

The latest classical DVD-Audio titles are departures from the mainstream orchestral repertory. First, the new-music label Starkland commissioned 13 technologically savvy composers to write short works for the DVD-A format. The resulting **Immersion** (Music ★★★★★, Recording ★★★★★) is not only a fascinating array of musical innovation but a persuasive exploration of the possibilities of surround sound.

It opens with "Live/Work" by Pamela Z, whose voice-and-electronics composition takes us on a wonderfully enveloping tour of

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her studio. Bruce Odland's "Tank" surrounds us with percussion, making particularly effective use of the subwoofer. For "The Housatonic at Henry Street," Phil Kline recorded street sounds of Manhattan's Lower East Side and mixed them with computer- and tape-generated music. Carl Stone's "Luong Hai Ky Mi Gia" expands on techniques he uses in live performance to create sounds that seem to swirl around us, while Ingram Marshall's "Sighs and Murmurs: A SeaSong" rocks us gently to and fro. And in Meredith Monk's "Eclipse Variations," a circle of voices seems to simply appear and disappear.

The care that went into this disc is carried through to the stylish onscreen graphics. No space is wasted here for bios and technical information, all better left to the excellent printed program notes. *Immersion* is challenging listening that will stretch your musical muscle while demonstrating the seemingly limitless possibilities of DVD-Audio.



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