

## Portraits – music of Barry Mills, Volume 7

Trio for Oboe, Cello and Piano+/ String Sextet++/

Portraits, for solo piano+++/

Trio for Clarinet, Viola and

Piano\*/String Quartet\*\*/ Sea

Movements\*\*\*/Walking in Beauty^

Dan Elson, oboe; Siriol Hugh-Jones,

cello; Stephen Carroll-Turner, piano+/

Lucy Jeal and Andrew Thurgood,

violins; Anna Cooper and Matthew

Quenb, violas; Sarah Carvahlo-Dubost

and Pavlos Carvahlo, cellos++/

Rachel Fryer, piano+++,\*\*\*/

Zoe Davies, clarinet; Ros Hansard-

Laurent, viola; Stephen Carroll-Turner,

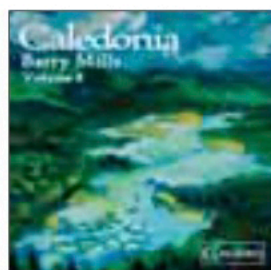
piano\*/

Timea Gazdag, soprano; Sam Brown,

lute^

★★★★★ Claudio Contemporary

CC6050-2 [72'56"]



## Caledonia – music of Barry Mills, Volume 8

Four Places in

Tenerife/

Caledonia/Trumpet

Concerto/Swords into Ploughshares

Nathaniel Mander,

harpsichord/Imogen Whitehead,

flugelhorn/Esther Ward-Caddle, cello/

Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra,

Pavel Šnajdr conductor

★★★★★ Claudio Contemporary

CC6051-2 [77'15"]

Here are two further excellent discs of the attractive and intelligent music by the English South Coast composer Barry Mills (born 1949). Most of Mills's music has been written especially for performing friends, and there is a welcome immediacy of expression in his music, as well as an intelligent creative mind that conceived it, that reinforce the essential commu-

nicative nature of his art.

One must applaud both the natural impetus that lies behind his ideas as well as his directness of expression. Mills is clearly a genuinely gifted composer, one who quietly ploughs his own furrow which produces – as these and other works readily demonstrate – music that is intriguing and well worth exploring by listeners and professional musicians.

The most substantial work here is the Trumpet Concerto of 2019, written for the fine soloist on this recording, Imogen Whitehead. It is in five movements, in the second of which the soloist swaps her trumpet for a flugelhorn, a most appealing slow movement *I Love My Love*. She is finely partnered by the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra who also are the partners of cellist Esther Ward-Caddle in *Swords into Ploughshares*. Effectively a five-movement (25') cello concerto, this is an equally entrancing score.

On Volume 7, *Portraits*, it is chamber music that mostly occupies the disc. These are almost all recent works occupying shorter time-scales: the String Quartet of 1921 is a most endearing composition, and even in the very brief (2'44") *Sea Movements* for solo piano – most musically captured by Rachel Fryer – the composer's command of quite short time-spans reveals his mastery as it does in the larger-scaled works elsewhere.

The recording quality, as one would expect from this source, is first-class in all respects and those looking for worthwhile music slightly to one side of most contemporary writing, eminently sane and sensibly composed by a genuine composer, would be well satisfied by investigating these new discs.

**Robert Matthew-Walker**