

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

It was an emotional evening for many at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on Tuesday night, when Juan Pablo Izquierdo, the music director of the Carnegie Mellon University Philharmonic, took the podium. It was his final performance after 17 years with the group -- years in which he's built the orchestra into an accomplished interpreter of contemporary music, performing composers from Schoenberg to George Crumb. And from the first notes of "Arcana" -- the brash Edgard Varèse powerhouse that opened the program -- to the close of Stravinsky's epoch-making "Rite of Spring," it was clear that those years have been well spent: Izquierdo is an impassioned and insightful conductor who unleashes 20th-century music in all its raw, explosive glory.

"Arcana," from 1927, is a work that needs to be experienced in the concert hall; recordings never really capture the huge blocks of sound that Varèse sends hurtling through space, or the elemental force that builds, like a juggernaut, for 20 minutes. And although the Carnegie Mellon players are all students, and understandably lack some of the polish and precision of a professional orchestra, Izquierdo drew a bold and exciting performance from the group that more seasoned players would have been proud of.

Things quieted down considerably for Giacinto Scelsi's ethereal "Quattro Pezzi" from 1959, for chamber orchestra. Some think Scelsi a charlatan, a nut job, or both; his mature works are marked by a focus on long, sustained notes, which build in intensity through ultra-subtle changes in dynamics and texture, and they're not for everyone. But the Carnegie's reading of the provocative "Quattro Pezzi" (whose four sections each consist of a single tone) was exceptionally beautiful, a slow blossoming of elegant sound worlds shimmering with light and grace -- enough to make a believer out of anyone.

-- **Stephen Brookes**

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

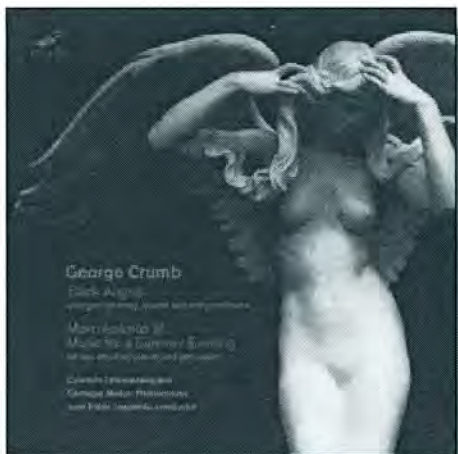
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George Crumb

(b. 1929)

mode 170



This recently released recording won the coveted "Diapason d'Or" Award, the most important independent European record prize in classical music.

George Crumb - Black Angels and Makrokosmos III

Makrokosmos III: Music for a Summer Evening (1974) (32:01)

for 2 amplified pianos and percussion

Nocturnal Sounds (The Awakening) (5:21)

Wanderer-Fantasy (4:52)

The Advent (7:17)

Myth (4:04)

Music of the Starry Night (10:26)

Luz Manríquez, Walter Morales, *pianos*

Nena Lorenz, Brian Spurgeon, Michael Passaris, Mark Shope,

percussion

Andrés Cladera, *voices, whistle, slide whistle, recorder*

Juan Pablo Izquierdo, *conductor*

Black Angels: Thirteen Images from the Dark Land (1970) (17:57)

arranged for string quartet and string orchestra by Juan Pablo Izquierdo with the permission of the composer

Night of the Electric Insects (1:29)

Sounds of Bones and Flutes (0:39)

Lost Bells (0:47)

Devil Music (1:41)

Danse Macabre (1:01)

Pavana Lachrymae (Der Tod und das Mädchen) (0:53)

Black Angels (2:23)

Sarabanda de la Muerte Oscura (0:52)

Lost Bells (Echo) (1:52)

God-music (2:36)

Ancient Voices (0:36)

Ancient Voices (Echo) (0:43)

Night of the Electric Insects (3:03)

②

Cuarteto Latinoamericano
 Members of the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic
 Juan Pablo Izquierdo, *conductor*

This CD combines two classic Crumb compositions of the 1970s expertly performed by members of The Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic under the direction of conductor Juan Pablo Izquierdo.

Black Angels for string quartet was written as a response to the Vietnam War. The work draws from an arsenal of sounds including shouting, chanting, whistling, whispering, gongs, maracas, and crystal glasses. The score bears two inscriptions: *in tempore belli* (in time of war) and "Finished on Friday the Thirteenth, March, 1970". In its arrangement here by Juan Pablo Izquierdo - with the approval of Crumb - for string quartet with string orchestra, the soundscape of *Black Angels* becomes all the more powerful and terrifying. The string quartet soloists are the superb Cuarteto Latinoamericano.

