

December 21, 2003

## **The Best Classical CD's of 2003; HARTKE: CLARINET CONCERTO; OTHER WORKS**

By ANTHONY TOMMASINI

It is all too easy to kick the classical record industry when it's down, as it has been for several years. And it is hard to predict the future even where it concerns DVD's, let alone downloading off the Internet. But there is much to appreciate in a present still dominated by CD's. In fact, the percentage of truly excellent new releases may well have risen, now that attrition has dispensed with so much of the vast middle range. In any case, there has been much to celebrate this year, and critics of The New York Times here list some of their favorite CD's of 2003.

Richard Stoltzman, clarinetist; Iris Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Michael Stern (Naxos) Many composers have foundered trying to incorporate elements of jazz into contemporary classical idioms, but Stephen Hartke pulls it off deftly in his Clarinet Concerto, "Landscapes With Blues," perhaps because he doesn't try so hard. This audacious, ingeniously complex work is steeped in Delta blues and West African folk music, and the other works are also exhilarating.

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