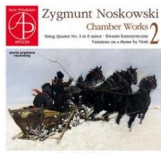


Zygmunt Noskowski – Chamber Works 2: String Quartet No.3 etc. (2013)

Written by bluelover

Tuesday, 20 December 2016 15:30 -

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String Quartet No. 3 1. *Allegro Espressivo* 2. *Moderato Scherzando* 3. *Largo Tragico* 4. *Allegro Feroce* Variations on a theme by Viotti 5. *Thema: Andante Con Moto* 6. *Variation 1: L'istesso Tempo* 7. *Variation 2: Piu Mosso A Risoluto* 8. *Variation 3: Allegretto Moderato* 9. *Variation 4: Andante* 10. *Variation 5: Tempo Di Marcia Maestoso* 11. *Variation 6: Larghetto* 12. *Variation 7: Allegretto Moderato* 13. *Variation 8: Alla Polacca* 14. *Fuge: Andante - Tempo 1: Andante - Allegro Molto* 15. *Humorous Quartet "Whichever way you like it" in D major* 16. *Vis a vis - Tram Duet - Musical Humoresque for violin and cello*
Four Strings Quartet: Fiedukiewicz Lucyna - 1st violin Witek Grzegorz - 2nd violin Raszewska Beata - viola Tudzierz Łukasz – cello

Zygmunt Noskowski is noteworthy, the booklet tells us, for being the composition teacher of Karłowicz and Szymanowski, as well as for being “simply a genius of a composer”. This, I suggest, is a matter of opinion. The best work here is the piece he wrote as a student, the Viotti variations, which charge forward from a D minor andante theme into a series of increasingly dramatic, momentous twists and turns. Given that he was a student at the time, it naturally ends with a fugue.

The Humorous Quartet is a four-minute suite of miniatures including a mazurka, parodic Strauss family waltz, Paderewski quote and several other allusions, one of them a very famous tune - I've been driving myself mad trying to remember the name. There's not much by way of musically-generated humour, except for some very sudden shifts of mood. Almost all the “jokes” are simply the references to other composers.

The big clunker is the 34-minute string quartet, a blandly “tragic” work that I wouldn't be able to discern from Raff or any number of other Germanic mid-romantic composers. There's a surprisingly anthemic theme in the finale which reminds me, weirdly, of Christmas carols.

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Noskowski doesn't seem to realize he's built an irresistible, primally fascinating melody, nor that it's the only one in the quartet. The scherzo is especially disappointing; I'd fault the Four Strings Quartet for playing it far too slowly, except that they aren't, because it's clearly marked "Moderato".

The little pieces are well-recorded, but the quartet is heard in a church with untamed reverb. The most interesting part of this CD is actually the booklet note, where producer Jan A. Jarnicki includes a two-page rant furiously explaining his hatred of libraries. It seems that the library where the Humorous Quartet score is kept did not allow them to use the score for this recording. They used it anyway, but instead of telling us how - a tantalizing mystery - Jarnicki insinuates things about the library's "lady president", faults the librarians for losing materials during World War II, and asks, "Why do we need libraries in Poland, particularly those funded or aided through the taxpayer's money?" --- Brian Reinhart, musicweb-international.com

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