be no surprise that again Bach's music stands up to a virtually infinite number of interpretations and reworkings.

Perhaps the most idiosyncratic of these comes from the Chinese-born pianist Ji Liu (who goes by simply "Ji"), known to popular culture from a 2016 Android commercial. Initially, I was nonplussed when Ji's opening aria was painfully slow. Soon it became clear, however, that Ji was being neither staid nor indulgent. Rather, he had chosen the tempo to highlight the balance among voices, which was exquisite. Taking a similar approach to Gould's 1981 recording in Variation 5, Ji blazes through at full speed, though his articulations are clearer and more even. He makes some daring choices in the canonic movements, with mixed results. The detached articulations of Variation 6 work better than the reverberation added to the Fughetta (Variation 10), which clouds the discrete voices. Nonetheless, Ji is to be commended for taking risks, something not always appreciated by the recording industry. This really pays off in the French overture (Variation 16). A combination of added reverberation, exaggerated double-dotted figures and flourishes, and lively passagework make the variation fresh while at the same time grounded in tradition. The Quodlibet is broad and declarative, though without the irony for which I had hoped. In the liner notes, Ji writes that it was in Bach's Goldberg Variations that he found his own sound. In doing so, he has produced a recording that is refreshingly original and executed with conviction. Ji's Goldbergs will not be to everyone's taste and it is decidedly not a middle-of-the-road reference recording. For listeners looking for a more exploratory experience, this disc will not disappoint.

Kemal Cem Yilmaz offers a more traditional reading of Bach's variations, beginning with an opening aria that takes advantage of the piano's full range of sounds, including a carefully deployed sustain pedal. In general, the piano sounds too bright and resonant for my taste, and the outer voices often obscure the inner ones. This seems to be more a function of the recording itself rather than Yilmaz's technique, which the Fifth Variation proves to be formidable. Like the other imitative variations, the Fughetta would benefit from more clarity in the individual voices. Throughout, Yilmaz seems to favor moderate interpretations. In the overture, for example, he avoids the theatricality and pomp characteristic to the genre. Yilmaz seems most comfortable in the adagio (Variation 25). This is the high point of the entire disc, pensive and wistful. He treats the variation with a light touch, leaning into the chromaticism gently and without affectation. Yilmaz plays the Quodlibet straight, opting again for a middle-of-the-road approach to tempo and line. As a whole, the performance seems to lack a cohesive Gestalt, as if each movement exists discretely. Although this is a competent reading of the Goldbergs, it is also a relatively neutral one. For yet another recording of this piece to contribute to the field, it must contain new or individual interpretive insights or be performed and recorded impeccably. Despite Yilmaz's considerable talent, this disc falls short on both counts.

Bach's keyboard music lends itself well to arrangement and reworking, but Concerto Italiano seem to have upped the ante with this latest recording, a potpourri of variation forms arranged for Baroque orchestra. In the opening Passacaglia in D Minor originally for pedal harpsichord (in C Minor), Alessandrini's arrangement is an intelligent, idiomatic one and the players are in fine form. By mapping each voice directly to a string instrument without adding a continuo part, Alessandrini allows for a homogeneity that alludes to the harpsichord but with all the added flexibility of the strings. The Aria variata alla maniera italiana in G Minor is reconstituted for solo violin and continuo here, with Nicholas Robinson taking the solo part. He dispatches the theme and each of the 10 short variations with effortless panache, sailing through figurations one moment and delivering mournful lyricism the next. A canzona for organ appears next in a four-part string transcription. As in the Passacaglia, the strings provide shape, ebb, and flow in ways the organ simply cannot.

