

Leila Josefowicz Plays Beethoven, Ravel, Salonen, Grey, Messiaen (2005)

Written by bluesever

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Disc: 1

1. *Theme: Modere Variations*
2. *I. Modere*
3. *II. Un Peu Moins Modere*
4. *III. Modere, Avec Eclat*
5. *IV. Vif Et Passione*
6. *V. Tres Lent*
7. *I. Allegretto*
8. *II. Blues: Moderato*
9. *III. Perpetuum Mobile: Allegro*
10. *I. Wonder Years*
11. *II. Clear Lake*
12. *III. Eruption* [play](#)

Disc: 2

1. *Lachen Verlernt For Solo Violin*
2. *I. Allegro Moderato*
3. *II. Adagio Espressivo*
4. *III. Scherzo: Allegro-Trio-Coda* [play](#)
5. *IV. Poco Allegretto-Adagio Espressivo-Tempo I*
6. *Scherzo In C Minor*

Leila Josefowicz - violin

John Novachek – piano

After eight releases, in 2002 Leila Josefowicz bade farewell to her longtime label Philips and it took three years for her to re-emerge with another high-profile label, this time Warner Classics. Her first release thereon is the two-disc Leila Josefowicz Plays Beethoven, Ravel, Salonen, Grey, Messiaen. Outside of her recording of Messiaen on the demure disc *For the End of Time*

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and her work with composer John Adams, Josefowicz's recordings have remained rather mainstream in terms of literature. With Leila Josefowicz Plays, on which she is partnered with pianist John Novacek, Josefowicz steps out a bit with more Olivier Messiaen and two new works written for her by composers Mark Grey and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Josefowicz's is a rather small voice -- her violin never rises to a full fortissimo and in the Ravel Violin Sonata in G major she has some trouble being heard in relation to Novacek's full-bodied piano accompaniment. However, it is a very pure and expressive tone that has matured considerably in direct comparison to the earliest work she did for Philips. In Messiaen's early Theme and Variations, Josefowicz's transparency of tone works well for the vaguely spiritual and transcendent nature of Messiaen's music. The new works are both for solo violin: Grey's Sam Andreas Suite brims with the salty air and foliage found on the California coastline -- New York critics might hate it, but it is a very attractive piece of music. Josefowicz is extremely lucky to have approached conductor/composer Salonen when she did, because he has responded to her commission with one of his finest creations. Lachen verlernt is a fluid, continuous gesture that weaves a spider-web-thin line between the peripheries of the abstract and the emotional, and is perfectly suited to the specific talent of Josefowicz. By way of an encore, Josefowicz dispatches the Brahms C minor "F.A.E. Sonata" Scherzo in a rambunctious and energetic performance that is a lot of fun.

Leila Josefowicz Plays is two discs rather than one, and by anyone's measure it's a whole lotta Leila. Nonetheless, it is highly enjoyable throughout, perhaps more so than anything she has done in terms of recordings, well establishing to her peers and her fans that by now Josefowicz is not just another pretty face. ---Uncle Dave Lewis, Rovi

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