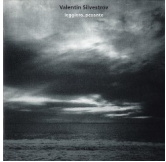


Valentin Silvestrov □ – Leggiero, Pesante (2002)



1 Sonata For Violoncello And Piano 22:01 2 String Quartet No. 1 21:07 Three Postludes
3 I. Postludium "DSCH" 6:53 4 II. Postludium 9:25 5 III. Postludium 4:07 6 Hymn 2001
6:27

Piano – Silke Avenhaus Violoncello – Anja Lechner Rosamunde Quartett: Viola [Rosamunde Quartett] – Helmut Nicolai Violin [Rosamunde Quartett] – Andreas Reiner, Simon Fordham Violoncello [Rosamunde Quartett] – Anja Lechner Soprano Vocals – Maacha Deubner Piano – Valentin Silvestrov

Valentin Silvestrov is hardly a household name in the United States; however, in the Ukraine, he enjoys a similar standing to that of his Estonian counterpart Arvo Pärt. But that is where the resemblance ends. Whereas Pärt in his holy minimalism reinvents techniques that derive from Renaissance practice, Silvestrov's roots are planted in late Romanticism. His music is steeped in all of the emotion and drama that such a stylistic association would imply. Leggiero, pesante is a collection of Silvestrov's chamber music, and as an introduction to the musical world of Silvestrov, this ECM New Series release admirably fits the bill. Most impressive are the performances of the Sonata for violoncello and piano (1983) and the third Postludium by cellist Anja Lechner and pianist Silke Avenhaus. In these works, Silvestrov strives toward a synthetic union between the two instruments. Lechner and Avenhaus achieve this end spectacularly well and manage to blanket the performances in an emotional sensitivity that gives voice to Silvestrov's intentions, yet retains the personality of the performers. Also noteworthy is the Rosamunde Quartet's transparent interpretation of Silvestrov's String Quartet No. 1 (1974) and the composer's own delightful, occasionally hesitant reading of a new work, Hymn 2001. Somewhat less engaging is the first two of the Three Postludes. These works are so wispy and fragmentary that they seem a bit undernourished, although they are in keeping with the rest of the music here. This disc is recommendable on many fronts, but especially so to listeners who find contemporary music scary and out of touch. Leggiero, pesante will likely prove both challenging and pleasing to those who take the plunge. The ECM recording is spacious, but not to the extent that it robs this chamber music of its intimacy. ---Uncle Dave Lewis

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