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## Letters to the Editor

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From Peter Quinn

In response to Steve Lake (*Tempo 215*), whilst I would be the first to acknowledge the excellence of ECM's previous Pärt releases and the label's importance in bringing his work to a wider audience my brief was not to give a potted history of ECM but to review *Alina* (ECM New Series 1591). Returning to the CD has served to confirm my central criticism that 'the original two-minute piece is merely repeated with slight variations to phraseology and register, with a more liberal use of the opening pedal point.' The purported 'improvisatory' element – which by definition involves an act of *spontaneous creation* – I found to be entirely lacking. Rather than engaging with this point Mr Lake descends to making petty *ad hominem* remarks.

The two selected phases of *Für Alina* tell us no more about the composer that cannot be gleaned

from the crystalline beauty of the original (as heard on ECM New Series 1377). Coupled with this the remaining three tracks offered interpretations of just one piece (*Spiegel im Spiegel*), giving an overall impression that *Alina* did not enjoy the fastidiousness and attention lavished on previous ECM Pärt releases.

In conclusion, I consider Arvo Pärt to be one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music and recently completed my PhD on the composer. I have been a guest speaker on BBC Radio 3's 'Hear and Now' talking about his early works, helped to organize the highly successful 'Pärt in Profile' festival at the Royal Academy of Music in March 2000, contributed a substantial feature article on *Credo* (*Tempo 211*) and wrote the CD booklet notes for the recent Naxos release.

London

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