Music for a Summer Evening is scored for the classic Bartok combination of two pianos and 2 percussionists, here performing on a vast array of instruments. The pianists are also required to use extended techniques and preparations, which together with the percussion, create a unique sound world. In an effort to achieve greater clarity and precision, Juan Pablo Izquierdo chose not only to conduct *Music for a Summer Evening*, but also to divide the percussion parts amongst four players. The superb recording conveys all the details, subtlety, power and magical atmosphere of these works.

la présente version privilégie
 hédonisme sonore et expressionnisme, parti pris soulignant l'imaginaire
 fécond du compositeur (ululements de Wanderer Fantasy, résonances
 lugubres de The Advent). L'équilibre entre pianos et percussions,
 privilégiant fréquemment ces dernières, rend ici plus largement justice à
 l'extraordinaire palette que Crumb avait convoquée sans jamais tomber
 dans l'anecdotique: quelque soixante-dix instruments différents
 (cymbals, crotales ou cloches-tubes) au service d'un << drame cosmique
 >> conjuguant l'énigmatique à l'illustratif.

), la présente réalisation offer
 une savoureuse amplification des effets, une étonnante diversité de plans
 sonores (Lost Bells) tout en préservant la densité et la virtuosité
 instrumentale de la pièce.

--- Nicolas Baron, *Diapson Magazine*, Juin 2007

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Giacinto Scelsi

(1905-88)

mode 95



Volume 2: The Orchestral Works 1

Hymnos (1963) *for organ & 2 orchestras* (10:59)

Hurqualia (1960) *for large orchestra* (4:37, 2:43, 4:02)

Konx-Om-Pax (1968) *for large orchestra & chorus* (5:41, 2:11, 9:59)

The Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic & Concert Choir
Juan Pablo Izquierdo, *conductor*

Canti del Capricorno (1962-72)

Canto No 1 *for soprano & percussion* (3:33)

Canto No 2 *for tenor* (2:30)

Canto No 14 *for tenor & percussion* (3:08)

Canto No 15 *for soprano* (2:50)

Canto No 18 *for soprano & percussion* (1:57)

Canto 19 *for voices & instruments* (2:33)

Pauline Vaillancourt, *soprano*

Douglas Ahlstedt, *tenor*

Volume 2 in Mode's Scelsi Edition presents three of his rarely heard and recorded orchestral works, vividly captured in outstanding sound.

Hymnos' large orchestra is divided antiphonally into two almost identical groups, symmetrically placed on each side of a central axis made up of the organ, timpani, and percussion. About halfway through the piece, as a result of accumulated pedal tones and their harmonics, the aura of a phantom choir miraculously appears-or so it seems-in a spine-tingling sonic revelation.

Hurqualia was written at the height of the composer's maturity. As with *Hymnos*, Scelsi obsesses on a single note-in this case a different note for each of the four movements. It reveals a shocking Scelsi: violent, impulsive, loud, fast.

Konx-Om-Pax is the word 'peace' in three languages: ancient Assyrian, Sanskrit, and Latin. This 20-minute work for choir and orchestra is his crowning achievement. The orchestra is the largest ever assembled by Scelsi, projected onto an enormous landscape of sound. The joining of 'all' in the third movement, combining the massive forces of orchestra and choir, makes an inevitable allusion to a previous 'ode to joy.'

The orchestral works are interspersed with selections from **Canti del Capricorno**. A collection of twenty songs, some of the Canti are written specifically for soprano voice, while for others the exact voice is not specified. Improvisation and 'personal inspiration' play a large part in the interpretation of the songs. Presented here are some for solo voice and others with instruments, performed by soprano Pauline Vaillancourt and tenor Douglas Ahlstedt.

A student of Hermann Scherchen, Juan Pablo Izquierdo's interpretations of the Viennese masters of the 19th century continue a long-standing European tradition, while also being internationally for his bold interpretations of avant-garde music of the 20th century. His first Mode disc with the superb Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic garnered rave reviews.

This is glorious Scelsi -- a must-have item for Scelsi fans, and the perfect disc to make converts out of skeptics and innocents.

