

This Week's Best Albums

April 8th, 2010



Daniel Bernard Roumain: *Woodbox Beats & Balladry* (Thirsty Ear)

Haitian-American violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain is a man of myriad talents, combining classical training with rapid-fire rock beats, DJ scratches, electronics, and funky bass lines.

Though his “highbrow” pieces can be dramatic, orchestral affairs, Roumain accurately portrays his music as “more to do with Prince than (Niccolò) Paganini,” and his résumé includes seemingly incongruous credits such as commissions by Carnegie Hall and an arrangement of a Lady Gaga song for *American Idol*.

Roumain has hooked up a few times with DJ Spooky, most recently at the Vancouver Olympics, and he has worked with other famed composers such as Philip Glass and Ryuichi Sakamoto. These great musicians surely seek Roumain’s technical talents, but his compositional skills are just as special.

Woodbox Beats & Balladry is a highly dynamic album, calling upon elements of IDM, piano balladry, and Vernon Reid-style wailing on top of Roumain’s standard amalgamation. It’s an outstanding album whose adventurousness perfectly fits the 21st Century.

Daniel Bernard Roumain: “Sonata for Violin and Turntables, Part 4”