

Baltic Concertos

VASKS: *Violin Fantasy*; **JUZELIUNAS:** *Violin & Organ Concerto*; **SENDEROVAS:** *Violin Concerto*

Dzeraldas Bidva, v; Karolina Juodelyte, org; Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra/ Modestas Pitrenas, Adrija Cepaite

Odradek 369—71 minutes

This release presents works by two Lithuanian composers and a Latvian. The soloists were born or educated in Lithuania, and judging from this release, the quality of music-making there is high. Dzeraldas Bidva—whom I had never heard of—is a first-rate violinist and musician. A delicate, celestial shimmering opens the Fantasy. Mysterious wonder and a detached panorama of nature carry the music forward, while the violin laments the mournful and barren realities of death and separation. Rarely is music this lugubrious and melancholic. There are similarities to Barber's famous Adagio for Strings: homogenous chords, the protracted pacing of swells, and devastating drops in energy after climaxes. But Barber's composition is less pensive and detached and more concerned with human expression. This is a good composition and an excellent performance of serious music.

Juzeliunas's concerto (1963) operates seamlessly with a difficult orchestration. Interspersed violin cadenzas supply an avenue of freedom, and their remarkable virtuosity propels the drama forward. Organ cadenzas supply a different perspective with remarkable power and drastic timbre changes. The full power of the organ is seldom unleashed, but its faded and delicate colors and drones draw the composition together. II opens with an extended bass whisper of organ sound. Slowly other voices emerge, but the subtle organ growling stubbornly persists, projecting dark, sinister, and troubled qualities. III draws on the language of Shostakovich.

A massive violin cadenza opens the Senderovas concerto. Sound clouds, chimes, and other percussion instruments allow for a wide range of timbres, from dark and somber to innocent and hopeful.

The Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra sounds superb, and Bidva proves he is one of the top violinists in the world. The Fantasy is a lovely work, though it feels longer than necessary. The other two works demand a lot from the listener and probably should be listened to separately. If not for Bidva, they would be difficult to plow through.

KELLENBERGER

Frost Symphony

Zwilich, Creston, McCloskey, Hindman, Stinson
Thomas Sleeper conducting

Albany 1750—69 minutes

The Frost Symphony, which has had favorable coverage in ARG, is new to me. They have a warm, mellow sound and do a terrific job with the contemporary Americana in this program. Three of the pieces are elegies: Ellen Taafe Zwilich's highly affecting Elegy for Flute and Strings, which displays the elegant, bluesy flute lines of Trudy Kane (who played with the Met Orchestra for 32 years) and the velvet strings of the FSO; Dorothy Hindman's imaginative and sinister *Setting Century*, which explores the relativity and inexorability of time; and Scott Stinson's chorale-like *Brother of Sleep*, displaying glowering brass and violent percussion. Lansing McCloskey's *Chanson pour Cordes* also has a mournful ambience.

Livening up the proceedings is the 1941 Alto Saxophone Concerto by the eclectic, underrated Paul Creston, displaying the virtuosity of Dale Underwood. The first movement, which has a lyrical second subject, climbs to a joyful major key conclusion. In the pensive slow movement, Underwood's delicious vibrato is matched by silken playing from the strings. Underwood is a master of color, fully displayed in the four cadenzas. His tone varies between a sexy lyricism in the lower registers and a fluttering fleetness in the upper reaches. In the finale, both saxophone and orchestra scamper with a light step, leaping to a bright, sweeping conclusion. The recordings, made from 1995 and 2015, come from concert performances in Miami's Gusman Hall—a good place to record.

SULLIVAN

Lithuanian Composers

BALAKAUSKAS: *Oboe Concerto*; **KUTAVICIUS:** *Dzukian Variations*; **MARTINAITIS:** *Concerto for Tenor, Flute, Oboe, and Harpsichord*

Robertas Beinaris, Eugenijus Paskevicius, ob; Giovanni Da Silva, t; Valentinas Gelgotas, fl; Vaiva Eidukaityte-Storastiene, hpsi; Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra/ Adrija Cepaite

Telos 221—61 minutes

Three 20th-Century works for chamber orchestra by Lithuanian composers.

Dzukian Variations of Bronius Kutavicius (b. 1932) uses the harmonic structure of a mournful Lithuanian folk song as the foundation for a series of textural and rhythmic varia-