

remainder very well. I hear notes but not personality in this recording.

METZ

Touch: Toccata Project I

Roem, Antheil, Hoiby, Fine, Sowerby, Liebermann, Antheil, Lees, Harris, Lehman, Menotti, Muczynski, Diemer, Lewenthal, Riegger, Persichetti, Bastien
Philip Amalong, p
Albany 1142—57 minutes

Look it up in any encyclopedia and you'll think you know what a toccata is. Listen to this and you will not be so sure any more, because the toccata can come in any guise. You want the generic, aggressive, virtuosic toccata? Listen to George Antheil, Robert Muczynski, Wallinford Riegger, or James Bastien. Or an elegant, light piece? Toccatas by Irving Fine, Lowell Liebermann, Vincent Persichetti, Ned Roem, or Mark Lehman will satisfy you. Even a serenade is possible, combining lyrical elements with a fast tempo in Emma Lou Diemer's work.

While the above works are related to the romantic, virtuosic notion of the genre, others are more inspired by the baroque toccata, a multi-sectional piece, often in improvisatory style. Raymond Lewenthal, Gian Carlo Menotti, Benjamin Lees, Roy Harris, Leo Sowerby, and Lee Hoiby wrote elaborate compositions, expressing a wide range of emotions.

With this variety of composers the excellent liner notes by ARG's Mark Lehman are especially helpful, as they characterize the genre, the composers, their compositions, and their relation to each other in an enlightening way. Mark Lehman also contributed a toccata to the collection, in its lighthearted attitude inspired by Mozart as well as by Prokofieff. Another piece is even explicitly declared a *Toccata alla Scarlatti* (composed by Raymond Lewenthal), joining Scarlatti's texture and form with modern chromatism and consistent 5/8 meter.

Ned Roem exploits the various possibilities to organize the eighth-notes in an 8/8 measure. He even includes an allusion to *Aufschwung* Op. 12:2 by Robert Schumann, the composer who wrote the first significant romantic-style Toccata.

George Antheil's first toccata explores polytonal chords, often alternating and in the end even juxtaposing chords harmonically unrelated to each other. A *ricercare* precedes Menotti's toccata, adding more depth through an imitative section and a choral style variation on a theme from his opera *The Old Maid and the Thief*. This melody, the main motive also in the toccata, unites the two pieces.

Roy Harris's toccata is the most reminiscent of JS Bach's famous organ toccatas. It sounds less driven, more like a recitative, and

includes frequent pedal points as well as short imitative sections.

There is not enough space to discuss every piece, but each one has its particular personality and contributes to the iridescent color that makes this special.

The moods may be diverse, but one thing is true for all pieces on the recording: they require considerable pianistic dexterity, and pianist Philip Amalong masters not only the technical challenges with sovereignty, but also offers interpretations of the more complex pieces by Roem and Harris that are convincing and captivating. This program will broaden everyone's mind about the toccata; and considering the struggles the composers had to overcome to create such variety in a genre that is often considered a playground for pure mechanical ostentation, the well known proverb gains a new meaning: Necessity begets ingenuity.

MUHLBOCK

Esperanza: Sounds of Hope

Roas Antonelli, p
Albany 1140—74 minutes

The "hope" in the title of this beguiling collection of Argentinean piano music refers to the excitement for new beginnings that has attracted immigrants to that country for so many years. The gentle melancholy of Carols Gustavino, the delicate trceries and Satie-like minimalism of Alberto Williams, the charming tangos of Astor Piazzolla, the French-tinted effects of Floro Ugarte, the Albeniz-like Spanish riffs of Julian Guirre, and the luxurious lyricism of Angel Lasala are all evoked with the soulful pianism of Rosa Antonelli, who plays with free rubato and color but also restraint. Her Steinway D is given a luscious recording.

The *Three Argentinean Dances* by Ginastera that conclude the collection have a special seductiveness and sophistication. The wonderful composer, who composed in so many different styles, rarely gets the full credit he deserves, though he is certainly better known than the others on this album (except Piazzolla). Altogether, this is a splendid introduction to Argentinean piano music.

SULLIVAN

British Piano 4-Hands

WALTON: *Duets for Children*; VAUGHN-WILLIAMS: *Wasps Overture*; ELGAR: *Introduction & Allegro*; McCARTNEY: *Appaloosa-Meditation*; *A Leaf*; *Singalong Junk*

Duo Caron, p
XXI 1603—57 minutes

Canadian sister and brother Josée and Martin Caron, playing a gorgeous sounding Italian