

# Jazz CAPS



Music 

Sonics 

## **Blue Chamber Quartet: *First Impressions*.**

Günther Pauler, producer. Hybrid multichannel SACD. Stockfisch 357.4046.2.

Blue Chamber Quartet originated in 2005 as the result of a concert at which four classically trained musician friends decided to combine the sounds of their instruments—piano, harp, vibraphone, and double bass—to create music that deliberately blurred distinctions between classical and jazz.

As vehicles for exploration on *First Impressions*, the foursome chose pieces from both composers familiar—Sergei Prokofiev, Chick Corea, Astor Piazzolla—and less well known. An emphasis on selections that offer hauntingly gorgeous melodic lines, strong rhythmic frameworks, and spaciousness ties everything together. Driven forward by Holger Michalski's impossibly beautiful *arco* bass phrases and Julia Bartha's precise, passionate piano accompaniment, the quartet's arrangement of Piazzolla's "Kicho" is a showstopper. Harpist Angelika Siman might begin a musical thought, only to have vibraphonist Thomas Schindl complete it.

Sonically, producer Günther Pauler captures the exquisite tonal colors in a natural way full of vitality and dynamic energy. The multichannel recording presents the ensemble in an intimate setting, placing listeners two rows back from center stage. **Chris Martens**

**Further Listening:** Claude Bolling: *Suite for Cello and Jazz Piano Trio*; The Gary Burton Quintet: *Ring*