Scelsi's orchestral works build intense textures from very few pitches. Some movements (or sections of movements) focus on one single pitch played by different instruments in different octaves and colored with accents, microtones and extended techniques. In these three works Scelsi also uses long pedal tones, prominent percussion, and groups of amplified instruments. Every passing beat is a laboratory of orchestration: We may hear two horns playing a D with an oboe playing the same D an octave higher, and suddenly they will fade away and reveal muted violas and cellos playing the same notes. It's all very miraculous and entrancing, and has no precedent in Western music.

--- Phil Ehrensaft, *WholeNote*, February 2006

This is the second volume in Mode's ongoing Scelsi series, promisingly titled "The Orchestral Works I," and it makes a perfect introduction to the composer. The orchestral music is much grander and mellower than in the *Accord* set, and the combination of miniature vocal works and enormous orchestral ones makes very clear Scelsi's non-Western interests and preoccupations.

... and I can't wait for more. In truth, it's easier to listen to Scelsi than to describe his music. I recommend this disc wholeheartedly.

--- Grant C. Covell, *La Folia* online review, August 2002
(www.lafolia.com)

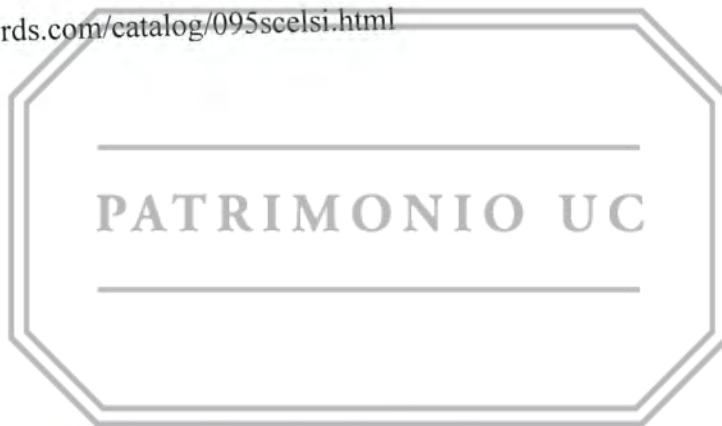
"Hurqualia" (1960), "Hymnos" (1963) and "Konx-Om-Pax" (1968) for large orchestra (augmented by organ on "Hymnos" and chorus on "Konx") take their place alongside the major orchestral works of the decade by the likes of Ligeti, Xenakis, Penderecki and Zimmermann.

"Konx-Om-Pax" (I agree with Riccardo Schulz's description of it as "Scelsi's crowning achievement") should be on every composer's work desk along with Stravinsky's "Sacre", Debussy's "Jeux" (and a handful of other pieces) as an example of truly spectacular orchestration.

I'm looking forward to Volume 2 enormously.
--- Dan Warburton, *www.paristransatlantic.com/magazine*,
April 2001

<http://www.moderecords.com/catalog/095scelsi.html>

4/14/2008



, this disc contains vivid readings, in excellent sound,

' The best way to describe Scelsi's large scale works is to think of a juggernaut, rolling down a steep hill, getting louder, more insistent, and yes, crushing everything in its way. I love this music.
--- Stephanie von Buchau, *The Tribune*, Oakland CA, 21 February 2001

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1



Xenakis & Varèse

mode 58

modere

Volume 3: "Xenakis & Varèse"

Iannis Xenakis

Dämmerchein
(1994)

for large orchestra. (first recording)

Persephassa (1969)

for percussion ensemble

La Déesse Athéna (1992)

for baritone, percussion solo & chamber ensemble

Philip Larson, baritone

Timothy Adams, percussion solo

(first recording)

Edgard Varèse

Amériques

(1918-1922)

for large orchestra

The Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

Juan Pablo Izquierdo, conductor

This remarkable disc brings together two leaders of the 20th century

2

avant-garde: the early French iconoclast Edgard Varèse and Iannis Xenakis, who now lives in France. Varèse's influence on modern music is indisputable -- from the later avant-garde, to Frank Zappa to movie soundtracks -- all borrowed from Varèse's unique style. He has also had a direct influence on Xenakis musically and personally, where the two collaborated on Varèse's electronic work *Poème Electronique* for the Brussels Worlds Fair.

Conductor Juan Pablo Izquierdo has had much experience directing Xenakis's music and other modern masterworks. Xenakis was invited by Izquierdo and Carnegie Mellon University for an extended visit featuring a festival of his music. All three works were prepared and recorded with the composer's supervision.

