

Review of the CD Marjan Mozetich: Lament in the Trampled Garden (2009), by Penderecki String Quartet, Gryphon Trio, Erica Goodman, Shalom Bard, Christopher Dawes, & Nora Shulman

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However, I highly recommend this book to any first-year undergraduate who wishes to use Wikipedia as a source for class essays. Here at last is a way to go under your professor's radar and include Wikipedia in your bibliography! Teachers beware, Wikipedia is in print!

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Penderecki String Quartet, Gryphon Trio, Erica Goodman, Shalom Bard, Christopher Dawes, and Nora Shulman. *Marjan Mozetich: Lament in the Trampled Garden*. Centrediscs, 2009 CMC CD 14009

Marjan Mozetich is one of Canada's most accessible composers. For proof of this, one needs to look no further than his considerable award collection. The most telling of these accolades is his 2002 Jan V. Matejcek Concert Music Award (SOCAN) granted to

the Canadian composer with the highest number of performances as well as a 2010 Juno Award for his composition *Lament in the Trampled Garden* for string quartet (he was nominated for two works in this category). This CD release exemplifies the self-proclaimed simplicity and directness of his compositional style which has no doubt led to Mozetich's audience appeal and subsequent commercial success.

Containing four multi-movement works, *Lament in the Trampled Garden* is dedicated to Mozetich's substantial forays in chamber music genres over a career spanning more than twenty years. While many neo-classical composers' transparent use of styles from the past can lead to predictability, Mozetich dangerously (yet successfully) navigates Romantic cliché. The other Juno-nominated work on this CD, *Angels in Flight* (1987) for harp, flute, clarinet, and string quartet, exemplifies this neo-classical style in its adherence to traditional forms. At the same time, this work foreshadows the composer's minimalistic tendencies that are apparent in later works such as the final selection on this release, *Scales of Joy and Sorrow* (2007) for piano trio. Mozetich's growing discontent with the avant-garde is clear in the aforementioned *Lament* (1992). Although he studied with prominent figures such as Luciano Berio and John Weinzweig at the onset of his career, this work's tonal harmonic design recalls a Tchaikovskian aesthetic (a common comparison) which is interrupted by a tango-like middle section reminiscent of Piazzolla. However, it is his *Hymn of Ascension* (1998) for string quartet and harmonium in which the composer's voice shines brightest. The slow culmination of harmonies and the

meditative mood of this work give Mozetich room to eschew comparisons with the past, allowing the music to speak for itself.

The performances by the Penderecki String Quartet, Gryphon Trio, and many guest instrumentalists showcase the excellence that has been come to be expected from these artists. The clarity of Mozetich's gestures is expertly revealed by the rhythmic drive and musical commitment of each performer. In addition, as is the case with most Centrediscs releases, the sound quality is rich and brilliant. The CD packaging and presentation is generally attractive and clean which compliments the simplicity of Mozetich's works. Detracting from this effect, however, are the overindulgent liner notes of musicologist Alexander Colpa. Although the fanciful descriptions are no-doubt interesting, the notion of 'too much information' being detrimental to a work is very much relevant here. Often telegraphing compositional surprises that should be left for the listener to experience, Colpa is far too explicit. For example, in the description of *Scales of Joy and Sorrow*, Colpa deems it necessary to reveal that the work's 'sweetest moment' occurs exactly at 4'33" seconds into the work as "the piano and cello take the theme from the A flat to F as if to savor the material from a new perspective." Some listeners may find this kind of interpretational spoon-feeding unnecessary, if not off-putting. The inclusion of personal gesticulating (from someone other than the composer) is particularly inappropriate considering that more background information would have been a welcome use of space. However, as the two Juno nominations suggest, Mozetich's attractive style and the masterful

performances featured on this CD far outweigh the gratuitous nature of the liner notes.

What makes a composer ‘accessible’? Certainly, musical works can be accessible as a result of transparency and predictability. In the century that witnessed the invention of elevator-music, it was not uncommon for ‘audience-friendly’ music to be condemned as artistically suspect. Without proper consideration, the compositional style as exhibited on *Lament in the Trampled Garden* could easily be dismissed as pandering to a common denominator when compared to more avant-garde voices of his generation. However, this latest release proves that with clarity of intention and courageous simplicity, Marjan Mozetich’s music is both accessible and stimulating.

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Paul Helmer. *Growing with Canada: The Émigré Tradition in Canadian Music*. Montreal, QC and Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009. xii, 388 pp. ISBN 978-0-7735-3581-7

European exile studies have grown and advanced significantly on both sides of the Atlantic in the past decades. The tale that so many European artists took flight from Nazi Germany to start anew in the United States has been told many times. The story of the musicians whose impact on the American music scene (Korngold in the film industry; Schoenberg taking on political and religious works on the west coast; Hindemith at Yale) has been told and refined: