



21ST CENTURY MUSIC

JANUARY 2011

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

21ST-CENTURY MUSIC is published monthly by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. ISSN 1534-3219.

Subscription rates in the U.S. are \$96.00 per year; subscribers elsewhere should add \$48.00 for postage. Single copies of the current volume and back issues are \$12.00. Large back orders must be ordered by volume and be pre-paid. Please allow one month for receipt of first issue. Domestic claims for non-receipt of issues should be made within 90 days of the month of publication, overseas claims within 180 days. Thereafter, the regular back issue rate will be charged for replacement. Overseas delivery is not guaranteed. Send orders to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. email: mus21stc@gmail.com.

Typeset in Times New Roman. Copyright 2011 by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. This journal is printed on recycled paper. Copyright notice: Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

21ST-CENTURY MUSIC invites pertinent contributions in analysis, composition, criticism, interdisciplinary studies, musicology, and performance practice; and welcomes reviews of books, concerts, music, recordings, and videos. The journal also seeks items of interest for its calendar, chronicle, comment, communications, opportunities, publications, recordings, and videos sections. Copy should be double-spaced on 8 1/2 x 11 -inch paper, with ample margins. Authors are encouraged to submit via e-mail.

Prospective contributors should consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), in addition to back issues of this journal. Copy should be sent to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. e-mail: mus21stc@gmail.com. Materials for review may be sent to the same address.

INFORMATION FOR ADVERTISERS

Send inquiries to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. e-mail: mus21stc@gmail.com.

21ST CENTURY MUSIC

January 2011

Volume 18, Number 1

TOM MOORE	An Interview with Ivan Elezovic	1
CONCERT REVIEWS	Not the Solution He Expected MARK ALBURGER	5
	Art and Popularity PHILLIP GEORGE	6
CHRONICLE	Of November 2010	8
RECORDING	Music of Tribute	12
ILLUSTRATIONS	i. Stephen Hartke iv. Ivan Elezovic 5. Avner Dorman 7. Carlos Santana 11. Brentano String Quartet 12. <i>Music of Tribute, Volume 6: Berg</i>	

Editorial Staff

Mark Alburger
EDITOR-PUBLISHER

Harriet March Page
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Patti Noel Deuter
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Erling Wold
WEBMASTER

Alexis Alrich
Adam Broner
Katherine Buono
Ken Bullock
A.J. Churchill
David Cleary
Jeff Dunn
Phillip George
Elliot Harmon
Brian Holmes
Jeff Kaliss
John Lane
Michael McDonagh
Tom Moore
William Rowland
Lisa Scola Prosek
Andrew Shapiro
CORRESPONDENTS



An Interview with Ivan Elezovic

TOM MOORE

Ivan Elezovic has produced a successful body of work in electronic and acoustic music. He was born and raised in Serbia, but went onto do university study in Canada. His training included study at McGill University with the noted Argentinean-Canadian composer Alcides Lanza. We spoke by Skype on April 5, 2010.

MOORE: You are from the “former Yugoslavia.” Where were you born and raised? Was there music in the family?

ELEZOVIC: I was born in Belgrade, Serbia. Music education in Europe is quite different from what I have seen in my experiences in Canada and the United States. If you want to enter undergraduate studies in any music field, first you must go through elementary music school, which lasts for six years, and then music high school, which lasts for four years, so there are ten years of school training before anyone can actually apply to enter as an undergraduate. I studied as an accordion player, and that is how I completed my elementary school in Belgrade. After that, before I entered music high school, I added piano as well, so I have two primary instruments. Regarding my family, no one in the immediate family was a musician. My grandmother had musical talent, but never was active as a professional. I was the first one in the family to pursue a musical career.

MOORE: How did you happen to choose the accordion? How old were you at the time?

ELEZOVIC: I was about ten years old. I liked listening to records when I was a kid, and used to sing along. My grandmother noticed, and talked to my parents. She said “Why don’t you send your child to a music school, to see what he can do?” My mother took me to the school, and I passed the entrance exam.

MOORE: What records were you listening to?

ELEZOVIC: Franz Liszt, Dallapiccola, some domestic popular music – rock and roll and pop.

Then I started listening to blues, as well. It was an education experience of figuring out what was going on out there.

MOORE: In the United States, the accordion has a strong association with particular genres of music – polka, music from Eastern Europe. Are there particular types of music with which it is associated in Serbia?

ELEZOVIC: I was playing classical music on the accordion. There is a different conception of studying accordion in Europe. In Europe classical study of the accordion is well-developed. The good schools are in Germany and in France, and in the rest of Europe, where playing accordion is not based on folk music (though it can be used in folk music as well). There are many composer and arrangers for accordion. Bach preludes and fugues can sound amazingly good on accordion, because every single pitch can be perfectly controlled with respect to duration. I played no folk music at all on the accordion, and when I came to Canada to do my undergraduate studies, people were expecting me to play polkas or something along those lines.

MOORE: How did you start to listen to blues?

ELEZOVIC: One of my friends gave me various recordings of blues singers. One of them was a British musician, Gary Moore. I couldn’t find his records in Serbia, and made a trip to the Czech Republic to buy some.

MOORE: How did you come to do your undergraduate studies in Manitoba?

ELEZOVIC: I wanted to study with Dr. Michael Matthews, who was teaching at the University of Manitoba at the time, and wanted to write music, but I knew that I needed an education to do that, since until that point I had been a performer. In 1992 I came to Canada, to Winnipeg, and passed the entrance exam in 1993 and started studying composition and electronic music, along with music theory.

