



Wholly engaging: members of the Parisil Quartet and friends meet the virtuoso demands of the French composer Laurent Lefrançois with spirit

submissiveness doesn't prevent the music abandoning reflective lyricism for explosive assertiveness from time to time. That the double-bass player is Viktor Suslin's son adds pertinence to the performance, and the whole disc is well projected, especially by violinist Nurit Stark, in strongly etched recordings. **Arnold Whittall**

## Lefrançois

'Bainéaire - Chamber Music'  
Sextuor mixte<sup>a</sup>. Padouk phantasticus<sup>b</sup>. Toccata sexta d'après Frescobaldi<sup>c</sup>. Approaching a City<sup>d</sup>. Erinnerung<sup>e</sup>. Le nouveau bainéaire<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>a</sup>Magali Mosnier fl<sup>g</sup> François Meyer ob  
<sup>abd</sup>Paul Meyer cl<sup>g</sup> Gilbert Audin bn  
<sup>ac</sup>Cyril Guillotin, <sup>g</sup>Nima Sarkechik pf  
<sup>b</sup>Ria Ideta mari<sup>g</sup> members of the 'Parisil Quartet Evidence © EVCD005 (50' • DDD)



It would be hard and probably undesirable to pin any sort of label on the music of

Laurent Lefrançois, the French composer born in 1974. Each of the pieces on this disc seems to be stylistically self-contained. There are nods to the milieu of Les Six and other French composers in the *Sextuor*

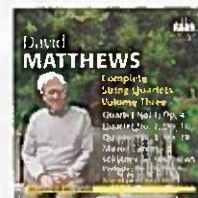
*mixte* (2003) for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano, though the booklet-note writer points to the influence of Janáček. If that is so, it is a Janáček with a very pronounced Gallic accent, shot through with idioms and rhythmic cunning characteristic of propulsive minimalism.

Set against that, the *Toccata sexta d'après Frescobaldi* (2013) is a free arrangement for string quartet of an early-17th-century Frescobaldi organ miniature (about five minutes long), in which Lefrançois pays homage to Frescobaldi's own originality in terms of harmony and free-flowing ideas rather than using it as a springboard for any modern embellishment. As Lefrançois says, 'I refer to the past through appropriation and do not wish to make a clean sweep of everything I love. Rather than the iconoclastic acts favoured by the post-war serial school, I prefer securing my musical language to the works of all the masters I rub shoulders with every day through concerts or the study of scores.' By contrast, however, *Erinnerung* (2007) for string quartet makes references to Mozart in the context of an at times Bartókian astringency. The variety here is engaging and the music's virtuoso demands are fully met by the spirited performers.

**Geoffrey Norris**

## D Matthews

'Complete String Quartets, Vol 3'  
D Matthews String Quartets - No 1, Op 4;  
No 2, Op 16; No 3, Op 18. Mirror Canon  
Scriabin Prelude, Op 74 No 4 (arr D Matthews)  
Kreutzer Quartet  
Toccata Classics © TOCC0060 (64' • DDD)



David Matthews' purposeful, imaginative and inventive music has

rightly gained its own following, which the Kreutzer Quartet's excellent cycle of his string quartets (14 numbered examples to date) is doing much to consolidate. This third volume returns us to the first three numbered quartets. But there is nothing tentative or, on the other hand, exaggeratedly flamboyant about these relatively early works. Partly, no doubt, that is because they were preceded by three discarded attempts in the genre. Beside certain of his European contemporaries the timbral and harmonic sound world is decidedly conservative – but unapologetically so, and rightly unapologetically so, because the music radiates a sense of purpose and goal-