



Bernstein; West Side Story

Gwendolyn Masin (violin),

Melisma Saxophone Quartet (Orchid Classics)

Bernstein's iconic Broadway score has been reinterpreted countless times. I'm a fan of Stan Kenton's brassy big band version so approached this disc with trepidation, the numbers arranged by Henk Huizinga for violin and saxophone quartet. I needn't have worried: this is exciting, zingy stuff. Huizinga makes changes to the show's running order and takes some liberties with individual songs ("Cool" lasts just over a minute here), but so much of his transcription sounds and feels thoroughly idiomatic.

Violinist Gwendolyn Masin impresses, never more so than in the intro to "America", when she's soaring over a carpet of burbling saxes. Huizinga's leaner textures emphasise how jagged and dissonant parts of this score are. That this is a live recording adds to the performance's edge and excitement.