MOORE: When and how did you decide to move to composition?

ELEZOVIC: When I came to Canada, I took a year off, and questioned everything about how I wanted to continue my music career. I had always wanted to express myself, and the language of expression was music.

MOORE: What sort of music were you studying at that time? Which composers were you listening to?

ELEZOVIC: Dr. Matthews was responsible for introducing me to twentieth-century music and various styles that I had not been aware of until that point. He also opened the door to electronic music and electro-acoustic music. I had known the music of Jean-Michel Jarre, but using computers to compose classical music was something very new to me. I was very interested in this. Dr. Matthews also influence my compositional styles. He made a point of introducing his students to as much twentieth-century music as possible, which gave me a great background. I will never forget arriving at the electronic music studio at the University of Manitoba. I was amazed by a program called Sound Designer. I was excited to visually see the sounds on the screen, the samples and sound waves. At that point Sound Designer was cutting edge. There were also additional pieces of hardware which were necessary. He also introduced me to Max, which is based on the programming language C++. At that point it was not MSP, like today, but only Max.

MOORE: Then you moved on McGill.

ELEZOVIC: For me it was a logical place for continuing my studies of composition. I had already heard of Alcides Lanza while at Manitoba, and Dr. Matthews suggested it was a place that would work well for me. By now Alcides Lanza is a legend – a very famous Argentinean/Canadian composer. I wanted to learn about graphic notation, and to be able to write my electronic music scores visually. In my first year of my master's studies, Alcides said that he could not teach me to compose, but that he could give me tools to keep me interested, and which I could take in any direction that I chose. I will never forget those words. I was shocked at the time, but I soon realized that it was a very truthful statement.

MOORE: Perhaps you could say a little more about his pedagogy. You were working with him on electronic music, I take it.

ELEZOVIC: Electronic music and acoustic music as well. Alcides was very open to experimentation. We had a very good studio on the top floor of the McGill University Faculty of Music, and I continued working with Max MSP and music sequencing software. I should also mention Professor Zack Settel, who studied at IRCAM, and who came to McGill to teach classes in music technology. I took a number of classes with him. The combination of study with Alcides Lanza and Zack Settel opened me to new ideas. From that point on, my pieces were targeting particular media. I had enough tools to be able to compose successfully in both the acoustic and electronic domains. Whether a piece would be acoustic or electroacoustic would depend what the best way was to develop its particular ideas.

MOORE: Historically there has tended to be a divide between the people who work in electroacoustic music, and those who work in acoustic music, or as they used to say at Princeton, silicon-based and carbon-based music. Were there particular composers who seemed to be useful models for you in these areas?

ELEZOVIC: I do not necessarily see that we should make a distinction between composers of acoustic and electronic music. My decisions are based on the ideas before I actually sit down and start writing the music – that is what media will be the best for presenting and developing my ideas. As far as which composers are my favorites, they include Giacinto Scelsi, about whose music I wrote an article for the Journal for New Music and Culture regarding three-dimensional sound phenomena. I don't have one favorite composer, but try to listen to various composers depending on what I am looking for – I am interested in the music rather than who wrote particular pieces. Every composer has pieces which are relatively successful and relatively unsuccessful. It is up to us as listeners to listen and to make those judgments.

MOORE: To go in a slightly different direction, perhaps you could think about what piece might represent your “opus one,” the first piece which you would list in your catalogue?

ELEZOVIC: That’s a very hard question to answer. It is extremely hard for me to judge my own music, and has always been a problem. In the process of writing I may think that the piece will be successful in various ways, and receive a number of performances, but that is not always the case. And on the other hand, when I am not satisfied with my pieces, it turns out that they are well-understood and well-received, with multiple performances. So I try to stay away from those kinds of judgments. With each new work I am approaching a different method. I am always trying to find new conceptual goals for my music, and comparing my pieces is difficult because each piece stands on its own. I like to think about a completed piece as a world which is already closed, and with every new piece I am moving to the next step.

MOORE: I see composers using two competing approaches to building a piece, one a more architectural approach, in which the structure comes from an over-arching shape, with the details filled in later, or the latter a more narrative approach, where the shape comes from the level of the details upwards. Which approach would you take?

ELEZOVIC: For every piece, before I start, I have an initial idea. If that idea is complete or not is a separate issue, but to me every piece is a puzzle, made up of smaller puzzles, which do not necessarily mean anything when we take a puzzle in our hand, but by putting together two, three, five, ten puzzles, we start creating something. Whether that something is going to be the beginning, or middle, or ending of the piece is a very different story. I try to limit myself in those situations. The hardest thing for me is to pick which bits are going to be fine in designing my piece. Once I make those decisions my piece will grow from the core, which is the basic idea of the piece, which may be made up of a couple of those small puzzles, and which will eventually grow to make the entire picture. In that sense, I can say that the work grows organically. For the past four or five years, this was the most common approach for me.

I also sometimes try to do something different, that I have not tried before. I wrote a lot of small exercises, which really helped me to figure out how well I can write a piece based on different approaches at the beginning. There are some interesting solutions that I came up with, and I plan to save them for future use in generating pieces.

MOORE: Rather like a Beethoven bagatelle.

ELEZOVIC: Yes. I am always thinking about listeners, and how many ways that people can listen to and hear and understand my music. I am still surprised by some of the comments that I get, when they mention that they have heard something that I really had not thought of at all. I am very interested to learn about how they understand and perceive my music. Those comments are very important for me to think about how to structure my next piece.

MOORE: Could you talk about “Mediterranean-Riots-Colors”? That was a commission for the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and seems to have been very successful since then, with performances, or I suppose one might say, showings at other festivals of electroacoustic music?

ELEZOVIC: First of all, it’s a multimedia, audiovisual piece. It’s one of the first pieces in which I connected audio and visual media. Both have basically equal importance throughout the piece. When I went to various festivals, some of the multimedia pieces that I saw were basically video pieces, with the audio portion simply a supplement, or vice versa. My idea was to devote equal attention to both, which is very challenging. Since I come from Southeastern Europe, and from the Balkans, I think that I owed it to myself to dedicate something to that geographic area. That area is very beautiful, but also very turbulent. The title makes this clear. Within the piece I tried to cover various social, political and economic issues which surround Mediterranean countries and life there. A lot of people and composers from North America recognize that, whether from personal experience, whether from traveling to the area, or from reading, and I think that part of the reason why the piece was successful was not only the compositional approach, but also the subject matter that I tried to expose.

MOORE: What presence does your background, your nationality, your growing up in Serbia have on your work as a composer? Is there music you heard as a child, or cultural factors that are important in terms of expression?

ELEZOVIC: From time to time I will write a piece that is influenced by the area where I come from. For instance, I have a piece for two-channel CD that is based on the tambura, an instrument that is a sort of a cross between guitar and mandolin. The instrument is used in the music of the Balkan peninsula. The timbre of the instrument is very interesting, and I tried to explore various timbral possibilities in the piece. And of course “Mediterranean-Riots-Colors” is based on events which took place in the Balkans over the last fifteen years. Every new piece brings new ideas. Influence may not be something that I am aware of, but obviously I grew up there, so it had to leave some influences on me and my music.

MOORE: Could you talk about a recent piece, or a project that you are working on for this year or next year?

ELEZOVIC: The last piece that I completed, which had its world premiere at a new music festival at Palm Beach Atlantic University, in West Palm Beach, Florida, was “Between the Lines” for string quartet. I was very interested in exploring various processes which are constantly developing from the first measure to the last. I was also interested in the timbral possibilities which I explored for the various instruments. The idea was to use the string quartet because I believe that it still has many timbral possibilities that have not been explored. Future pieces which I will complete this summer include a piece for solo piano that I am writing for Misa Stojanovska, a great pianist that I met at a conference in Tallahassee, Florida last summer. In hearing her performance I was very excited about

what she can do. I will be writing a piece for her which she can play at various festivals. I also want to get back to writing electronic music. My next piece will be a work for two-channel CD, where I will be doing some experiments regarding speech. For now I am planning to structure the piece around the speech of various people whom I will invite to the studio and record.

MOORE: You spent a year as a visiting professor teaching Western music in Thailand. How was that? Did you come away with ideas from Thai music that might have an effect on future pieces?

ELEZOVIC: My experience in Thailand was very valuable, first as a musician, and then as a composer. Culturally it was very interesting. I was reading a lot about Asia and Thailand before I went, and knew that I would be exposed to music that I had not experienced before. Living there was a composition lesson that lasted for an entire year. I tried to meet a lot of composers, and get a view into their way of writing music, their stylistic approach. First of all, they have a lot of instruments which we do not know much about, or do not study. Not only that – they are not so interested in intervals or modes, but are more focused on the inner life of the actual sound. The music is based around a lot of improvisation. That sense of freedom was very interesting to me, but the composers actually leave blank measures where the performers are supposed to act as composers by improvising and adding to the things that the composer structured initially. These issues led me to think about my own music. I like to explain everything, to be very precise, to be as precise as possible. But perhaps I should think about allowing my performers to control the music in various ways, so I am wondering about how those pieces might look, and how they might sound.

Concert Reviews

Not the Solution He Expected

MARK ALBURGER

Long time readers will know that this writer defaults to the 20th and 21st Centuries. So why is it that yet again the old guy trumped the newer ones in Alasdair Neal's Marin Symphony November 14 outing at Veteran's Memorial Auditorium?

Well, let's make a list. Beauty, clarity, energy, inventiveness, strength of material, balance between stasis and change, sheer power and excellence in performance -- many of the qualities that make art worth paying attention to, and life worth living.

The trumper was Peter Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. The trumpees were William Walton's Viola Concerto and Avner Dorman's (not) The Shadow.

While the Tchaikovsky is perhaps a textbook case of over-the-top, it's also one of intuitive-yet-logical development, allowing listeners to clearly follow the course of arguments even in the second half of a program when ears had possibly been over-lulled. One can still almost hear Tchaikovsky's thought process at work: how about a third movement beginning with only pizzicato strings, then simply woodwinds, followed by unadorned brass (trumpets mostly playing accurately all night) and timpani, then somehow weaving all three ideas together? Forty years (or thereabouts) after first hearing this piece, and I still picked up new qualities of organization in the fourth movement.

That's how it should be.

And even the over-the-top part. Why not? It works for early Igor Stravinsky and Philip Glass and heavy metal. Audiences want to be blown away sometimes. It's not always about subtle.

