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REVIEW



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Ole-Henrik MOE (b. 1964)

Vent Litt Lenger (Wait a little longer): Vent (1997) [9:32], Litt (1997-2007) [13:26], Lenger (2006) [14:49]

◆ Arditti Quartet, Ole-Henrik Moe (violin)
rec. 5-6 March 2009, Henry Wood Hall, London. DDD

◆ AURORA ACD 5054 [37:51] (P)

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The sleeve-notes describe this set of three works for string quartet as “a cycle of pieces of which the material is made up of acoustic reminiscences”. Moe bases his compositions on memories of sounds, which he associates with people or places, such as the sound of a voice or a certain resonance. This is an interesting concept which produces some fascinating results.

The first piece of the three, *Vent* begins quietly with an almost electronic resonance building between the instruments. Fragments of sound emerge as sudden metallic blasts, which break from the texture in increasingly developing material. The piece takes the listener on a journey of gradually transforming material, suspending our sense of time and producing some interesting musical effects along the way.

Litt takes the metallic sounds from *Vent* and works with them further, with energetic outbursts starting the piece. Despite the obvious link with the first piece, however,

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the music has a different feel. After an initial section where sounds are stated, rather than developed, the music becomes static and intensely quiet. The textures here become more important and a wonderful sense of atmosphere is created. There is a wide range of dynamics in the piece, which meant I had constantly to turn the volume control up and down, but the quiet, eerie sounds in the centre of this piece are worth listening to closely.

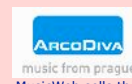
Lenger, the final of the three works, begins with bird-like sounds, which become increasingly louder. The effect is impressive, with the sound moving more towards an abstract string sound as it develops, and a rhythmic pattern also coming from the movement on the fingerboard. This is the busiest music so far in these works, and the harmonic textures which are created from the interaction of the instruments in the quintet - this piece has an extra violin part, played here by the composer himself - create a sense of tension and dissonance. The music builds to a frenzy and then breaks, with new material taking its place. The work is in sectional form, with each section generating its own musical energy. One section reminded me of a flock of birds and the movement between them; it is a vivid image which works incredibly well in musical terms, with constant activity and movement within the overall sound. A slower section is juxtaposed upon this, which is much calmer and more eerie, ending the work in quiet contemplation.

Moe's language is highly modern, using contemporary techniques to transform the traditional string quartet sound into something new. To me, this is a highly exciting disc which possesses its own energy and a sense of compositional innovation, using the instruments in different ways and creating sound textures which have an emotional meaning within themselves. The Arditti Quartet perform with their customary flair and help to present the music in the best possible light. This is an excellent and enjoyable disc which left me wanting more.

Carla Rees



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