

CD Review by [Phillip Scott](#)

STORYTELLER: CONTEMPORARY CONCERTOS FOR

TRUMPET • Mary Elizabeth Bowden, David Dash^{1,2} (tpt); Yvonne Lam¹ (vn); Allen Tinkham, cond; Chicago Youth SO • **ÇEDILLE 229 (68:15)**

STEPHENSON ¹*The Storyteller. Scram!*. **CLARICE**

ASSAD *Bohemian Queen: Concerto for Trumpet and String*

Orchestra. **VIVIAN FUNG** *Concerto for Trumpet and Chamber*

Orchestra. **TYSON GHOLSTON DAVIS** ²*Veiled*

Light. **SNIDER** *Caritas*. **ESMAIL** *Rosa de Sal*

Who would have thought a few decades back that some of our leading solo classical trumpeters would be women? It would have seemed unusual, but today we are fortunate enough to have Alison Balsom in Britain, Tine Thing Helseth in Scandinavia, Selina Ott in Austria, Mary Elizabeth Bowden in the U.S., and no doubt many more. And they all are making recordings. The main selling point of *Storyteller* is the repertoire: Most of these works were composed for Bowden, and all are recorded premieres. Another point that needs to be made: The performances are extraordinary. Bowden's tone is purity itself, and her control in quiet sections especially is breathtaking. The Chicago Youth Orchestra under conductor Allen Tinkham is excellent too; its dynamism and color match the soloist's own at every turn.

In the previous issue, *Fanfare* 48:1, Colin Clarke wrote a detailed, very positive review of this release. I strongly suggest readers consult it. Since I agree with him completely, there seems no need to go over the same ground regarding the background of each of these pieces. Let me just mention some highlights. I love both pieces by James M. Stephenson. His opening work, *The Storyteller*, a tribute to longtime Chicago Symphony trumpeter Adolph "Bud" Herseth, is a gorgeous, lyrical arioso. While in no way imitative, it takes wing as gracefully as Vaughan Williams's ascending lark. Stephenson's short scherzo *Scram!* makes for a brilliant closer. Clarice V. Assad's three-movement concerto *Bohemian Queen* is great fun, particularly in the jazzy finale and its tongue-in-cheek descent in the direction of kitsch in the second movement. Vivian Fung's concerto contains numerous memorable moments, including a stamping rhythmic passage that accelerates excitingly. Then there are the exotic textures at the top of Reena Esmail's *Rosa de Sal* for Trumpet and Chamber Orchestra, and the mysterious atmosphere of the first movement of *Veiled Light* by Tyson Gholston Davis. Every piece in the program, while designed to showcase the technical facility and tonal beauty of the soloist, also represents value as pure music.

Sound quality is great. In fact, every aspect of this collection makes it a winner. Highly recommended. **Phillip Scott**