But sometimes, it is. Even the notion of a Viola Concerto bears this out -- the non-flashy in-between relative of the violin and cello -- and William Walton's bares this out (the list of top-drawer violistic solos is not much longer because of this work). This is not the flashy Walton of Facade

(1926), despite that the work was only written three years later (1929). Principal violist Jenny Douglass did her best to bring life to this intriguing work, despite the fact that she is not a globe-trotting showman and the music, particularly in the first movement, is a little arch and leisurely.

The scherzoic Vivo has its whimsy, which conductor and soloist brought out nicely, and the finale does its best to sound 1920's modern. Yes, we get the rising fourth motive (admittedly decades before Alexander Courage's Star Trek usage) and the earnest fugato, it's just that we don't always care. Somewhat akin to Richard Wagner's relentless use of the Tristan prelude motive, or Sam Shepard's True West character Austin: "I don't want to know!"

Because, sometimes we can overthink things. Dorman started in a bang-up fashion in his engaging composition "not after" Hans Christian Andersen's The Shadow. An upward rocket, pounding funky-mid-eastern percussion, rapturous textures -- there was not much to not like! The middle section, however, spun out in a rather protracted manner: scale fragments and intervallic oscillations apparently can only go so far (and this said by a critic-composer who is a confirmed post-minimalist!). The end redeemed itself, returning to opening -- yet altered -- material, but overall, one wished for a little less "all-the-music-spins-out-from-initial-gestures" and a little more tangential "where did that come from?" surprise, as the composer so wonderfully demonstrated in the work's outset.

Not the conclusion we might have drawn. The unexpected is inevitably the goal....



Art and Popularity

PHILLIP GEORGE

Charlie Bit My Finger has been watched 251,258,129 times on YouTube.

Call of Duty: Black Ops (characterized by the Entertainment Software Rating Board as featuring "blood and gore, intense violence, [and] strong language") sold seven million copies in its first 24 hours.

Naranda Michael Walden and Carlos Santana opened the Oakland East Bay Symphony season and packed the Paramount Theatre on November 20-21, with arena-rock whoops and clap-alongs. It clearly was a smash success, from fundraising and audience-building points of view. Makes you wonder why the organization would bother with Johannes Brahms, Gustav Holst, and John Adams the rest of the year. Oh, sorry. No John Adams.

Great set-up, however: the orchestra splayed downstage left strings and upstage right woodwinds, brass, and percussion; with a colorful flower array for conductor Michael Morgan's podium, and equally colorful piano, electric keyboard, grand-slam drum kit, and elevated guitar downstage right center. This -- plus an engaging light show, and eventual amplified vocal soloists at front and chorus behind strings -- all made for potential scenic and sonic divertissement.

The opening Arturo Marquez's Danzon No. 2 was the only concession to art music, from a Mexican-American composer true to his roots whose energetic work also includes the influences of Morton Subotnik, Mel Powell, and Lucky Mosko. Had to Google this information, as the program only gave biographical information about "Guest Artists," and Arturo clearly wasn't there.

Marquez wasn't the point, however. The point was Santana (who, with the members of the Rolling Stones, is the only individual to have placed pop hits on the charts in each of the last five decades). So let's say "Whoo Hoo," and really start this show, shall we?

This was The Innocents Abroad. And certainly not the first or the last time where an orchestra is mostly conceived as a couple of "string" and "horn patches" to a timbral palette that is really mostly about the sounds of 70's era classic-rock, geared towards listeners who lump the myriad styles of art music into the "genre" of "classical music" yet parse the peccadilloes of pop ad infinitum.

Passacaglia is often the name of the game, although rarely (if ever) verbalized as such -- the default mode being take a bass line / chord progression and cycle same with improvisation above. That was pretty much it for Santana's Novus -- mercifully a ten-bar riff with the guitarist engaging in his signature pyrotechnics above it. Alice Coltrane's Andromeda's Suffering played out in a similar fashion, and in each case one wondered why the orchestra bothered showing up (well, they were nice to look at, at least).

