

CD REVIEW 108

KARL FLORINI

Concerto for violin and chamber orchestra

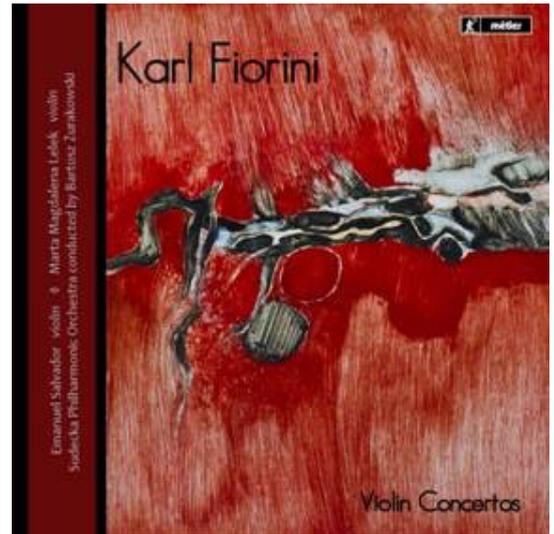
Violin Concerto No 2

Emmanuel Salvador (violin, in first concerto)

Marta Magdalene Lelek (violin, in second concerto)

Sudecka Philharmonic Orchestra, Bartosz Zurakowski.

Metier MSV28533 (49.56).



This is a super disc of two very impressive violin concertos. They are not trammelled by traditionalism and romantic slush but are powerful and robust works full of interest with never a dull moment. The writing for the soloist is exemplary and the orchestra is bright and staggeringly good.

The sound could not be better and the two violinists are remarkable with excellent intonation and a virtuosity that does not get in the way of the music.

The music is always vital and alive. The composer does not lead us down alleys of uneventful music or ghastly wallowing which we could say about some concertos.

There will be critics who will discuss the eclecticism of these works to show their superior knowledge and talk about the manipulation of sound but we should listen and enjoy these works without these unnecessary deviations. Shallow reviewers can read into music what is not there.

The first concerto was written soon after the death of his mother but do not look for tragedy or pathos here, although the music is not serene. Perhaps there is anger but the concerto is best perceived without these distractions. There is a short prelude and four movements lasting a total of about 25 minutes.

The second concerto is also impressive but the writer of the sleeve notes says that the music often suggests Schubert. Thankfully it does not. Here is a composer pursuing new lines but retaining lyricism and drama both to equal effect. He is without doubt a composer of innovation.

He was born in Malta in 1979, studied in his home country and then came to London to study at the Guildhall School and the Royal College of Music. He now lives in France and served as composer-in-residence in Avignon. He has composed several important works including a Cello Concerto. His works have featured in many festivals from Spain to Finland. He has won many prizes from Boston, Luxembourg, Guildhall School and received bursaries from other organisations.

He is an important composer but, I would suspect, little known in the UK.

The soloists are, first, Emmanuel Salvador, born 1981 who has performed in many venues and won prizes and one does not have to wonder why. He premiered the Violin Concerto by Joaquin dos Santos and currently is the leader of Orquestra de Norte in Portugal. He has been declared to be the finest Portuguese violinist of our time.

Marta Magdalene Lelek is Polish and Poland has a wealth of magnificent string players. She has worked with the great Wanda Wilkomirska. This young violinist has been acclaimed as having a stunning technique which thrills the audience with the most brilliant sound. She began her studies at the age of nine at the Academy of Music in Katowice and then went to the Guildhall School of Music. She has in her repertoire some interesting concertos including those by composers who are little known.

The conductor is amazing as he copes with difficult scores with apparent ease, something certain famous conductors cannot do. To say more would be a list of superlatives.

I cannot recommend this CD highly enough. This is REAL music.

(561)

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