

CLASSICAL★CDS

ORCHESTRA

TONY BANKS – SIX PIECES FOR ORCHESTRA
CHARLIE SIEM (VIOLIN), MARTIN ROBERTSON (ALTO SAXOPHONE)
 NAXOS, 2012

When the final tour of the pop-rock supergroup Genesis ended in 2007, Tony Banks – the band's long-time keyboard player – told the music press that he planned to compose an orchestral work. After all, it wasn't the first time the well-known instrumentalist had dabbled in symphonic exposition. In 2004, Banks released his debut classical work – *Seven: A Suite for Orchestra* – generating both international interest and critical acclaim. His latest project, *Six Pieces for Orchestra*, showcases an innovative composer of rare lyrical ability at the peak of his creative powers. Stylistically, these pieces demonstrate both romantic and impressionist influences; from the former, thematic and narrative intimations, from the latter, mood, colour and atmosphere. It's a creative sensibility that results in a collection of evocative, vibrant music, which invites the listener on a sojourn through sprawling soundscapes of cascading strings and swelling horns. Soloists Charlie Siem and Martin Robertson bring contributions to the fore as well; the smoky sensuality of the alto saxophone, the violin's crisp lines and dynamic pathos imbue the music with sublime appeal. The genesis of an aural success. – *Chris Morgan*

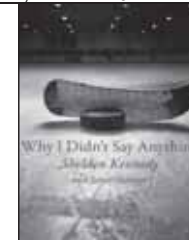


BIOGRAPHY

BOOK★REVIEWS

WHY I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING • BY SHELDON KENNEDY
 INSOMNIAC PRESS, 2011 • 234 PAGES

In 1996, National Hockey League player Sheldon Kennedy rocked the Canadian sporting world when he came forward with allegations of sexual abuse at the hands of well-respected coach Graham James. James would later plead guilty to sexually abusing Kennedy and another former hockey player more than 300 times. He was convicted, and went on to serve 18 months in prison. *Why I Didn't Say Anything* is Sheldon Kennedy's biography, covering his early years in small-town Manitoba before focusing on the abuse suffered at the hands of James and how that influenced his life. In answering the title question, Kennedy recounts details of the abuse, especially the methods by which James chose him, kept him isolated, and continued to hold nearly complete power over him as a junior hockey player, leading him into depression, drinking and drugs. His purpose is to explain why many victims of abuse don't come forward, and also to help Canadian society understand the importance of preventing and halting such abuse whenever and wherever it is found. When his hockey career ended, Kennedy worked tirelessly to raise awareness about sexual abuse and its impact. Kennedy's story was in the spotlight again recently when James received two more years in prison for abusing other former players, a sentence that sparked outrage from much of Canadian society. It is the hope of Kennedy and other vocal victims that sharing their experiences will increase awareness and lead to more serious consequences for sexual abuse.



~ Adam Shirley

ECOHOLIC BODY: YOUR ULTIMATE EARTH-FRIENDLY GUIDE TO LIVING HEALTHY AND LOOKING GOOD • BY ADRIA VASIL
 VINTAGE CANADA, 2012 • 470 PAGES

In this latest instalment of her *Ecoholic* series, Adria Vasil has left no cap unscrewed and no label un-decoded. Author of the popular and long-running *NOW* Magazine column of the same name, Vasil has turned her uber-green sensibilities towards health and beauty products, clothing – in a nutshell, anything that has to do with going in or upon the body. *Ecoholic Body* follows the basic premise of her previous guide, *Ecoholic Home*, whereby she tested virtually all of the green cleaning products on the market and rated them according to effectiveness, user-friendliness, cost, and genuine eco credibility. Numerous products are similarly treated here, from the usual suspects (herbal supplements, cosmetics, weight-loss products, soaps, perfumes, lotions, etc.) to the surprisingly uncommon (looking for alternatives to your phthalate-laden sex toys?). Vasil delves into the hows and whys of the harmful ingredients lurking in the stuff many of us unknowingly slather onto ourselves, and details the greener and more beneficial options available. Included is a fabulous and eye-opening section on clothing and how to dress with an edge – on environmental sustainability, that is. Admittedly, being schooled in the various toxins and pollutants jammed into everyday products be overwhelming, especially to those just coming into an awareness of their own carbon footprint. However, Vasil's tone is encouraging and positive and about as far away from preachy self-righteousness as one can get. Indispensable.