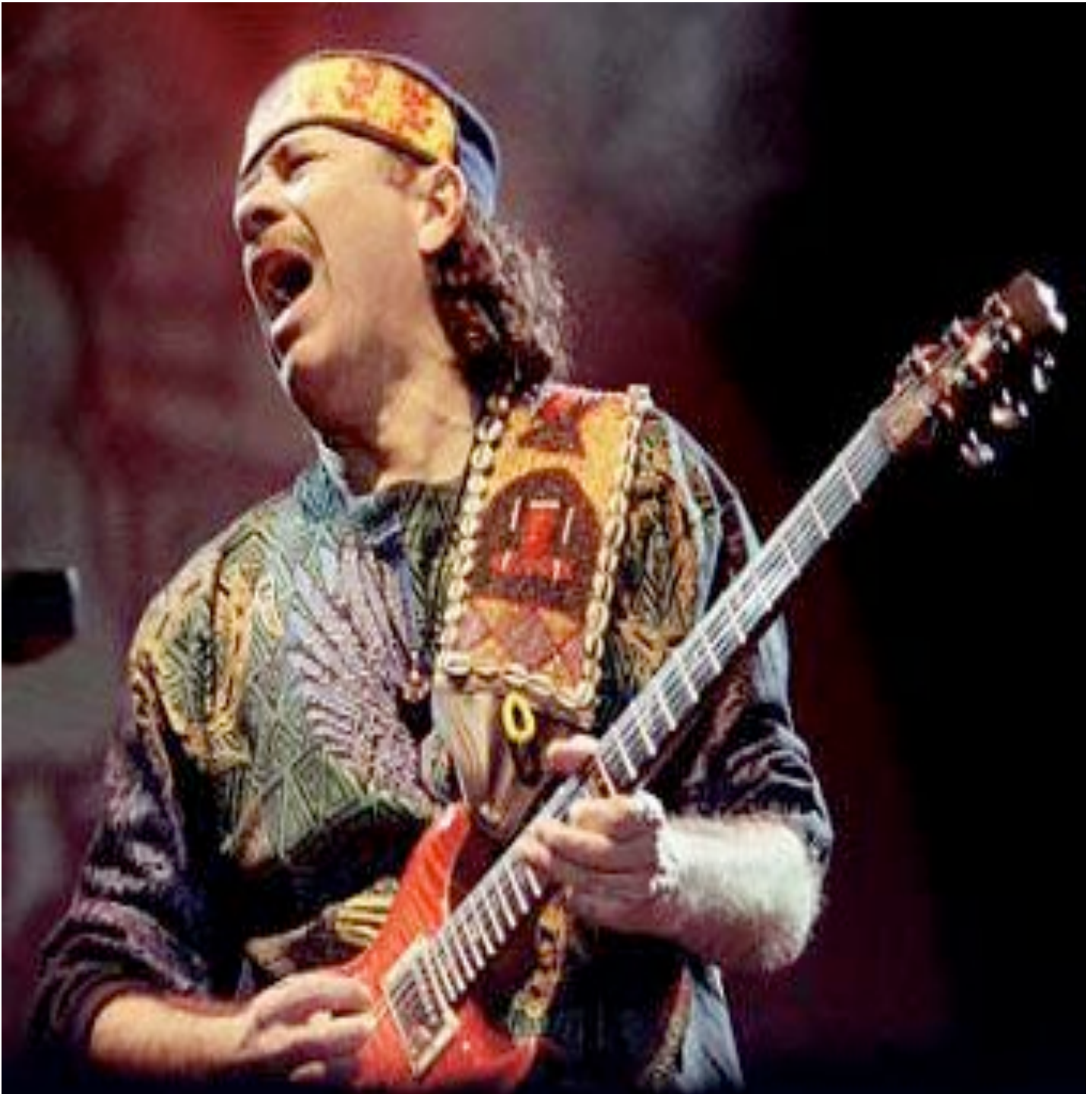
Such pieces reminded one of the really subversive notion of a concerto -- be it in solo or grosso mode. The idea is that the soloist or small group can stand up against the behemoth of an orchestra. Well, in the case of a rock band, no problem, what with the amplification. And the mobility of a guitarist! Marvelous! The soloist can prance around and actually threaten the seated bowed strings with his axe. What an intrigue it would be if the tables turned, as in the end of Disney's Bug's Life, when the numerous ants rise up against the few grasshoppers. Amplify and mobilate the orchestra (a la George Crumb's Processions), and the soloists are buried.

John Kendall Bailey's game orchestration of George Harrison's While My Guitar Gently Weeps was bounded by the arrangement of Santana and Matt Serletic. The bluesy vocals of Nikita Germaine and Company rang out in imaginative interplay with the guitar-master's double-instrument solos in the brave tradition of Eric Clapton.

Walden set the tone of The Enchanted Forest: Seven Higher Worlds of Music with his own flashy white outfit, pompous vocal pronouncements, and first-class pounding percussion. That he held his own with a large almost-substantial work after the previous bon-bons was impressive in itself, and there were definite moments, such as the opening

doubling of French horn and chimes, the charming array of young ballet students, mysterious vocalise from a Beethoven's-Ninth-bring-out-all-the-bells-and-whistles chorus, exciting metrical schemes such as a 5/4 as 5/8 + 5/8, and the anthemic build up of a rather quixotic line about love and family (with a stand-in attractive vocal Dad-Mom-Daughter-Son quartet at the mikes, just in case we weren't getting the point) to a memorable melodic ostinato.

From the general-audience and box office point of views, it all totally worked. In the spirit of certain early Renaissance writers: "It hardly seems believable. But there is no music worth listening to that hasn't been written in the last 50 years."



Chronicle

November 3

The Brentano String Quartet plays Stephen Hartke's *Night Songs for a Desert Flower* (2009). Zankel Hall, New York, NY. "[The work] has a Classical four-movement structure, and Haydn and Beethoven would have found his syntax coherent. He also provides the players (and listeners) with plenty of melody. But those singing themes are sometimes angular and ear-catchingly out of kilter, and Mr. Hartke supports them with mildly acidic harmonies. He also uses techniques from outside Haydn's and Beethoven's sound worlds, like having long-spun melodies played entirely in harmonics, with a whistling sound produced by not depressing the string completely. In a program note, Mr. Hartke described the work as 'a book of madrigals for string quartet,' with a celebratory dance as its finale, and you could see what he meant. Much of it has the kind of dramatic arc that madrigals often do, and the finale, with its constantly shifting harmonies and hard-driving rhythm, had a dancelike vigor. The writing is democratic, with solo themes moving among the four lines, and the Brentano players addressed both their individual moments in the spotlight and the rhythmically vital ensemble passages with the kind of energy that comes of intense focus" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/4/10].

