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Our halftime report: The best discs of 2006 ... so far!

SHARON MCDANIEL's three favorite classical/world music discs:

'World Keys: Virtuoso Piano Music'; pianist Joel Fan (Reference). Any newcomer daring — and secure — enough to record (American) William Bolcom, (Latvian) Peteris Vasks and (Australian) Peter Sculthorpe for his debut disc gets my attention. This young New York native holds it. Clear from the start is his knowing grasp of each piece's inner workings, an artist's ear for piano color and a linguist's fluency of expression. Reference's pristine audio captures every detail. **'World Keys: Virtuoso Piano Music'; pianist Joel Fan*** (Reference). Any newcomer daring — and secure — enough to record (American) William Bolcom, (Latvian) Peteris Vasks and (Australian) Peter Sculthorpe for his debut disc gets my attention. Reference's pristine audio captures every detail.