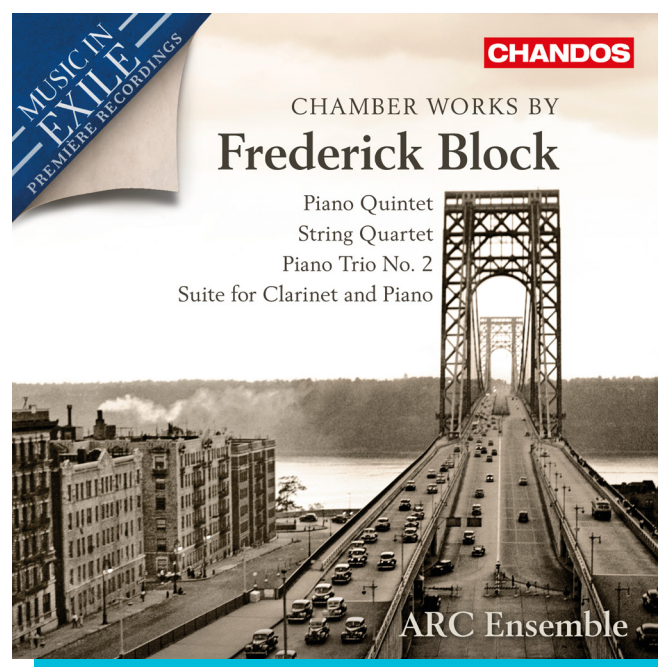


## Music in Exile, Chamber Works by Frederick Block

Frederick Block (1899-1945) was on the brink of an auspicious European career when his future was shattered by the Nazi's annexation of Austria in 1938. His brief exile in New York was tortured by recurring premonitions of his imminent death, which prompted a resolute quest to set down as many works as possible in the time he had left. On June 1, 1945, the premonitions fulfilled their promise, and his extraordinary legacy has remained unexplored since his death. For the eighth of its highly regarded "Music in Exile" recordings for Chandos, the ARC Ensemble (Artists of the Royal Conservatory) turns its attention to this forgotten Viennese émigré.



## Reviews

Canada's ARC Ensemble (Artists of The Royal Conservatory) presents the eighth in its "Music in Exile" series with a new album of chamber pieces by the Jewish-Viennese composer Frederick Block. It is the first commercial recording of the composer's works, hidden gems that richly deserve inclusion in the mainstream classical repertoire. This continues their mission to recover masterpieces that have been suppressed or marginalized due to war, repression and antisemitism.

Laurie Niles, Violinist.com

"Although it may be helpful to place Block's music in some kind of historical perspective, there is little doubt that he was an extremely fluent composer with a strong personal identity whose cause is brilliantly served he by outstandingly committed playing from the ARC Ensemble and a superbly vivid recording."

Erik Levi, BBC Music Magazine

*Block's lyricism and harmonic lushness [...] are offset by an angular (at times almost jazzy) rhythmic sense and an iridescent, often sultry harmonic language. Block is a composer with a voice of his own, and with exemplary annotation, good recorded sound and polished, heartfelt performances, this album is a handsome piece of advocacy that leaves you wanting more. Now, how about one of those symphonies?*

Richard Bratby, Gramophone

*When the history of this generation of baby-boomers is finally written – and recalled – one of the momentous events ought to be the series of recordings bookmarked as Music in Exile. [...] All of this enshrines this Music in Exile series in a place that is utterly fascinating to behold, but also hard to match in every respect of rare recordings of quite simply archeological importance. And happily, these signature scores are brought to life by one of the most justifiably celebrated ensembles.*

Raul da Gama, World Music Report

*Ardent advocacy makes the case for a forgotten figure [...] his music is extremely well crafted, and offers striking ideas that are well developed, but never meandering [...] Without doubt, having the ARC Ensemble as an advocate is a wonderful boost, its players characterising the music lucidly yet with great tonal and dynamic colour. The String Quartet offers a similar pithiness of ideas and contrasts of mood, again admirably depicted, in the fin-de-siècle style of 'comfortable chromaticism'. Clearly it is time for a re-evaluation of Block's music.*

Joanne Talbot, The Strad



Frederick Block

## ARC Ensemble

The Royal Conservatory's ARC Ensemble is among Canada's most distinguished cultural ambassadors. Performing a wide range of music, its focus remains the research and recovery of music suppressed and marginalized under the 20th century's repressive regimes. A growing number of hitherto unknown masterworks are rejoining the repertoire as a result of the Ensemble's work.



From left to right: Steven Dann (viola), Thomas Wiebe (cello), Kevin Ahfat (piano), Marie Bérard (violin), Joaquín Valdepeñas (clarinet), Erika Raum (violin). Not pictured: Simon Wynberg, Artistic Director