November 6

The Riverside Symphony in Paul Hindemith's *Cello Concerto*, Jan Sibelius's *Symphony No. 7*, and George Tsontakis's *Laconika*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "The ensemble, conducted by George Rothman, was in generally excellent shape. . . . Amit Peled, an Israeli cellist with a warm, glowing tone, was the soloist in Hindemith's *Cello Concerto* (1940). The Hindemith is an odd work, as concertos go.

Its dense scoring, rich in unrestrained brass, percussion and woodwind writing, leaves the cellist to cut through the din or, much of the time, to become a plaintive strand within the dense counterpoint. Mr. Peled gamely did both, and when Hindemith left the cello line free and clear, in the two sweetly melodic *Andante con moto* sections, he seized the moment, playing with a seductive timbre and an emotionally pointed approach to phrasing that made you want to hear him again in a more conventional work. George Tsontakis's *Laconika* (2010), composed for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (hence the title), received the most memorable performance here. Mr. Tsontakis has become a magnificently free-spirited colorist in recent years, and in the five short movements . . . orchestral sections overlap and interact in ways that yield otherworldly textures. The opening movement, *Alarming*, for example, is built of sliding brass figures overlaid with crystalline vibraphone lines and acidic woodwind chords, and the closing *Twilight* is woven around an oscillating flute motif. Curiously, for all the orchestrational magic, the most affecting movement was *Laconicrimosa*, a straightforward meditation dominated by a lush string sound" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/7/10].

November 9

Brad Mehldau, with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Zankel Hall, New York, NY. "He has written song cycles for Renée Fleming and Anne Sofie von Otter, and both singers have recorded those works with Mr. Mehldau at the piano. His solo and ensemble recordings have touched on his classical leanings too. They show him grappling with formal notions of structure and thematic development, and seeking a balance between the precisely defined gestures of composed music and the freedom and spontaneity of improvisation. His recent *Highway Rider* (Nonesuch) is his grandest effort yet.

Scored for an oddly constituted quintet (piano, bass, saxophone and two percussionists) and a chamber orchestra, the 15-movement piece is vaguely programmatic -- Mr. Mehlau says it describes a journey -- and is built around transformations of an ear-catching modal motif. Mr. Mehlau, who holds the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall this season, presided over a performance of *Highway Rider* at Zankel Hall on Tuesday evening, with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra as part of his band. The seriousness of Mr. Mehlau's interest in classical composition is evident in his program note, which includes his observations about Beethoven's use of motivic kernels as the DNA of larger works (with a supporting quotation from the musicologist Charles Rosen) and discusses the specifics of Strauss's scoring for *Metamorphosen*. It is not just talk: you could hear how he took Beethoven's process to heart, and in terms of both texture and spirit, the movements dominated by lush, dark-hued strings — *Now You Must Climb Alone* and *Always Departing* -- owe a lot to *Metamorphosen*. But jazz is Mr. Mehlau's language, and nearly everything about *Highway Rider* -- not least Mr. Mehlau's rhapsodic piano solos, Joshua Redman's magnificently supple virtuosic saxophone playing, Larry Grenadier's shapely bass lines and Jeff Ballard's and Matt Chamberlain's inventive, richly detailed drumming -- is couched in jazz's bluesy chromaticism and fluid rhythms. Except in the few movements where the strings hold the spotlight, or where the woodwinds and horns elaborate briefly on a theme, the orchestral scoring is secondary, and for long stretches the St. Paul musicians sat silently. When they played, their contributions were vibrant and, in the Straussian movements, deeply soulful. Clearly unwilling to squander a visit to New York by performing as a backing band, the orchestra also played a short preconcert program devoted to Shostakovich's *Chamber Symphony in F* (Op. 73a, actually Rudolf Barshai's 1990 orchestration of the *Third String Quartet*). The arrangement works brilliantly. The passion of Shostakovich's 1946 meditation on World War II is magnified not only by the heftiness of the string textures but also by the broadened palette afforded by the winds and harp. The orchestra, led by its concertmaster, Steven Copes, produced a wonderfully focused, opulent sound" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 10/11/20].

November 11

White Light Festival. Lincoln Center, New York, NY. "The overarching, some might say overreaching, theme . . . is to explore music as an expression of spirituality. As the festival continues, the participating artists keep coming up with intriguing choices of musical works that invite listeners to look inward. The violinist Gidon Kremer brought *Kremerata Baltica*, the string chamber orchestra he founded in 1997, to Alice Tully Hall to play mystical works by Lera Auerbach, Giya Kancheli and Beethoven. And later, in the Kaplan Penthouse, the veteran Russian pianist Alexei Lubimov played the first in a series of 60-minute *Late-Night Elegies* programs, offering eight shorter works. They ranged boldly from a restless and strangely reflective fantasia by C. P. E. Bach to an explosive and brutally spiritual 1988 piano sonata by Galina Ustvolskaya, bursting with dense cluster chords that Mr. Lubimov played with open hands and forearms. Mr. Lubimov's program was ideally conceived for this festival. He moved from the C. P. E. Bach work to an undulant early piece by John Cage (*In a Landscape*); Liszt's late, gloomy *Lugubre Gondola II* (with its stunningly modern harmonic language); and more, ending with *The Messenger* by Valentin Silvestrov, a hushed piece (played with the piano lid completely closed) that sounded like strangely altered bits of outtakes from a recording session of Mozart piano sonatas. Throughout, he played with clarity, sensitivity and beautiful colorings. *Kremerata Baltica* has championed living composers from the Baltics, Russia, and other Eastern European regions, many of whom have been immersed in spiritual dimensions of music, like Ms. Auerbach, whose *Sogno di Stabat Mater* opened [the] program in its New York premiere. This alluring, reflective piece is a reworking of an 18th-century Italian sacred work, the *Stabat Mater* by Pergolesi. Ms. Auerbach considers this 12-minute piece -- scored for violin (Mr. Kremer), viola (Ula Ulijona), vibraphone (Andrei Pushkarev) and string orchestra -- a dialogue across time. The sections of the piece that more closely follow Pergolesi are tweaked and slightly distorted, with pronounced walking bass lines and harmonies that mingle and blur. But the sections in which Ms. Auerbach riffs on the original to explore new sounds, chords and textures seem just as much a homage to Pergolesi. Mr. Kancheli's

