

winter landscape inspired by the composer's childhood. Its mood, for the most part, is not bleak, and it even projects a straightforward ebullience that one would not have predicted from this composer 50 years ago. It is, quite frankly, a knock-out, and horn players must be scrambling over one another to perform it. Jennifer Montone, principal horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra, strides and whoops and gallops her way through it, and it is joyous. The engineering, excellent elsewhere, completely makes you sit up and take notice here, so present and alive are the sonorities.

The composer's own recordings are recommendable, but I don't find them definitive, and Antoni Wit brings a clarity to the sometimes thick textures that Penderecki often does not. A little more viciousness from the Warsaw Philharmonic would have been welcome, and perhaps a little more personality from the harpsichordist. Still, these are very satisfying readings, and if you don't try the Horn Concerto, you are missing out!

Raymond S. Tuttle

Romitelli

New

Amok Koma. Domeniche alla periferia dell' impero – Seconda domenica.

Flowing down too slow. The Nameless City. Nell'alto dei giorni immobili.

Musiques Nouvelles/Jean-Paul Dessy.

Cyres CYP5623 (full price, 50 minutes). Website www.cyres-records.com. Producers Daniel Léon, David Nuñez. Engineers Jarek Frankowski, Jean-Paul Dessy. Dates May 17th, 18th and 29th, 2007.

Trash and spectralism might seem strange bedfellows but the music of Italian composer Fausto Romitelli, who died in 2004 at the age of just 41, could indeed be said to be their offspring. Even if some of the claims made in Jean-Paul Dessy's booklet note seem a little ambitious ('... the whole époque, our époque, would – to us as survivors – become Romitellian ... with hindsight, it is Jimi Hendrix and Gerry Mulligan who sound like musical flash-backs of Romitellian archetypes, and not the latter that reinterpreted them') this is nonetheless most attractive music: well made, appealingly sensual but not without rigour or drive, and of an extremely endearing humanity. It is perhaps not drawing too long a bow to compare the early loss to music of Romitelli with the loss a few years before of his teacher Gérard Grisey, who also died in his forties and who similarly would have had an enormous amount to add to what he had already given.

The second of Romitelli's *Domeniche alla periferia dell' impero* ('Sundays at the border of the empire') is a homage to Romitelli's former teacher and the two composers have much in common: a keen sense of timbral invention (the quartet of flute, clarinet, violin and cello is extended in its colouristic range not only with mutes in the strings and singing into the bass clarinet but by auxiliary

instruments such as kazoo and harmonica) and a constant, mesmerizing ebb and flow. The plural in the title on the disc is a little inaccurate here as only the 'Seconda domenica' is recorded – Romitelli also composed a 'Prima' and it is a pity it was not also included, both for reasons of total playing time (under 50 minutes is a little slender) and for the purely musical contrast that the 'Prima domenica' offers the 'Seconda'.

Flowing down too slow was composed for *Musiques Nouvelles* and it is hard not to hear in this a reason for this performance sounding particularly involved. The close-miking characteristic of the entire programme makes for a vivid sound-picture, bringing (quite appropriately) to the fore such sounds as the cellist's hands on the fingerboard. *Amok Koma* is an excellent opener, vigorous fanfaring arpeggios classically balanced by gentle descents.

To be sure, Romitelli's obsessive concentration on a relatively restricted vocabulary does have its disadvantages – the selection presented here can sometimes sound like five movements of a single work. *The Nameless City* departs the most clearly from the general picture: it employs neither the relatively standard new-music set-up of most of its companions here (*Amok Koma*, the *Domeniche* and *Nell'alto dei giorni immobili* all fit within a 'post-Pierrot' group of flute, clarinet, percussion, keyboard and string trio) nor Romitelli's characteristic electronics. Instead, it is scored for a small string orchestra (9-3-2-1) and a single bell, and its timbral variety comes solely from Romitelli's careful deployment of a relatively restrained array of performance techniques. The pop-culture trappings of some of the other works here are largely absent; the work itself is just as hypnotically attractive as its companions here, despite it being by some margin the longest work on the programme.

Many composers have attempted to create such a synthesis between popular and new-music idioms. I know no other in the recent past who managed the task remotely as convincingly as Romitelli: the growing success of his music since his death only makes his loss felt all the more keenly. **Carl Rosman**

Röntgen

New

Symphonies – No. 5, 'Schnitter Tod'^{ab}; No. 6, 'Rijck God, wie sal ic claghen'^b; No. 19, 'B.A.C.H.'

^aMarcel Beekman (tenor); ^bConsensus Vocalis; **Netherlands Symphony Orchestra/David Porcelijn.**

CPO 777 310-2 (full price, 1 hour 2 minutes). Website www.cpo.de. Producer/Engineer Stephan Reh. Dates June 30th-July 4th, 2008.

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