

Takemitsu - Corona; For Away; Piano Distance; Undisturbed Rest (1974)

Written by bluesever

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A Corona - London Version 22:43 B1 For Away 7:12 B2 Piano Distance 4:30 B3 Undisturbed Rest 6:52 B3.1 Slowly Sadly As If To Converse B3.2 Quietly And With Cruel Reverberation B3.3 A Song Of Love Roger Woodward - Piano

Takemitsu: Corona is a long awaited reissue of a disc one would have thought had appeared on compact disc long ago, but for some reason it never surfaced until now. This is a recording made in London for English Decca in 1973 and was once a coveted LP treasured by connoisseurs of freaked-out classical music under the appellation of "Roger Woodward plays the Complete Piano Music of Toru Takemitsu." This was the first recording made by Australian pianist Woodward, who has moved on to many, many other things since 1973, including making acclaimed recordings of standard literature and themed compilations of classical "hits" for the Australian market, in addition to recording Feldman, Xenakis, and revisiting Takemitsu's complete piano music for Etcetera in 1990. Not quite "complete" even in 1973, Takemitsu: Corona is less so now, as Takemitsu returned to the piano in a few more pieces composed afterward. This Explore Records reissue, which remains faithful to the original LP, seems short now at 41 minutes, though part of the appeal of the original release was that, owing to its long silences and extreme sense of distance, it seemed to go on forever.

Everything that was treasurable about Takemitsu: Corona is still intact, and it holds up well in spite of the welter of Takemitsu releases that has come along in the meantime, particularly since his death in 1996. Woodward's realization of Corona, a rare Takemitsu effort in the use of graphic notation, was pioneering in 1973 and still seems fresh now. Written for three pianists, Woodward realizes Corona playing all three parts, moving inside the piano and extending the realization to include parts for organ and harpsichord. It was way out, trippy music in 1973 and still sounds so now, although in hindsight it seems a little closer to Pink Floyd than anything one would normally associate with Takemitsu. For Away was written for Woodward, and has since become something of a standard repertory piece among pianists who specialize in twentieth century music. Piano Distance is the earliest work on the disc and the most violently explosive,

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whereas Undisturbed Rest suits its title, couched in the quiet, spacious manner of For Away.

All of these performances are authoritative, and by twenty first century standards, can even be considered "historical." These tapes have held up very well, and that's a good thing, as the original Decca pressings were particularly fragile and conducive to ticks and pops that made them, owing to the nature of the music, unlistenable if even slightly damaged. For those of us who have long needed to replace our worn copies of the original LP, this Explore Records reissue of Takemitsu: Corona will be a boon, and hopefully the fans of Takemitsu who have never heard his music reproduced from an LP will come along and finally have a chance to enjoy Woodward's interpretations. --- Uncle Dave Lewis, Rovi

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