Silent Prayer, a 25-minute score dedicated to Mr. Kremer and the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, also received its New York premiere. Shortly after Mr. Kancheli finished writing the piece in 2007, Rostropovich died. As this performance began, the two soloists, Mr. Kremer and the cellist Giedre Dirvanauskaite, traded eerie, high, elliptical phrases against a hazy backdrop of pungent string harmonies. The piece evolves in contrasting episodes: skittish outbursts, followed by tinkletinkle spans that evoke a music box, segue into gravely ruminative music made more wistful by the inclusion of the recorded voice of a young girl singing a song from Mr. Kancheli's native Georgia. . . . Who says having fun is inconsistent with exploring the spiritual? As encores Kremerata Baltica played a slinky Astor Piazzolla piece, then a new version of Ernst Toch's Geographical Fugue. The original is a word-fugue for spoken voices sputtering the names of towns, cities and places. This version, with nonsensical text by Mr. Kremer, touched on the travails of the performing profession, as the uninhibited players shouted phrases like "gramophone" and "music business" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 11/12/10].

November 12

Death of Henryk [Mikolaj] Gorecki (b. 12/6/33, Czernica, Poland), after being hospitalized with a lung infection, at 76. Katowice, Poland. "[He was] a renowned Polish composer whose early avant-garde style gave way to more approachable works rooted in his country's folk songs and sacred music and whose Symphony No. 3 -- an extended lamentation subtitled 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs' -- sold more than a million copies on CD in the 1990's Gorecki (pronounced go-RET-zki), who with Witold Lutoslawski and Krzysztof Penderecki was one of Poland's most revered contemporary composers, wrote music that often played with the extremes of musical expression. In works like *Old Polish Music* (1969), blocks of assertive, high-energy brass writing are juxtaposed with eerie, slow-moving, pianissimo string passages.

His intensely focused *Beatus Vir* (1979) and *Totus Tuus* (1987), both dedicated to Pope John Paul II, draw on the simplicity of traditional chant as well as richly harmonized, intensely focused choral writing and, in the case of *Beatus Vir*, monumental orchestral scoring. And in *Already It Is Dusk* (1988), his first string quartet, Mr. Gorecki reconfigures Polish dances and dirges, casting the more outgoing sections in acidic harmonies that give the score a searing, angry edge. But the work for which Mr. Gorecki is most widely known, the *Symphony No. 3* (1976), explores the gradations of a single mood: somber, introspective reflection, conveyed in three long, slow, quiet movements that last nearly an hour. Scored for orchestra and soprano, the work's vocal sections include settings of a 15th-century sacred lamentation, a simple prayer ('Oh Mamma do not cry -- Immaculate Queen of Heaven support me always') scrawled by a young girl on the wall of a Gestapo prison in southern Poland, and a plaintive Polish folk song in which a mother grieves for a son lost in war. Mr. Gorecki surrounds these texts with a compelling amalgam of lush neo-Romanticism; open, entirely consonant tonality; and a gradual unfolding of themes and textures that struck many listeners as a distinctly Eastern European approach to Minimalism. The work quickly took on a life of its own. In 1985, the French director Maurice Pialat used an excerpt from the symphony on the soundtrack to *Police*, a film starring Gérard Depardieu. A recording of the full work, conducted by Ernest Bour, with the soprano Stefania Woytowicz, was released on the Erato label, and though it was packaged as a soundtrack album for *Police* -- a film virtually unknown in the United States -- it proved a first encounter with Mr. Gorecki's music for many American listeners. Two more recordings were released, both with Ms. Woytowicz as the soloist. But the work did not achieve its explosive success -- a surprise, given its unceasingly mournful character -- until a recording by the soprano Dawn Upshaw, with David Zinman conducting the London Sinfonietta, was released on the Nonesuch label in 1992. The recording became a radio hit in Britain, where it broke into the Top 10 on the Music Week pop chart, and sold more than a million copies worldwide. For a while, Nonesuch said, it was selling 10,000 copies a day in the United States.