The lion's share of the disc, however, is reserved for the Goldberg Variations. Alessandrini himself opens with harpsichord alone with a sensitively ornamented reading of the aria theme, alternating with the strings. For the variations, he mixes and matches chamber configurations. Even the relatively pedestrian Variation

3, a canon for three voices, turns into something special here, with tastefully contoured violin lines over the cello and harpsichord. Concerto Italiano's typically vibrant playing is ideal for variations like the Fughetta, in which even the continuo seems to take flight. Alessandrini and the players commit wholeheartedly to exaggerated notes inégales and dramatic flourishes of French overture in Variation 16, and the result is wonderfully dramatic. The Quodlibet is unsentimental, fast but still a touch heavy, while the closing aria offers a sort of mirror image of the opening one, beginning with strings and moving on to solo harpsichord. These are masterful reworkings of Bach's original material, so idiomatic that it is easy to imagine Bach reusing his keyboard works in the exact same manner. That Alessandrini and Concerto Italiano are so fluent in these styles only makes the arrangements sound more natural. This is surely one of the best instrumental arrangements of the Goldberg Variations available, and the other treasures on the disc make it doubly desirable.





## Franz Schubert: Impromptus D. 935 & D. 899

Franz Schubert

CD aud 20.037

**Facebook** 9. Januar (Jean-Yves Duperron - 09.01.2019)

Quelle: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Musique-pour...>

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### Musique pour tous

Turkish-German pianist Kemal Cem Yilmaz instinctively throws into relief the vocal nature of these piano pieces (after all, Schubert was first and foremost a composer of lieder) and like a singer, knows when and where to slow down and breathe. Here and there, during the more passionate passages, you can even hear him hum along, à la Glenn Gould, when emotion takes over. But don't worry, it's so faint that at first I thought I was hearing things. He clearly "gets" the aforementioned shifts in mood and mode, and responds accordingly with warmth, tenderness or passion. And even though these are not technically challenging pieces, there are still quite a few passages that require clear and articulate phrasing, as well as proper dynamic balance between the left and right hand, all things that Kemal Cem Yilmaz does with natural ease. You most likely already have one or more recordings of the Schubert Impromptus in your music collection but should seriously consider this one as an alternative. And if not, don't hesitate.

In conclusion, we all know how many talented musicians or people with high degrees of education fail to make it and end up being taxi drivers. It turns out it's the other way around for Kemal Cem Yilmaz. He worked twelve years of his life as a taxi driver in Hannover, in order to support his musical studies and freelance recitals. This seems to be only his sophomore recording, the first being a release, on the same label, of Bach's Goldberg Variations. Let's hope there are many more.

**www.classicalmusicsentinel.com 15.01.2019 (Jean-Yves Duperron - 15.01.2019)**

Quelle: <http://www.classicalmusicsentinel.com/KE...>



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**Stretto – Magazine voor kunst, geschiedenis en muziek Maart 25, 2019 (Michel Dutrieue - 15.03.2019)**

Quelle: <http://www.stretto.be/2019/03/15/heerlij...>



**Heerlijk mooie Impromptus, Moments musicaux e.a. van Schubert, door Kemal Cem Yilmaz en Patricia Montero, op de labels Audite en pavane**

Na een schitterende carrière als docente, nam Patricia Montero, een leerlinge van Eduardo del Pueyo, een aantal pianowerken van Schubert op, die haar heel na aan het hart liggen, inclusief de weinig gespeelde en onafgewerkte Sonate D. 571. Kemal Cem Yilmaz begon op achtjarige leeftijd piano te studeren bij Daniel Vodovoz in Langenhagen, nabij Hannover. Het publiek was verrukt over zijn talrijke concerten als kind, want zijn spel was reeds volwassen en inspirerend. Patricia Montero en Kemal Cem Yilmaz brengen nu op hun nieuwe cd, de verklanking van de intieme, dichterlijke emotionaliteit van Franz Schubert.

