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ON RECORD

A Trip to Venice



Curt Cacioppo

Italia

Quartetto d'Archi di Venezia

Matthew Bengtson, piano

Network for New Music

Navona Records

Performed with an emotional commitment and technical command that most living composers would dream of, the Quartetto d'Archi di Venezia negotiate the rich complexities of Curt Cacioppo's *Impressioni venexiane* as if it were their native tongue, which, by coincidence, is not far from the truth. The American composer's work pays homage to the quartet's hometown by citing the city's place in music history, with near quotations of Gregorian chant and a nod to Mendelssohn's Venetian boat songs. Nothing, however, tops the quartet's opening, which, for all of its ingenious passagework, falling somewhere between a hoquet and canonic writing, invokes the glistening sunlit **canals of fair Venice** like simply no other music this reviewer has ever encountered. The other pieces, *Sulla Via dei Sette Ponti* and *Colomba scarlatta della Libia* are both represented here by fine performances, for which David Cramer's incredible flute work deserves special mention. Navona's handsome CD includes an enormous amount of accompanying material on the web (navonarecords.com/Italia), where listeners can see the composer speak about his work and view entire scores of the works included in this recording, which should be a treat for any musicians hearing Cacioppo's music for the first time. —Menon Dwarka