~ Amie Ronald-Morgan

ORCHESTRA

RAVI SHANKAR – SYMPHONY
ANUSHKA SHANKAR (SITAR), LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
 INDEPENDENT, 2012

There are only a handful of people who musically mentored the late George Harrison, but Ravi Shankar is among them. The former Beatle first consulted with the renowned Indian instrumentalist and composer in the mid-1960s, a period which coincided roughly with George's use of sitar on John Lennon's *Norwegian Wood*. As a consequence of Shankar's influence, many pop artists – and George in particular – would continue to integrate eastern musical sensibilities into the popular music idioms of the west. Now Shankar returns the favour with this recently released recording of the premiere performance of his first symphony written for western classical musicians. As one might expect, the composer integrates many of the signature accents and stylistic qualities of Indian music into all four of the movements that comprise his symphony. The dizzying glissandos and mantra-like repetition of certain phrases and percussive patterns take on a singularly unique dimension when arranged for orchestra – and not just any orchestra, in this case, but the London Symphony Orchestra. From the anticipatory, hypnotic hum of the opening *Allegro* through mysterious pastorals and syncopated rhythms of later movements, Shankar's music resonates... within you and without you. – *Chris Morgan*



HEALTH

THE GOLDEN AGE OF STRING QUARTETS
WINDERMERE STRING QUARTET
 INDEPENDENT, 2012

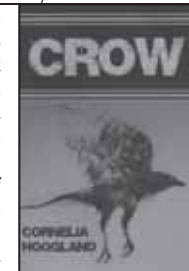
Music directors and instrumentalists take different approaches when recording the compositions of classical masters. In some cases, exceptionally gifted soloists or ensembles imbue a work with such vitality that an associated performance will become known as a "seminal" interpretation of the piece. Other times, there is a deliberate attempt to create something as true to the composer's original intent as possible. Authenticity is certainly the goal of the Windermere String Quartet, and their recently released compilation of string quartets penned by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven bear witness to the degree of their success. Playing period instruments, Rona Goldensher (violin), Elizabeth Loewen Andrews (violin), Anthony Rapoport (viola) and Laura Jones (cello) transport listeners through time to the aristocratic halls of 19th century Austria, where many of classical music's most celebrated works were first performed. The quartet's choice of repertoire is impeccable, demonstrating taste and technique. The opening piece – Mozart's *Quartet in C*, or "Dissonance" – has the brisk beauty shown in much of the maestro's work, but added to that, the sonorous nuance one might expect from vintage instruments. Sandwiched between Mozart's work and Beethoven's sincerely impassioned *Quartet in C minor*, Haydn offers listeners comic relief with the final movement of his *Op. 33*, a segment of music affectionately known as "The Joke". A delight to hear. – *Chris Morgan*



POETRY

CROW • BY CORNELIA HOOGLAND
 BLACK MOSS PRESS, 2011 • 84 PAGES

Ravens and crows are impressive winged specimens and as such, they are defined in numerous religious traditions. The reverence from earthbound primates is understandable; in fact, modern ornithology has documented that the inky black birds often score at the high end of avian IQ tests. But of even greater import than their spiritual significance or their latent intelligence is the fact that the birds are a pervasive presence in most people's lives, even if we don't take note of them standing in a row on a telephone wire, or cawing at the blood-red dusk. All of these elements come to bear one way or another in *Crow*, a recently released collection of poetry from London resident Cornelia Hoogland. One part meticulous craftsmanship, one part visceral passion, and all inspiration, Hoogland's verses explore the image of crow-raven in all its multi-faceted splendour. For the poet, the black bird is a transcendent symbol of biographical, experimental and temporal importance (the events documented in a "Tar Baby"), an expression of mystery and myth (perinatal sequences described in "In Utero") and a magickal companion ("Her Familiar"). The last work listed here hints at another aspect of the crow-raven symbology, the trickster: 'And his humour – his bald caw caw / obscene as your mother's moans / from the guest bedroom / the night her boyfriend sleeps over.' *Crow* sees all, and through the eyes of the bird, 'everything's animate / everything moves / The light of the world through oil and water'. A soaring effort.



~ Chris Morgan

STRING QUARTET