

GOMPPER: *Violin Concerto; Ikon; Flip; Spirals*

Wolfgang David, Peter Zazofsky, v; Royal Philharmonic/ Emmanuel Siffert

Naxos 559637—71 minutes

David Gompper is an Academy Award-winning American composer. He has worked internationally as a pianist, conductor, and composer. This is the first time I have heard his music, and I am very impressed. I feel refreshed that such exceptional music is still composed in these times of artistic apathy.

The incredible Wolfgang David takes the stage with the Violin Concerto. This Austrian violinist is extraordinary. His playing is exceptionally rich and opulent and can also be frighteningly delicate and distant when necessary.

The concerto begins with a violent solo violin gesture that explodes into a dense texture, Stravinskian in quality. The violin dances around to a very American tune, yet reflects a staple 20th Century violin concerto. Shostakovich seems to be of influence in passages of very involved counterpoint in the winds, which serve as support for the cadenza-like passages in the violin—as in the Op. 99 scherzo. The frantic exchange is interrupted by a beautifully meditative section. As the agitation begins to brew once more, the desperate counterpoint between the strings and winds comes to a drastic halt with a booming brass call that melts back into a meditative vision. The ending seems to be in the style of Shostakovich—this time, the end of the Fourth Symphony.

The second movement is an agonizing moment, with a never-ending violin line that reaches a transformative climax. III is certainly the high point of this piece. I cannot get enough! I am listening obsessively to the riveting ending. Again, it seems to redefine, yet celebrate the great violin concertos with sounds of Bartok and Shostakovich. David Gompper also does something rather rare these days: compose a good tune; it's glorious.

The other pieces are also very satisfying—especially the emotionally charmed *Ikon* and *Spirals*, inspired by the Fibonacci sequence.

What an absolute delight!

JACOBSEN

GOULD: *Freedom Fanfare; St Lawrence Suite; Jericho Rhapsody; Clarinet Derivations; Band Symphony 4*

Stephanie Zelnick, cl; University of Kansas Wind Ensemble/ Scott Weiss

Naxos 572629—62 minutes

This collection of concert band works by Morton Gould (1913-96) has introduced me to several works I wish I had played back in my band

days. The UK Wind Ensemble's exciting reading of 'Fanfare for Freedom', composed in 1942 for the Cincinnati Symphony, has all the block triads well balanced and in tune. From the same period is the 12-minute *Jericho Rhapsody* (1941), based on 'Joshua Fit the Battle' and in eight lively, creative sections that correspond with events in the Biblical story. Also quite attractive is *Saint Lawrence Suite* (1958), in four movements, each opening with a two-trumpet fanfare (symbolizing US-Canadian cooperation), and each with much quiet playing. It is good to hear Gould's Symphony 4 (1952), subtitled *West Point*, composed for that institution's sesquicentennial. In two movements, the work opens with a seemingly long (though only 12 minutes) 'Epitaphs' and concludes with the uplifting 'Marches'.

The program also includes *Derivations for Clarinet* (1955), given a smooth, swinging reading by University of Kansas clarinet professor Stephanie Zelnick. She is miked quite closely, and other musicians seem to move in and out of proximity. Apparently the engineers played an active role in how this piece sounds—but it sounds good.

Scott Weiss, director of bands at the University of Kansas since 2007, has his ensemble operating at a high level. I hear lots of great moments and no weaknesses. Fine playing and music-making!

KILPATRICK

GOUNOD: *Sacred Music*

Missae Breves 5+7; Noël; Bethlehem; 7 Words of Christ on the Cross; Evening Service (Anglican); Pater Noster

Raphaella Mayhous, s; Christa Bonhoff, a; Tobias Götting, org; I Vocalisti Chamber Choir/ Hans-Joachim Lustig

Carus 83161—65 minutes

Requiem in C; Mass in C minor

Charlotte Müller-Perrier, Valerie Bonnard, Christophe Einhorn, Christian Immler; Vocal & Instrumental Ensemble of Lausanne/ Michel Corboz

Mirare 129—63 minutes

Charles Gounod (1818-93) could be passionate about church music, and he was not shy when it came to expressing his strongly held convictions about it. He was an ally of Charles Bordes (1863-1909) in seeking the reform and elevation of church music in France to the standing it had enjoyed before the Revolution. He deplored the sentimental popular church music of his day, described in a letter of 1892 to Bordes as "the mush of romance and all the sweets of piety" (toutes les guimauves de la romance et toutes les sucreries de piété). His exemplars were Palestrina and Bach. Much of