Dämmerchein ("Rays of Twilight") is one of the latest large orchestra works by Xenakis. An energy-charged, volcanic composition from the first note to the last, its massive contrasting blocks of sound give the aura of light through music.

Persephassa is a classic in Xenakis' oeuvre and one of the great percussion ensemble works.

La Déesse Athéna is a thickly scored chamber work, with the instruments often playing in their most aggressive ranges. The virtuoso baritone part calls for the singer to range from his lowest register to high falsetto, effecting the dual male/female nature of the Greek deity Athéna.

Finally, Varèse's monumental **Amériques**, for a huge orchestra including 11 percussionists and sirens, was influenced of the urban landscape of New York - a thing of violent beauty. At the climax, the full power of the orchestra is unleashed in one of the most expansive and impressive passages in the entire orchestral repertoire. A sonic experience richly recorded and guaranteed to blow you out of your seat!

REVIEWS:

Iannis Xenakis

Dämmerchein / Persephassa / La Déesse Athéna

Mode 58

The Mode disc places another late Xenakis orchestra piece from 1994 alongside a crack performance of Varèse's *Amériques*. With its German title, *Dämmerchein (Rays of Twilight)* making explicit reference to Wagner's *Die Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods)*, this is a one-off Xenakis piece with a harmonic language that falls as close to tonality as he ever dared. The high-energy level and dramatic sweep is, however, absolutely characteristic.

--- Philip Clark, *The Wire*, July, 2006

3

**Iannis Xenakis: DOMMERSCHHEIN ; PERSEPHASSA; LA
DEESSE ATHENA**

Edgard Varèse: AMERIQUES

Philip Larson / Timothy Adams, Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic / Juan
Pablo Izquierdo

...a long-awaited new recording of 1969's percussion classic "Persephassa" (hands up those of you with the old silver Philips vinyl with the Percussions de Strasbourg). "The piece exploits in a new manner the Screen Theory or the logical function of residue classes modulo m ". Xenakis tells us, though if you haven't managed to make it through his book "Formalized Music" yet (don't worry, not many have) this doesn't matter; the fact that the work was written and scored from thousands of mathematical calculations makes no difference--this is still going strong after thirty years.

Instead of filling up the disc with other Xenakis orchestral music, ... Juan Pablo Izquierdo opts for Varèse's 1921 classic "Amériques", in so doing inviting comparison with the mighty Boulez NYPO recording. In fact, the Carnegie Mellon students equip themselves rather well, and the mix brings out some odd pockets of instrumental activity I hadn't noticed before ... the ending knocks Boulez out of the ballpark, thanks to the apocalyptic baritone fire siren from the local Mount Lebanon Fire Station--~~God help your ears if ever your house burns down in Pittsburgh.~~

---Dan Warburton, *Paris Transatlantic Review*,
November 2000

4

No such problems with Edgard Varèse's 23 minute *Amériques* from 1922 New World futurism expressed in a montage of impressionism, sirens and alchemical violence. In Varèse's historico-materialist aesthetic gesture never overreaches sonic actuality. The performance here is fleet, the string writing realised with close-focused precision. Perhaps the initial flute motif is played a little too softly but by the end Izquierdo manages to bring off the coherence via cataclysm that was Varèse's intent. Half an hour of great new music an exceptional discs.

--- Ben Watson, *The Wire*, March 1998

IZQUIERDO'S XENAKIS AND VARESE GARNERS RAVE REVIEWS

Harold Lewis, in the internet review of mode 58 (rec.music.classical.recordings) had this to say:

"Mode 58, the latest CD in Mode Records' Xenakis series, contains, in addition to three works by Xenakis, the best performance and recording I have yet heard of Varese's *Americues*. Juan Pablo Izquierdo conducts the excellent Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic in a reading of tremendous authority, fully alert to the changes of mood, pace and texture, bringing out the intricate detail and subtlety of the scoring as well as the stark power of the work. The performance is aided by superb engineering, offering a marvellous concert-hall ambience, wide but natural dynamic range and sound that is clean and sharply focused--a thousand miles away from the muzzy, upholstered fuzz often perpetrated these days by Sony Classical and DG. Varese enthusiasts who don't yet know this recording should get their hands on a copy as soon as possible."

Xenakis - Varese

Scelsi

PATRIMONIO UC

Gaumb

material para parte DC