Schuberts hier, door Kemal Cem Yilmaz gespeelde, acht Impromptus uit 1827, zijn karakterstukken die tot zijn bekendste en populairste pianowerken behoren. Vol rijke lyriek, zijn ze weliswaar veel meer dan kleine toevalligheden "à l'improviste", zoals de titel laat vermoeden. De Impromptus, gecomponeerd tijdens een vakantie in Graz, werden gepubliceerd in twee sets van elk vier Impromptus. De eerste twee stukken van de eerste set werden in 1827 tijdens het leven van de componist, door Haslinger in Wenen gepubliceerd als op. 90. De derde en vierde van de eerste set werden gepubliceerd in 1857. De tweede set werd in 1839 postuum gepubliceerd als op. 142, met een opdracht toegevoegd door de uitgever, aan Franz Liszt. De twee sets zijn nu gecatalogiseerd als respectievelijk D. 899 en D. 935. Ze worden terecht beschouwd als één van de belangrijkste voorbeelden van het fijn en populair Biedermeier genre in het Wenen van de vroege 19de eeuw.

Eén van de opmerkelijkste aspecten van Schuberts talent was ongetwijfeld zijn vermogen om als tijdgenoot van de grote Beethoven, voor wie hij trouwens de grootste bewondering had, zijn eigen persoonlijke taal te ontwikkelen. Door het combineren van één sonate en twee verzamelingen korte pianostukken, eert de opname van Patricia Montero, twee verschillende maar complementaire aspecten van Schuberts pianowerken. Bovendien gaf Schubert als één van de eersten in die tijd, bekendheid aan kleine genres, zoals korte stukken voor piano, Impromptus, Moments musicaux en Klavierstücke. Het specifiek karakter van deze korte stukjes werd gevormd door hun lyriek, die overal terug te vinden is en die terecht geassocieerd wordt met zijn talent voor het componeren van liederen.

De beroemdheid van Schuberts korte stukken heeft echter de bekendheid van zijn bijzondere sonates overschaduwd. Het aantal sonates, gecomponeerd door Schubert, is moeilijk te bepalen, omdat vele helaas niet voltooid werden. Dit is het bv. geval met de waardevolle Sonate in fis D. 571. Deze Sonate werd gecomponeerd in juli 1817 maar werd pas voor het eerst gepubliceerd door Breitkopf & Härtel in 1888. De sonate is onvolledig. Ze bestaat slechts uit slechts één enkele beweging, en zelfs die werd niet voltooid. Anderen, zoals Eusebius Mandyczewski (1857-1929), Howard Ferguson, Noël Lee en Martino Tirimo (°1942), hebben geprobeerd de veronderstelde intenties van Schubert te realiseren. Deze hypothetische aanvullingen van de sonate werden door hen ontleend aan afzonderlijk gepubliceerde stukken van Schubert, zoals een (verondersteld) Andante in A, D. 604, een Allegro vivace in D, en een Allegro in fis, D. 570.

Schubert componeerde Drei Klavierstücke D. 946, in mei 1828, amper zes maanden voor zijn overlijden. Ze waren oorspronkelijk bedoeld als een derde set van vier Impromptus, maar er werden er slechts drie gecomponeerd. De Klavierstücke werden voor het eerst gepubliceerd in 1868, onder redactie van Brahms. In vergelijking met de sets D. 899 en D. 935, worden deze werken jammer genoeg vaak verwaarloosd en worden ze dan ook niet vaak gespeeld of opgenomen. Er is daarnaast weliswaar twijfel of deze stukken daadwerkelijk een cyclus vormen of dat ze zijn samengevoegd door Brahms. Sommige musicologen noemen de stukken geen Impromptus, terwijl de eigenlijke Impromptus D. 899 en D. 935, de neiging hebben dichter bij de sonatevorm te staan. De constructie van de stukken D. 946 is trouwens ook anders en staat tamelijk dicht bij de Moments musicaux, cfr. hoe Schubert de midden episodens van de stukken componeerde, en hoe hij telkens de tweede thema's introduceerde.

In de Six Moments musicaux op. 94 (D. 780) vinden we een grote formele diversiteit aan Schubert-achtige eigenschappen, zijn uniek melodisch talent, zijn buitengewone en originele harmonie met onverwachte akkoorden en modulaties, zijn vermogen om zijn eigen intieme toonkleur te creëren, en zijn voorkeur voor sfeer en schemering.

