



Record of the Week: Duo Kiasma

CBC Radio Canada

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“This week, a new duo pairing the cello and the accordion: Duo Kiasma, made up of Belgian cellist Pierre Fontenelle and Luxembourgish accordionist Frin Wolter. Their debut record, *Polaris*, brings together music by Rameau, Bach and Vivaldi in a combination of sounds you don’t hear every day.”

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« And now it's time for the “In Concert Record of the week”, a new release that I think you should know about. This week, it's a new duo pairing the cello and the accordion. They're called the Duo Kiasma: here they are with music by Jean-Philippe Rameau. I just love their sound! That is the Duo Kiasma with music by Jean-Philippe Rameau. An air from the *Borréades*, and that's from this week's “In Concert Record of the Week”; it's called *Polaris*. It's the debut recording from Duo Kiasma. This new duo from Benelux: the Belgian cellist Pierre Fontenelle and the Luxembourgish accordionist Frin Wolter. And there's a phrase I never thought I'd say: Luxembourgish accordionist! Together they make up this Duo Kiasma and this is their debut recording, as I say, and they're all about upending expectations with their unusual combo. As they put it, what could be more unusual than the pairing of the cello, the Prince of classical music, and the accordion, a quintessentially traditional instrument embodying the history and melancholy of entire peoples. Now they know they're not the first to try out this combo. They point out that the great Soviet cellist Mstislav Rostropovich once said that the accordion was a better partner for the cello than the piano. Nonetheless it is still an unusual combination. **It sounds gorgeous and I don't know, it's a nice change of pace to hear the cello playing in this context supported by those great swelling bellows of the accordion. They do complement each other particularly well.** Now, the duo started life in the town of Namur in Belgium, but with a different accordionist, a “viscerally romantic” guy. They played stuff like arrangements of film scores and songs by Daft Punk, but the other guy turned out not to be the best choice of duo partner ultimately, because he gave it all up to become an orthodox monk, so the cellist Pierre Fontenelle was in need of a new accordionist. Enter Frin Wolter, the Luxembourgish accordionist, and they shared an appetite to play baroque music together and that led to this record which features their arrangements of music by Rameau, as you heard, as well as Bach and Vivaldi. They did leave a little bit of room for visceral romanticism on the record though, and that's what I want you to hear next. Their arrangement of the famous *Aria* from *Bachianas Brasileiras* #5 by the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa Lobos. **Once again from their new album the Duo Kiasma. That is such a cool arrangement of the *Aria* from *Bachianas Brasileiras* #5 by Brazilian composer Heitor Villa Lobos; the arrangement by the Duo Kiasma, the Belgian cellist Pierre Fontenelle and the Luxembourgish accordionist Frin Wolter. That's from their new record, their debut recording. It's called *Polaris* and it is this week's “In Concert Record of the Week”.**