

# thedigitaldose

## MUSIC | CLASSICAL



### Knussen: "Where the Wild Things Are" and "Higglety Pigglety Pop!"

Glyndebourne Festival Opera;  
Oliver Knussen, conductor  
Kultur

Years could pass while Oliver Knussen finishes "Cleveland Pictures," his commission from the Cleveland Orchestra.

In the meantime, these two operas based on tales by Maurice Sendak make amusing introductions to his work. Full productions from 1985 designed by the author, complete with elaborate costumes, make all the difference over concert versions presented here in years past, placing animated performances by Karen Beardsley and Cynthia Buchan into imaginative fantasylands populated by singing dogs, plants and monsters. **Grade: A** — *Zachary Lewis*



### Rorem: Piano Works, Vol. 2

Thomas Lanners,  
piano  
Centaur

American composer Ned Rorem is most admired for his vocal and operatic works, but he has toiled successfully in other realms. The piano pieces on this fine recording attest to Rorem's penchant for lyrical and dramatic contrast. Although the music hails from a vast period (1948-2003), Rorem's style remains steadfastly warm, vital and clear. Thomas Lanners brings exceptional detail and urgency to the repertoire, taking as much care with inner voices as he does with arching statements. **Grade: A** — *Donald Rosenberg*



### Beethoven: String Quartets Op. 131 and Op. 135

Cypress String Quartet  
Cypress Performing Arts Association

Another recording of Beethoven String Quartets seems almost unnecessary, but this one by the San Francisco-based Cypress String Quartet doesn't belong on the slush pile. Presenting two late works, the Cypress players converse with such rare sincerity as to make long-familiar music sound utterly fresh. Throw in their technical aplomb and rich, cohesive tone, in which every voice is significant, and you've got a pair of definitive statements. Happily, more are coming; This is merely volume one. **Grade: A** — *Z.L.*



### Bellini: "I Capuleti e I Montecchi"

Anna Netrebko, Elina Garanca, Joseph Calleja; Fabio Luisi, conductor  
Deutsche Grammophon

Bellini's take of "Romeo and Juliet" receives intense, elegant treatment by the star team of soprano Anna Netrebko and mezzo-soprano Elina Garanca. Both are versatile singers, if not the ultimate in bel canto wizardry. The performance benefits from the presence of up-and-coming tenor Joseph Calleja and conductor Fabio Luisi, who extracts ample heart and blood from Bellini's tuneful score. With Luisi at the helm, the Vienna Symphony contributes bountiful refinement. **Grade: B+** — *D.R.*