De zes Moments musicaux, D. 780 (op. 94) werden gecomponeerd tussen 1823 en 1828 en gepubliceerd in het voorjaar van 1828. De oorspronkelijk titel "Moments Musicaux" kwam niet van Schubert, maar werd bedacht door de pianist, componist en uitgever, Maximilian Marcus Joseph Leidesdorf (1787-1840) (foto). Naast de Impromptus, Militaire Mars en de Wanderer Fantasie, behoren ze tot Schuberts meest geliefde en beroemdste pianostukken. Schubert zou ze gecomponeerd hebben onder invloed en naar het voorbeeld van de Impromptus, op. 7, uit 1822, van Jan Václav Voříšek en deze van Heinrich Marschner (1795-1861). Schuberts nr. 3 in f werd gearrangeerd door o.a. Leopold Godowsky (foto met Charlie Chaplin), en de zesde werd reeds in 1824, afzonderlijk gepubliceerd in een kerstalbum met als titel, "Les plaintes d'un troubadour".

Het eerste Moment musical (Moderato) liet al echo's horen van zijn latere Pianosonate ("Premiere Grande Sonata"), in la klein, D 845, uit 1825, maar bleef nog grotendeels binnen de stijl van de vroeg romantiek. De tweede (Andantino) ontwikkelde de typische sterke emotionele uitbarstingen van Schubert. Opvallend hier is het gebruik van fis (klein) als de toonaard van de dood binnen de romantische stijl, die optreedt in het donker, monotoon B-deel, die naar het einde van de episode, in drama toeneemt. Het doelloos pendelmotief van de A-episode wijst naar het motief van de verdwaalde zwerver, die in zo veel werken van Schubert voorkomt. Pendelmotieven stralen hopeloosheid en doelloosheid uit. Het derde stuk (Allegro Moderato), ook bekend als "Air Russe", doet denken aan de vele dansen die Schubert voor piano componeerde. In tegenstelling tot de sombere stemming van andere in de cyclus, is deze bijgevolg eerder licht verteerbaar.

In het vierde stuk (Moderato) zijn duidelijk echo's van Bach te horen, met wiens werk Schubert druk bezig was op het moment dat hij de stukken componeerde. De latente tweestemmigheid in de A-episode, is zeer vergelijkbaar met de prelude in c uit het eerste deel van Bachs "Welgetemperd Klavier". Het vijfde stuk (Allegro Vivace) heeft een mars-karakter vol drama en de monotonie van het zesde en laatste deel van de cyclus (Allegretto) doet opnieuw denken aan de metafoor van de zwerver (foto, "Der Wanderer im Schwarwald" van Hans Thoma).

De pianistische vereisten om deze "Moments" te spelen, zijn technisch gezien, eerder laag, maar er is een delicate toucher en warme empathie vereist. Net als vrijwel alle meer bekende, korte pianowerken van Schubert, maken de Moments Musicaux geen indruk door virtuositeit, maar eerder door een opvallend grote verscheidenheid aan fijne, emotionele expressie, precies zoals Patricia Montero, geheel in de lijn van haar leraar, het speelt en aanvoelt.

Haar leraar, de Spaanse pianist en pianopedagoog, Eduardo Del Pueyo (1905-1986) (foto), vestigde zich in 1935 in Brussel en werd er een beroemde docent aan het Koninklijk Conservatorium. Daarnaast was hij van 1952 tot 1983, jurylid en adviseur van de Koningin Elisabethwedstrijd voor piano.

Gevormd door de legendarische pianist en pianopedagoog, Pierre Sancan (1916-2008), aan het Conservatorium (CNSM) in Parijs, en vervolgens negen jaar door Eduardo Del Pueyo, is Patricia Montero (foto's) een briljante pianiste en pedagoge met veel ervaring. Na assistente van Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden, tevens ex-leerling van del Pueyo, werd ze zelf professor aan het Conservatorium van Bergen/Mons en vervolgens in Brussel. Patricia Montero heeft vele onderscheidingen ontvangen, waaronder "Citizen of Honor" van de stad Dallas, en geeft ook regelmatig Masterclasses in Mexico en Spanje.

