

Favorite Albums of 2015 (excerpt)

By Peter Margasak

Melia Watras, *Ispirare* (Sono Luminus)

Seattle-based violist Melia Watras knocked the wind out of me with the dramatically dark beauty of this recording—her fourth album, but the first I've heard. She commissioned a dark-timbred, utterly transporting solo viola piece by Chicago composer Shulamit Ran, with lines inspired in part by Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*. In fact, it's followed by a take on Berio's adaptation of "Black Is the Color . . .," sung beautifully by Galia Arad, and a version of Berio's *Naturale (Su Melodie Siciliane)* that ends the album with a powerful shudder.