

STRINGS

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Dim Sum. Ying Quartet: Timothy and Janet Ying, violin; Phillip Ying, viola; David Ying, cello. (Telarc 80690).

If you go to a Chinese brunch, somebody will bring out a dim-sum tray, an assortment of tasty morsels. That could describe the Ying Quartet's latest release, also called *Dim Sum*, a collection of short items by living Chinese-American composers. Everything here is played with technical polish and a real sense of advocacy. The only aspect that may put off some listeners is the sheer diversity of musical styles. If, for example, you are attracted



to Chen Yi's *Shuo*, where modalism makes it sound rather like a Chinese counterpart to Vaughan Williams, or Vivian Fung's *Pizzicato*, which is something of a Chinese answer to the Scherzo in Ravel's quartet, will you also be interested in the more avant-garde works by the likes of such prominent figures as Tan Dun

and Ge Gan-ru?

What binds most of this recital together, diverse as it may be, is the composers' delight in adapting traditional Chinese sounds to the string quartet. Pizzes and little percussive effects, bent notes; all manner of ways of applying bow to string—all these methods help link centuries-old Chinese traditions to the contemporary string quartet. So whether your preferences are conservative or experimental, that, at least, will surely hold your interest through this delectable disc.

—J.R.