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SOUND CHECK - OUT THERE

Daniel Bernard Roumain

etudes4violin&electronix

(Thirsty Ear)

Essential: "The La La Song"



The violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain (above) is hard to pin down. One minute you'll think he's a classical musician, the next a jazz improviser. Then you'll think he's into electronica or ambient noise. Truth is, all of these descriptions apply over the course of his brilliant new nine-track album, "etudes4violin&electronix."

Roumain must get bored easily, because he moves swiftly from one genre to another. DJ Spooky lays down beats and effects on "Black Man Singing" and "Resonance." Pianist Ryuichi Sakamoto duets with him on "The Need to Be" and "The Need to Follow." Film scorer Philip Glass plays piano with him on "Metamorphosis." Peter Gordon, the head of the Thirsty Ear label, plays flute, synthesizer, and other electronics on two tracks. Roumain backs himself up on the buoyant "The La La Song," turning kitchen utensils, keys, a glass cup, sandpaper, and a bathtub into percussive instruments.

His mechanics on the violin shift chameleon-like, too. He can bow sweetly and gently, and he can wail. Whatever he's doing, he sure isn't boring anybody.

[Steve Greenlee]