

and rather wayward progress toward an oddly restrained coda that peters out quietly and inconclusively suggest Tamas's somewhat eccentric (or at least very personal) take on musical form. At any rate the result here, engaging though it be, is as much nocturne as serenade.

Two more works of lesser interest complete the program. The 1952 Concerto Da Camera by Peter Mieg (1906-90) is a much-watered-down imitation of Frank Martin. Its four movements for piano, timpani, and strings try to generate some typically neoclassic forward drive but come off as thin, wan, and enervated. Inoffensive it is, but that's not my idea of praise for a concert work that might be suitable for background music in a misty film noir. Also suitable as a film score—this time for a Star Trek movie—is *Quasars* by Ernst Widmer (1927-90). From 1970, this picturesque item evokes the stars twinkling in the cosmos into which bursts a brilliant quasar (a mysterious, intensely bright, rapidly pulsing star-like object).

It never fails to amaze me how Victorian such ostensibly futuristic tone-poems almost always sound: Rimsky-Korsakoff updated with spaceships and midcentury-modern orchestral furnishings. Once in a great while a modern composer is able to transcend the genre, and the most notable example is Harrison Birtwistle's 1972 bleak, marmoreal *Triumph of Time*. But in most instances, as here, this kind of clunky, naïve, witless silliness just makes me cringe with embarrassment for the deluded composer who apparently takes this campy dreck seriously.

LEHMAN

### **Golden Age of Hollywood 4**

Royal Philharmonic/ David Firman  
RPO 24—71 minutes

Another mixed bag from the Royal Philharmonic. This collection of film score snippets ventures a bit off the beaten track. The Charles Gerhardt adaptation of Max Steiner's *Key Largo* gets the program off to a good start, even if Gerhardt himself did it better (July/Aug 2011). There's a suite from *Rear Window* that isn't heard often, possibly because the film didn't really have a dramatic score but used on-screen music coming from phonographs and the like. Christopher Palmer was able to get five movements out of it, but aside from the main title with its echoes of Leonard Bernstein only the ballet (borrowed from *A Place in the Sun*) makes much of an impression.

Six selections from Jerry Goldsmith's *Chinatown* only total nine minutes and are fairly thin gruel, but two powerful sequences from *The Lost Weekend* (Miklos Rozsa) are strong in *American Record Guide*

arrangements by Christopher Palmer. There's more Waxman (*Captains Courageous*) along with brief bits from *Wuthering Heights* (Alfred Newman) and some lesser efforts (Jarre, Morricone, et al). The program concludes with a "Ballad" fashioned by Palmer from Dimitri Tiomkin's *Gunfight at the OK Corral* that comes off better than I expected. All the performers are on their toes, and the sonics are unimpeachable.

KOLDYS

### **European Folkscapes**

Apollo Chamber Players  
Navona 5941—52 minutes

These are all arrangements by the Apollo players except a Fantasy on Bulgarian Rhythms by Karin Al-Zand. The scoring is for quartet except two Basque tunes played by solo violin. The program opens with a 'Wallachian Lament' from the Czech Republic followed by 'Seremoj es Romanca' from Hungary. Two Greek numbers follow, 'I Xenitia' and 'Nychtose Xoris Feggari'. These are all dancey and effective settings.

Then comes the more overtly sophisticated work by Al-Zand, a work expressing a number of subtly-scored elements of its subject. Then comes a catchy Russian tune, 'Korobushka'. We move to Spain for a detailed and imaginative study of the famous Malaguena, after which violinist Matthew Detrick moves across the border into Basque country for a solo setting of 'Zortziko and Aurreku'. His violinistic partner Anabel Ramirez follows him on the next horse, joining him for 'Fandangoa'. By this time violist Whitney Bullock and cellist Matthew Dudzik have managed to pass the border, joining their high-pitched comrades for 'Jota-Arin-Arin', a joyous setting including claps and clicks. Finally we enter Italy for 'O Sole Mio' and 'Salento Pizzica' and a bonus track from Germany, the 'Hofbrauhaus Polka'.

The Apollo settings may sound simplistic compared to Al-Zand's piece, but they are beautifully arranged and make enjoyable listening. Keep at it, boys and girls. You're doing a valuable service and making folk music come to life effectively. This is a recording to consider. Digital booklet, study scores, video, and more are on the computer.

D MOORE

### **Buckley Chamber Players**

Palkowski, Spratlan, Sawyer, Macchia  
Albany 1467—68 minutes

If there's a common denominator among these five well-played and well-recorded pieces written from 1985 to 2009 by four currently-active American composers (based at or