The symphony was subsequently used as soundtrack music in Peter Weir's *Fearless* (1993) and Julian Schnabel's *Basquiat* (1996). Samples of the score were also used in recordings by several pop groups, most notably Gorecki by the English band Lamb. Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki was born . . . to parents who were amateur musicians. He began studying the violin when he was 10, and later took up the clarinet and piano. By the early 1950's he was composing songs and piano works while earning a living as a teacher. In 1955, he enrolled at the Music Academy in Katowice, where he spent the next five years as a composition student of Boleslaw Szabelski. But he was already beginning to make his name in Polish avant-garde circles with works like the *Four Preludes* (1955) for piano and the contrast-rich *Sonata for Two Violins* (1957). In *Epitafium* (1958), for mixed choir and instruments, he began experimenting with the spatial placement of his performing forces. In the *Symphony No. 1* (1959) and *Scontri* (*Collisions*, 1960), he experimented with Serialism . . . and with the textural contrasts -- dense clusters versus spare, pointillistic solo lines -- that would become a hallmark in his later music. Mr. Gorecki continued to embrace Serialism through the 1960s, but mixed it with other techniques -- including whole-tone harmony and the use of ancient modal scales -- that made his music sound bracing and fresh, rather than doctrinaire. He became fascinated with choral and vocal music around 1970, and expanded his stylistic arsenal with folk music -- an extension of his interest in modal melodies -- and traditional Polish church music. Gradually, he jettisoned Serialism and moved toward the completely tonal, diatonic language that gave the *Symphony No. 3* much of its immediate accessibility and appeal. . . . Other important works in Mr. Gorecki's catalog include three string quartets -- *Already It Is Dusk* (1988), *Quasi Una Fantasia* (1991) and *... Songs Are Sung* (1995), all written for the Kronos Quartet -- and the *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (1993) for piano and 13 instruments. Mr. Gorecki joined the faculty of the Music Academy in Katowice in 1968, and became a professor in 1972 and rector from 1975 to 1979. Among his composition students were his son, Mikolaj Gorecki, who survives him, as do his wife, Jadwiga, and his daughter, Anna Gorecka-Stanczyk.

Mr. Gorecki left his post at the Music Academy in 1979 to protest the Polish government's refusal to allow Pope John Paul II to visit Katowice. He also composed his *Miserere* (1981) as a protest, in this case against the government's crackdown on members of Rural Solidarity in Bydgoszcz. But he always insisted on a distinction between his music and his politics. 'My dear, it would be a terrible poverty of life if music were political,' he told Bruce Duffie, a radio producer, in a 1994 interview. 'I cannot imagine it, because what does this mean -- 'political music?' That is why I ignore questions about political music, because music is music. Painting is painting. I can be involved in some political ideals. That would be my personal life.' Mr. Gorecki received honorary doctorates from the University of Warsaw, the Music Academy in Krakow and Concordia University in Quebec, and an honorary fellowship from Cardiff University. Last month Bronislaw Komorowski, the president of Poland, visited Mr. Gorecki in the hospital to award him the country's highest honor, the Order of the White Eagle. 'I think about my audience, but I am not writing for them,' Mr. Gorecki said in his 1994 interview. 'If I were thinking of my audience and one likes this, one likes that, one likes another thing, I would never know what to write. Let every listener choose that which interests him. I have nothing against one person liking Mozart or Shostakovich or Leonard Bernstein, but doesn't like Gorecki. That's fine with me. I, too, like certain things'" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/12/10].

November 13

Opera and Song. John Bilotta's *Trifles* and Yeats Songs, Edward Knight's *Life Is Fine*, Mark Alburger's *Job: A Masque*, and Sylvia Rickard's *Three Cabaret Songs*. Community Music Center, San Francisco, CA



Recording

Music of Tribute, Volume 6: Berg. Ieva Jokubaviciute, Vladimir Valjarevic, pianists; Marjorie Elinor Dix, mezzo-soprano. Labor Records. "Ieva Jokubaviciute may not be a household name yet. (Far from it; it is pronounced YAY-vuh ya-ka-ba-va-SHU-teh.) But anyone who has heard this young Lithuanian pianist -- in one of her infrequent New York recitals, as a member of the Naumburg Award-winning Trio Cavatina or as a most valuable player in season after season at the Bard Music Festival -- knows that she is an artist of commanding technique, refined temperament and persuasive insight. Those traits are amply demonstrated by Ms. Jokubaviciute's debut recording, issued on Labor Records as part of a continuing multiartist series, Music of Tribute. As in earlier volumes devoted to Bach, Debussy, Villa-Lobos, and others, the program mixes compositions by Berg with works dedicated to him or inspired by his music. Ms. Jokubaviciute's take on Berg's Piano Sonata (Op. 1) is lithe, muscular and transparent, creating a sense of spontaneity and play.

In Four Songs (Op. 2) she sensitively accompanies Marjorie Elinor Dix, a skillful mezzo-soprano who counts among her roles Marie in Berg's *Wozzeck*. The rest of the program, most of it previously unrecorded, provides a useful range of responses to Berg. Giacinto Scelsi's furtive *Poema No. 4: Passage du Poète* conjures mystery and majesty. Franghiz Ali-Zadeh's *Sonata No. 1*, jittery and ruminative by turns, evokes the presumed danger of embracing Berg during the 1970s in that composer's native Azerbaijan. Other works tap into Berg's music directly. The opening of his *Violin Concerto* provided the germ for Ross Lee Finney's wistful *Variations on a Theme by Alban Berg*. In *Reflections on Three Chords of Alban Berg* Jacob Gilboa turned a frugal borrowing from *Wozzeck* into a gripping exploration of touch and timbre. And Hans Erich Apostel, Berg's student and friend, transformed the fourth piece from the *Lulu Suite* into *Variations From Berg's Opera Lulu*, an appealing gambol for piano, four hands. Here and throughout this fascinating disc Ms. Jokubaviciute is an authoritative, compelling guide" [Steve Smith, *The New York Times*, 11/12/10]

