

Perle: Eight Pieces (1938-1997)
Michael Brown (piano)
Bridge Records BRIDGE 9426 *****

George Perle, who died five years ago at age 93, is honored by these excellent performances, which include the majority of his works for piano, spanning nearly sixty years. Two are recorded here for the first time: a spicily dissonant but quite tonal *Classic Suite* from 1938, with an amusing burlesque of Bach (there's some Ravel in it too); and the more chromatic *Chansons cachées* (1997), which are nine vignettes composed for friends. The longest work on the disc, *Lyric Intermezzo*, displays a distinctly 19th-century piano style in a mostly atonal framework; the *Short Sonata* and *Toccata* are percussive and brittle but their rhythmic style is very winning. There are even some echoes of Alban Berg's harmonic flavor, reminding us that Perle was the foremost of all experts on the great Austrian composer. Pianist-composer Michael Brown, who is currently working towards a doctorate at The Juilliard School, has been playing some of this music since he was 15 years old.
—Mark DeVoto (Classical Ear)