



HALFFTER

Piano music (complete)

Adam Kent (piano)

Bridge 9106 79:46 mins £££

This is an immensely attractive record, beautifully and resourcefully played and recorded. Ernesto Halffter (1905-89) was a (very) Spanish composer-pianist, steeped in the uniquely vivid and arresting styles of his homeland's folk music but with an equally clear love of the Baroque.

To say that his piano music often sounds like a cross between Manuel de Falla and Antonio Soler, with a dash of Bartók, Ravel and François Couperin thrown in is an oversimplification, but not by much. Exotic (but not at the picture-postcard level), vital, dancy and eloquently lyrical by turns, it has, too, certain rather jazzy elements, all of which are impeccably captured by this young American pianist, whom I must say I'd never heard of, but hope to hear more of. Beautifully recorded, his playing here is often suggestive of Alicia de Larrocha. The sound, like much of Spanish music, particularly flamenco, is often hard, though never unpleasantly strident, but there's also a full-bodied 'singing' tone, perfectly suited to the music's more lyrical and rhapsodic moments, and a command of buoyant articulation from which many far better-known pianists could learn a lot. I recommend this disc wholeheartedly. *Jeremy Siepmann*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

SOUND

★★★★★