

Claire Chase – Density (2013)

Wpisany przez bluesever
Sobota, 09 Styczeń 2016 17:09 -

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1. Steve Reich - Vermont Counterpoint 2. Marcos Balter - Pessoa 3. Alvin Lucier - Almost New York 4. Philip Glass - Piece in the Shape of a Square 5. Mario Diaz de León - Luciform 6. Edgard Varèse - Density 21.5 Claire Chase – flute

Claire Chase, founder and artistic director of the International Contemporary Ensemble, is well established as a first-rate flutist with vital new music instincts. Her latest recording is not always an easy listen — take Alvin Lucier's 24-minute droning "Almost New York" — but a worthwhile one. Steve Reich's "Vermont Counterpoint" features layered recordings of 11 parts. Chase becomes an impeccable, bright, propulsive chorus, with mechanic precision but also urgency and eagerness. In a similar minimalist vein is Philip Glass' "Piece in the Shape of a Square." Marcos Balter's captivating 2013 "Pessoa" employs odd, husky tones of six bass flutes. Chase seems to hiss, stutter and whirr through the instrument as well as latch on to melodic elements with natural musicality. At various points a main voice seems surrounded by percussive popping sounds, like splatters of paint on a canvas, as well as the buzz of swarming insects, but only flutes are used. The recording also includes an expert rendering of Varèse's Density 21.5 on a platinum flute and Mario Diaz de León's dark, virtuosic video-game like work for flute and electronics, "Luciform." — Ronni Reich, nj.com

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