

Wild Bird
Duo Concertante; Barbara Budd
Centrediscs CMCCD 16110

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Violinist Nancy Dahn and pianist Timothy Steeves formed Duo Concertante in 1997, and have had over a dozen works for violin and piano commissioned for them from Canada's leading composers. Three – R. Murray Schafer, Chan Ka Nin and Kati Agócs - are represented on this fascinating and beautifully-produced CD from the Canadian Music Centre.

Schafer's works open and close the disc. His tremendous three-movement *Duo*, premiered in 2008, is a real gem, and the best work on the CD for me.

Chan Ka Nin's *Late in a Slow Time* is the longest - and most immediately striking – work of the four. In 2001 the composer heard Nova Scotia poet Carole Glasser Langille, a friend of the Duo, reading from her book of poems of the same title, and was inspired to write a musical work that would incorporate the recitation of the poems. Barbara Budd is an outstanding narrator in a work that draws you in and doesn't let go.

Kati Agócs' *Supernatural Love* follows, but on first hearing suffers somewhat in comparison, being perhaps more in the expected style of a contemporary work. Difficult at first, it repays repeated listening.

Schafer's *Wild Bird*, originally for violin and harp, was written in 1997 for Jacques Israelievitch's 50th birthday. Timothy Steeves transcribed the harp part at the composer's suggestion. It's a wonderful piece, intended to "celebrate the violin's versatility", as the excellent booklet notes tell us. That it certainly does!