

As the title for this recording implies, "Testimonials and Remembrances" celebrates selected compositions by Dana Paul Perna, many of which having been written with respect and homage to various figures who, not only influenced and shaped his creativity, but graced the world with their genius. In track order, here are the titles the listener will encounter, all in their world premiere recordings:

1) Riconoscenza per Leonard Bernstein (1990) (2:00)
Strings of the Štátna Filharmónia Košice,
Tristan Michael Willems conducting

To honor the passing of this most important figure in Music, this "remembrance" was written on October 15, 1990, the day after Bernstein's demise. Since that time, Perna has written four additional (and separate, they do not collectively constitute a cycle) pieces that use "Riconoscenza per..." in their title, all of which remember a fallen conductor, and, in some instances, similar with Bernstein, composer/conductor.

Three Characteristic Pieces for Clarinet (1977) (5:02)
2) 1. Chalumeau (1:55)
3) 2. Waltz/Scherzo (1:18)
4) 3. Toccata (1:50)
Gregory Barrett, clarinet

As its title accurately implies, this work underscores characteristics of the clarinet in a manner that exploits its timbre, dexterity, and moods. Gregory Barrett has long been a champion of Perna's music, so it became essential that his artistry be represented on this recording.

Two Pieces for Organ, Pop. 51 (1980) (8:42)
5) 1. John Wayne (5:38)
6) 2. Evocation (3:04)
Larissa Bulava, organ (recorded at the Riga Dome Cathedral, Riga, Latvia)

The reason for the title of this work rests largely with the fact that Perna did not know what to call it, nor its movements for that matter. Since there were two pieces written for organ, of no particular meaning apart from that, voila, the titles manifest themselves. This recording was produced at the historic organ of the Riga Dome Cathedral, the instrument for which Franz Liszt wrote its inaugural piece.

Three Dirges for Violin and Cello (1976 - 1980) (6:16)
7) 1. In memoriam - Mark Stringano (1:40)
8) 2. to Berg (1:42)
9) 3. to Shostakovich (2:49)
Janis Bulavs, violin, and Leons Veldre, cello

As its title implies, these three pieces were written in memory of individuals who meant a great deal to Perna. Mark Stringano was a classmate of his who passed away suddenly from massive kidney failure, while Alban Berg and Dmitri Shostakovich were composers whose works greatly inspired him.

10) Nonet: In Memoriam - Charles T. Griffes, Pop. 60b (1985 version) (5:30)

Woodwinds of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra,
Dana Paul Perna, conducting

At an early age, not only had the music of Charles Tomlinson Griffes served as an influence on Perna, he even researched the late composer's manuscripts, observed his watercolors, and assisted the late Edward Maisel, the author of Griffes' biography, during the time Maisel was at work on its second edition. Originally composed for the combined forces of saxophone quartet and brass quintet in 1981, Perna prepared an edition for nine woodwinds in 1985, the version that is heard on this recording.

They Live Down the Road (for Piano Trio), Pop. 49 (1979) (13:33)

11) 1. forcefully and accented.... (6:56)

12) 2. floating legato....faster, with intensity.... (6:34)

The Riga Piano Trio (Janis Bulavs, violin, Leons Veldre, cello
and Aldis Liepiņš, piano)

Around the time work on this piece began, while walking up Searington Drive in Syosset, New York, Perna waved "hello" to one of his neighbors as he was leaving his house to walk his dog. Immediately, the title came into his head, later finding its way onto paper. Apart from that, it is a piano trio - nothing more, nothing less - since there is no "programme" for this piece apart from that anecdote.

13) Oratory for Organ, Pop.56 (1982) (6:51)

Larissa Bulava, organ (recorded at the Riga Dome Cathedral, Riga, Latvia)

This single movement organ work derives its title from a vision Perna had regarding an Orator orating to a crowd of people. Its world premiere was presented at the Chant d'Oiseau/Vogelsang Church in Brussels, Belgium on 25 April, 1989 by organist, Susan Carol Woodson to whom the work is dedicated.

14) Wilder Syntax for clarinet quartet (2004) (10:19)

Quattro diferente: Guntars Gedroics, Kristaps Kitners,
Marina Vidmonte, clarinets, Česlavs Grods, bass clarinet

While its title may suggest something completely different than what it implies, the "Wilder" in this case, is in reference to the great, late Alec Wilder (1907-1980), whose work Perna greatly admires. When asked to write some arrangements for Quattro diferente, Perna could not come up with something and began to play around with an idea just to get "something going." Within a week, "Wilder Syntax" was completed in June 2004. Dedicated to Quattro diferente, they presented its premiere in Ogre, Latvia just three weeks after its completion, recording it in Riga a short time later.

Divi Skardarbum for two piano/four hands (1989) (10:05)

15) 1. Largo (6:03)

16) 2. Forcefully (4:02)

Antra and Normunds Viksne, duo pianists

The title, "Divi Skardarbum....." (which, simply translated means "Two Pieces.....") states it all. Of the two, the second piece was finished first, but the order became clear once the first one became completed.

17) Riconoscenza per Sir Georg Solti (1997) (3:23)
Strings of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra,
Dana Paul Perna, conducting

Similar to the work with which this recording opened, this "remembrance" celebrates the great Sir Georg Solti (1912 -1997) whom Perna saw conduct on several occasions, and whose work he truly admired.

TOTAL TIME: 72:33

Tracks were recorded at various venues over an extended period of time that were provided through the services of the following:

Engineers:

tracks 5-9, 11-13, and 15-16 - Normunds Slava (Latvian Radio),
tracks 10 and 17 - Kārlis Pinnis and Vilnas Kaksis (Riga Recording Studio, Latvia),
track 1 - Emil Niznansky and Hubert Geschwandtner (Dom umenia, Slovakia)
track 14 - Vilnis Kundrāts

Booklet annotation: Allen Jenkins

Organist's Assistant at the Riga Dome Cathedral for Larissa Bulava was Arnolds Dimants.

Editor, Mastering, Project Producer: Dana Paul Perna

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