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"Barbie" singers, music from the heart (literally), and dobros

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Shelf Life



THE NEW YORKER

I begin almost every day with a cup of coffee and *The New Yorker*. I love the variety, the in-depth analyses of national and world issues, the great arts coverage (I particularly enjoy articles by Alex Ross), a healthy dose of clever comics, good fiction reads, and fascinating biographical stories. One of my favorite articles was on swimming legend Diana Nyad. She is so inspiring!

TIN HAT

The Rain Is a Handsome Animal

When people ask me what kind of music I program on my

“Barbie” singers, music from the heart (literally), and dobros

We asked classical music programmer Maggie Stapleton '08 what works are currently inspiring her.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR *Maggie Stapleton '08 holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music and flute performance from Furman and the University of Washington, respectively. Since 2010, Stapleton has worked at Classical KING FM 98.1 in Seattle and is currently the station's assistant program director, coordinating and implementing all content on Second Inversion, KING FM's contemporary music project.*

radio show, *Second Inversion*, the ensemble *Tin Hat* is always one of the first examples I give. There are only four musicians in the group, but they collectively play an eclectic mix of violin, viola, bass harmonica, clarinet, contra alto clarinet, accordion, piano, guitar, dobro, pump organ, prepared piano. Plus vocals! What makes this music so quintessentially *Second Inversion* is the way each track crosses genres and breaks down musical barriers. Within each song there are unique combinations: Americana meets Erik Satie; Steve Reich meets Viennese waltz; jazz meets Icelandic ambient Bjork-style vocals.

Shelf Life

GENGHIS BARBIE

Amp It Up!

One fun, accessible way to create a gateway to classical music is to cover pop songs with orchestral instruments. Genghis Barbie is a quartet of top-notch French horn players who cover the likes of Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, Whitney Houston, Madonna, The Eurythmics, David Bowie, and more on their CD *Amp It Up!* Taking after a famous girl group from the 90s, they each have their “Barbie” stage name: Freedom Barbie, Velvet Barbie, Cosmic Barbie, and Attila the Horn. Don’t let the girly-girl nature of their names and the brightly colored bells of their horns send you into skeptics. The blend, pitch, accuracy, and power of their playing will impress classically savvy ears, and the lack of vocals will give anyone the accompaniment to belt “Papa Don’t Preach” or “Sweet Dreams” like never before.

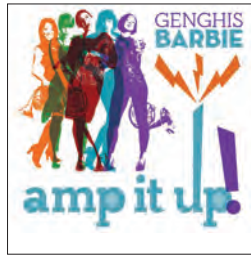
JHEREK BISCHOFF

Composed

To say Seattle-native Jherrek Bischoff is multitabled would be an understatement. Along with a cast of talented friends, you can hear Bischoff throughout *Composed* on cello, trombone, piano, percussion, bass, guitar, ukulele, and harmonica. He has little formal training in classical music (“The Secret of the Machines” has an inadvertent Stravinsky “Rite of Spring” bassoon), but throughout his life he learned how to play just about any instrument he could acquire and took a few composition classes to figure out how to get his musical ideas on paper. This album rethinks classical and pop music; each piece has an intricate chamber orchestra foundation with alt-pop vocals on top.



Tin Hat crosses genres and breaks down musical barriers.



Don't let the girly-girl nature of Ghengis Barbie fool you.



Bischoff's album rethinks classical and pop music.



My heart grew 10 sizes when I discovered Parry's album.



Brooklyn Rider breathes life into the notes on the page.

RICHARD REED PARRY

Music for Heart and Breath

Richard Reed Parry is probably most famous for his membership in Arcade Fire. As a huge fan of that band, my heart grew 10 sizes when I discovered Parry's *Music for Heart and Breath*, an album of original compositions that rethinks tempo. The inspiration for this music literally comes from the heart. Each musician uses a stethoscope to play exactly in sync with his or her own heartbeat. The variety in the players' pulses creates a pointillistic effect that will undoubtedly never sound exactly the same in two different performances. The album features an all-star cast of musicians: yMusic, Kronos Quartet, Nico Muhly, Nadia Sirota, and Bryce and Aaron Dessner. The smallest group on the disc is a duet and the largest is a 14-member chamber orchestra, with sizes in between for a journey of textures, dynamics, and timbres.

BROOKLYN RIDER

The Brooklyn Rider Almanac

Since the birth of Second Inversion, Brooklyn Rider's versatile recordings of new music for string quartet have been a significant presence on our airwaves. To celebrate their 10th anniversary, they released *The Brooklyn Rider Almanac*, a collection of 13 new works for string quartet mostly by composers rooted in jazz, rock, or folk music. It's an incredible celebration of Brooklyn Rider's musical connections in the last decade and it rethinks the string quartet repertoire, putting a stamp on the fact that music doesn't need labels or categories or genres. When you put these four musicians together who express emotion and breathe life into the notes on a page, the magic is there. **F**