De Turks-Duitse pianist, Kemal Cem Yilmaz (foto's), uit Hannover, studeerde piano bij Heidi Kohler, Markus Groh en Christopher Oakden in Hannover, en bij Alfredo Perl in Detmold. Gelijktijdig met zijn muzikale studies en concertactiviteiten, werkte Kemal Cem Yilmaz twaalf jaar als ... taxichauffeur in Hannover. Deze zoon van Turkse immigranten, woonde als freelance pianist en componist in Hannover en Istanbul. De

Turkse pianiste, Idil Biret, werd zijn belangrijkste beschermvrouw. Al sinds zijn kindertijd is improviseren en componeren voor Yilmaz net zo natuurlijk als de ontwikkeling en uitvoering van de tijdloze werken uit de pianoliteratuur.

Zijn muzikale ervaringen uit zijn vroege jeugd werden aanzienlijk beïnvloed door Turkse, Perzische en Indiase klassieke kunstmuziek en volksmuziek, evenals door Duitse kinderliederen. De focus van het artistiek werk van Kemal Cem Yilmaz ligt in Turkije, maar tegelijkertijd streeft hij ernaar zich te vestigen in de concertcircuit van andere landen, vooral in Duitsland. In 2002 ontving hij de 1e prijs op de nationale Turkse pianowedstrijd in Eskisehir. In Turkije heeft Kemal Cem Yilmaz een druk concertschema ontwikkeld met gerenommeerde orkesten, gerenommeerde kamermuziekpartners en soloprogramma's. Het profiel van Kemal Cem Yilmaz kenmerkt zich door sociale betrokkenheid, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van liefdadigheidsconcerten voor "Kindernothilfe" of zijn erelidmaatschap van het Duits pedagogisch muziekproject, "Rhapsody op school".

### [American Record Guide](#) 01.06.2019 (Bruno Repp - 01.06.2019)



Schubert's lovely Impromptus are always a delight to hear, and each of these new recordings has given me pleasure, even though the first two are not special. For piece-by-piece comparison with these newcomers I chose two excellent recordings from my collection: Sheila Arnold (Cavi 8553336, J/A 2017) for the first set of four pieces and Maria Joao Pires (DG 457550, M/J 1998) for the second. Amandine Savary is a French pianist in her mid-30s who has recorded Bach toccatas and several discs of chamber music as a member of Trio Dali (none reviewed in these pages). Her playing is of textbook quality. There is little to criticize, but also little out of the ordinary. The interpretations are far from shallow; they are simply good, but not as compelling as Arnold and Pires. This is most strikingly evident in the third piece of the second set (the Theme and Variations), which makes the most varied demands on expression and which Pires plays magnificently. The booklet contains an excellent essay on the music but no biographical information. Thanks are given to Alfred Brendel, who perhaps did some coaching. The Turkish-German pianist Kemal Cem Yilmaz, who seems to be in his late 30s, takes a weightier approach in terms of both tempo and touch. His tempos are on the slow side, and forte passages are rather too forceful. He also occasionally changes tempo in a piece, most noticeably in the first of each set. These are solid and unmannered performances, but they are pedestrian compared to Arnold and Pires. The booklet has good notes on the music and a brief biography that mentions that Yilmaz earned his living for many years as a taxi driver while pursuing his music studies. He deserves our respect for that. This seems to be his first commercial recording. Khatia Buniatishvili, born in Georgia 32 years ago, is in a different category. She is already a high-profile artist with a busy career, much publicity (taking advantage of her striking good looks), and half a dozen previous recordings for Sony, three of which have been reviewed and praised highly in these pages (N/D 2011, M/A 2013, J/F 2015). Listening to her Schubert one can immediately tell why. Her command of keyboard, pedaling, and dynamics is superlative. Such outstanding pianism is perhaps more sophisticated than necessary for Schubert, who did not write for virtuosos and was not one. But Buniatishvili is also a tasteful and highly sensitive artist and remarkably unmannered despite considerable individuality. Her Impromptus are superb, played with a lovely touch and subtle dynamic differentiation. Buniatishvili also gives us Schubert's last sonata in a refined interpretation, but here she makes two controversial tempo choices. Perhaps inspired by Sviatoslav Richter's famous recordings, she plays the first theme very slowly but then speeds up considerably, only to return to the slow tempo when the theme recurs. She also takes the repeat, which makes I too long (20:34). Richter took even longer (24:16 on Brilliant 92229; 25:26 on Urania 121.316) because he more or less maintained the slow tempo he set at the beginning—at least he was consistent. Richter played II at the prescribed Andante sostenuto, which took him 9:20 (Brilliant) or 10:10 (Urania). Buniatishvili chooses an abnormally slow tempo for II, so that it lasts an unprecedented 14:32. That gives her an opportunity to display her exceptional control at soft dynamic levels. Some will surely find her rendition mesmerizing, but I was not fully convinced. The tempo is just too slow, and it is certainly not what Schubert had in mind. The remaining two movements are at more conventional speeds. As an encore, Buniatishvili includes Liszt's transcription of the song 'Ständchen', played very beautifully. The presentation

