Violin Sonata, Lament, Air and Dance

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Short Description

Tasmin Little (Violin) with Martin Roscoe (Piano)
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Reviews:

Tasmin Little's solo violin on George Lloyd's quietly powerful Lament, Air, and Dance Sonata [Albany TROY029-2] was rendered with a natural beauty and sensuous tone gripping enough to make one's heart stop. ***Jules Coleman***

...Martin Roscoe's playing is big scaled and bold; Tasmin Little offers richly coloured sound which is alive to sudden shifts of mood...an almost ideal partnership for Lloyd's autumnal world. The Lament begins with deceptive lyricism, the Sonata seesaws between dark pessimism and limpid beauty...deeply felt music. ***Hampstead and Highgate Gazette***

...Impressive resource and invention in both musical and pianistic terms. Martin Roscoe responds to the unfailingly effective keyboard textures with much superb playing.One cannot imagine better performances, nor ones better recorded. ***Hi Fi News***

...Roscoe is outstanding also in the last of this current batch of CDs, as accompanist to the equally admirable Tasmin Little, in two works for violin and piano that are as good as anything I have heard from Lloyd; both from the late 1970s and each substantial, about 30 minutes in length. Lloyd is himself a violinist and his affection for the instrument shows here not in demands for stratospheric athleticism but in music that sounds, to this non-fiddler, extraordinarily grateful to play. And it is very good music. The *Lament, Air and Dance* is a sonata in all but name, beginning with a free chaconne, written as a homage to Vitali's, followed by a slow movement of touching simplicity and a faster finale that threatens the listener with one of Lloyd's infuriating bits of jollity but quickly turns to deeper material. The *Sonata* is in a single movement of contrasting parts that, like its companion here and the works on the piano CD, underlines how much the discipline of limited instrumental resources seems to stimulate Lloyd's imagination. The performances strike me as exemplary, with Tasmin Little's tone belying her surname. ***Martin Anderson, Tempo***

....There is something rather special about the case of George Lloyd. Badly injured in World War II and dogged for a long time by illness, he struggled back to win recognition again, not at first as a composer but for (of all things) his horticultural achievements (he is a champion mushroom grower). I firmly believe the two things are connected; his music has a strong pastoral feel, not plain and simple in any naïve sense, but intermingled with the strangeness of Celtic legend.

A few years ago Edward Downes conducted one of Lloyd's longer symphonies in the Royal Festival Hall; the event excited me and the rest of the audience and instantaneously set the seal of popularity on music that features long swinging melodies and brash, colourful orchestration. The soul-searching harmonies in Lloyd's earlier work sought to recapture lost youth, and contrasts tellingly with the maturity of his advancing years.

No one should be ashamed of writing good tunes (quite a rarity these days), but Lloyd adds something else- a mastery of orchestration which throws into relief the prismatic colourings of the different instrumental sections and adds a strong feeling of warmth.

Lloyd's illness lies behind the creation of the works for violin and piano on this CD. During convalescence, he took up playing the violin once more. Yards of manuscript were discarded in his efforts to compose suitable music for the instrument but the *Lament, Air and Dance´* do not convey his obvious pleasure in making the violin sing sweetly and naturally.

"Lament" is heavily influenced by Vitali's "Chaconne" (a favourite and respected work), "Air" is calm and elegiac but I find "Dance" more interesting. This Puckish work takes us through a maze of musical adventures. Lloyd obviously relishes in leading us astray. The piano comes more into its own here,
lending *glissando* accompaniments to the violin's meanderings. I detect Szymanowski in this music (the First Violin Concerto) but I don't know whether Lloyd was actually influenced by the Polish composer.

The 28-and-a-half-minute single movement *Sonata* is quite different. Here Lloyd begins and ends in one key and explores several others in between, creating a restless tension and a variety of contrasting mood patterns. Some of the rhythmic motifs are reminiscent of Nielsen (the Chaconne for piano and two Violin and Piano Sonatas) and the piece has part atonal writing for the piano at the beginning, although after the conflicts have been resolved it settles down peacefully for a tonal conclusion. Tasmin Little treats all the music with great respect while Martin Roscoe partners her with his customary expertise. The recording is first class. ***BN, CD Review***

The second of Tasmin Little's debut recordings has more imaginative content and the performers respond with an ardent sense of conviction. Roscoe's playing is big-scaled and bold, Little offers richly coloured sound which is alive to sudden shifts of mood. An almost ideal partnership (at times the phrasing verges on the hard-edged) for Lloyd's autumnal world. The two works were written in the late 1970s, but inhabit the era of Debussy and the young Richard Strauss. Yet there is more to Lloyd than that; the *Lament* begins with deceptive lyricism, but edges into the harsh conflict of mechanised war. *The Sonata,* a continuous movement, see-saws between dark pessimism and limpid beauty. Lloyd's discursive structures are not in the uncomfortable category of greatness, but the tuneful attractiveness of this deeply felt music demands frequent hearing. ***Phillip Sommerich, Hamstead and Highgate Gazette***

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