

David Felder - Les Quatre Temps Cardinaux (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
Wednesday, 14 October 2020 12:03 -

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1 Prelude/Stanza 1a [Daumal] 4:03 2 Stanza 1b [Daumal] 3:42 3 Spring Light [Creeley] 4:56 4 Stanza 2a [Daumal] 1:31 5 Fragments (from Neruda) 1:49 6 Stanza 2b [Daumal] 2:16 7 Stanza 3a [Daumal] 4:58 8 Stanza 3b [Daumal] 2:36 9 Buffalo Evening [Creeley] 10:01 10 Stanza 4a [Daumal] 2:37 11 Insomnia [Gioia] 5:32 12 Stanza 4b [Daumal] 4:51
Laura Aikin - soprano Ethan Herschenfeld - bass Boston Modern Orchestra Project Gil Rose - conductor Text By – Dana Gioia, René Daumal, Robert Creeley

The BMOP (Boston Modern Orchestra Project) comes through with another very worthy release, David Felder (b. 1953) and his most ambitious and dramatic Les Quatres Temps Cardinaux (BMOP Sound 1069). It is led by Gil Rose and scored for a 40-person orchestra, soprano (Laura Aikin), bass (Ethan Herschenfeld) and a part for 12-channel surround electronic music. The work was composed in 2013-14 and first performed in concert by BMOP with the identical soloists in this recording.

An important component of the work are poetic texts by Rene Daumal (Les Quatres Temps Cardinaux or The Four Cardinal Times), Robery Creeley and Dana Gioia on the experience of lived time. The texts are variously sung, recited, abstracted into sound and otherwise serve as meaning clues and word analogs to the overall expressive-Modernistic musical flow.

The vocal-orchestral-electronic mix has a glorious complexity and an ambitious foregrounding one hears less frequently nowadays but is no less the welcome for its rarity. The combination of the various iterations of the poetry combined with the highly voluble syntactical whole of words and sound-color lucidity-abundance makes for exceptional listening. It is music not afraid of reaching for the stars as it simultaneously explores the many human poetic-soulful aspects of living existence.

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The 45-minute, 12-part unfolding of the work sequence dramatically arcs through meaning universes that reflect on how life feels as time lives through us all. I will leave the poetic-semantic particulars to the listening experience. Suffice to say there is a dramatic thoughtfulness to the whole that affords us deep meaning and a most artful fullness in the end.

The level of expression is consistently vibrant with the capital /a/ of Modern Musical Arts ever present. The many faceted whole of this work benefits greatly by excellent recorded sound and magnificent performances by Aikin and Herschenfeld, with precision dramatics by Rose and the BMOP that give all the character one might hope for to this music. The BMOP triumphs in ways one can applaud without hesitation.

Felder gives us a uniquely personal reflection in a work that wears the cloak of our present time in a manner one can only hope future generations will look back upon with approval. This is a milestone work in heartfully moving performance. Hear this by all means. --- Grego Applegate Edwards, classicalmodernmusic.blogspot.com

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