is most unusual. On the cover and on two additional photographs inside the booklet the gorgeous pianist, dressed in a sheer white gown and clutching a bouquet of baby's breath, reclines on the ground as if in the throes of death. Instead of a scholarly essay on the music and a biography there are two literary effusions of Buniatishvili called "Notes of a Feminist" and "Death and the Maiden". The first seems to be addressed to an unidentified male or perhaps to the male gender wholesale, but its relevance to the music is unclear. The second points out "a certain femininity and sensitivity in Schubert's works [that] are destined to die like a river, taking with it a white night dress" and then digresses into further feminist ruminations. At least there is a connection with the photographs, but unless those prose texts are to be considered poetry, licensed to be impenetrable, they seem pretentious piffle to me. At the same time I feel some admiration for this young woman who is determined to do things her own way and has persuaded Sony to let her go ahead.

### Fanfare August 2019 (Jerry Dubins - 01.08.2019)

fanfare

Turkish-born, Hannover-trained pianist and composer Kemal Cem Yilmaz has thus far had one album reviewed in Fanfare, his Audite recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations. It was reviewed in 41:6 by James Maiello, who didn't find much to recommend it.

Schubert's two sets of Impromptus are played by many and beloved by all. I'm not sure why, on the present album, Yilmaz and/or Audite's production team chose to program the two sets in reverse order. Both, it's true, were written in 1827, the last full year of Schubert's life, but at least the D 899 set was partially published while the composer was still alive, whereas the D 935 set wasn't published until 1839, 11 years after his death. I suppose it doesn't really matter what order you listen to them in, but I'm always struck by the perversity of it when works are programmed, for no discernible reason, contrary to expected norms and common sense.

That said, I like Yilmaz's performances a lot. He plays with a singing tone, nimble finger work, the right amount of pedal in the right places, and he's quite adept at sculpting the melodic lines from out of the accompaniment. We hear the contours of the song hidden within and emerging from the rhythmic patterns and shifting harmonies.

Yilmaz is not unique, however, in these respects, and I'd be hard-pressed to say that he is better at it than five of my favorites: Andreas Haefliger (Sony), Maria João Pires (Deutsche Grammophon), Krystian Zimerman (Deutsche Grammophon), Wilhelm Kempff (Deutsche Grammophon), and Radu Lupu (Decca). That I would put Yilmaz in this same company is high praise indeed.

Since we've been asked to mention it, I will tell you that if you're interested in acquiring this release in surround-sound format, it's available as an HD download at [audite.de](http://audite.de).