

Itamar

REVISTA DE INVESTIGACIÓN MUSICAL: TERRITORIOS PARA EL ARTE



AÑO 2021

7

 Facultat de Filosofia i Ciències de l'Educació



VNIVERSITAT
DE VALÈNCIA

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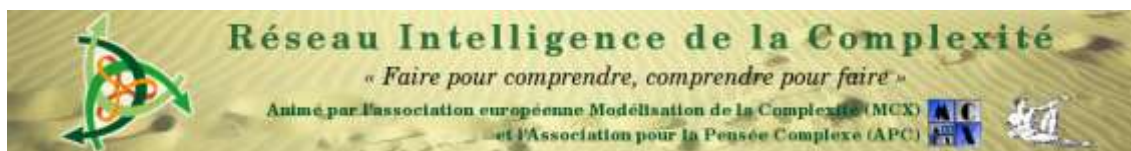
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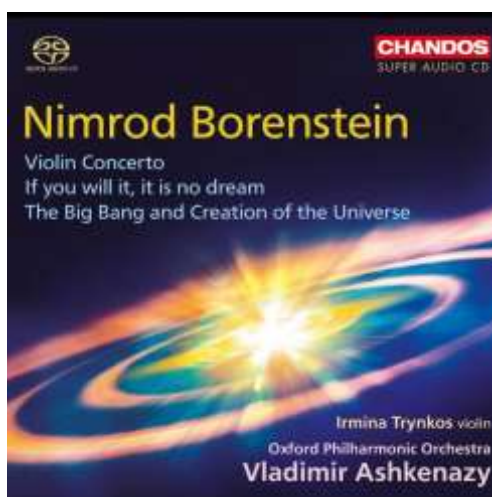


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Territorios para la escucha



Nimrod Borenstein

Orchestral Works

Label: Chandos 2017

Premiere recordings

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 60 (2013)* 27:53

1 I Allegro 9:02

2 II Moderato 6:23

3 III Adagio 6:18

4 IV Allegro 5:59

The Big Bang and Creation of the Universe,

Op. 52 (2008 – 09) 19:46

Dedicated to Zvi Meitar by his loving family, on the occasion of his 75th birthday

5 I Light. Moderato 8:03

6 II Peace. Adagio 6:07

7 III Adam and Eve. Allegro 5:27

8 If You Will It, It Is No Dream, Op. 58 (2012) 8:39

To Zvi Meitar

Written for the Philharmonia Orchestra

Allegro

TT 56:45

Irmina Trynkos violin*

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra

Natalia Lomeiko leader

Vladimir Ashkenazy



Nimrod Borenstein (b. 1969) in *Italian Postcards*
Wolf – Mozart – Borestein - Tchaichovsky
Quartetto di Cremona. Label: AVIE RECORDS (2020)

6 Cieli d'Italia, Op. 88 for string quartet 7.20
world-premiere recording, commissioned by the Quartetto di Cremona

Cristiano Gualco violin I (Nicola Amati, Cremona 1640)
Paolo Andreoli violin II (Paolo Antonio Testore, Milano ca. 1758 - Kulturfonds Peter Eckes)
Simone Gramaglia viola (Gioachino Torazzi, ca. 1680 - (Kulturfonds Peter Eckes)
Giovanni Scaglione cello (Dom Nicola Amati, Bologna 1712 - Kulturfonds Peter Eckes)

Among the great composers of our time, there is Nimrod Borenstein (1969), a British-French-Israeli artist based in London. Recently, his CD, published by Chandos (2017), that contains a part of his orchestral works conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, won 5 prizes for the BBC magazine. Borenstein's compositions are performed throughout Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan. His music is in the repertory of many orchestras and ensembles, like the famous Quartetto di Cremona, who have commissioned to him a composition for their 20th anniversary special CD, entitled *Italian Postcards*, published for the label AVIE RECORDS (2020), which also comprises works by Wolf, Mozart and Tchaikovsky. Borenstein's search for the beauty of music appears on first listening. His style reveals a gratitude for the past musical tradition, especially the romantic repertoire, which is the main inspiration of his compositions for Orchestras, chamber, vocal / choral and solo: impressive are his 24 Piano Etudes, a work in progress inspired by Chopin's masterpiece. However, Borenstein's voice is unique for his particular combination of timbres, especially in the orchestral works. Articulation of voices and rhythmical combinations reveal a certain modern attitude to organize musical elements, even if always imbued with an internal romantic and vibrant palpitation.

His *Violin Concerto, Op. 60* contained in his CD of orchestral works (which comprise concertos for violin, cello, saxophone, trumpet, piano, guitar and string orchestra) presents all these aspects. Composed in 2013 for Dmitry Sitkovetsky, who premiered it with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra under Marios Papadopoulos, this work explores in a masterly way the virtuosity of the violin idiom. The Greek-Polish violinist soloist, Irmina Trynkos, expressed all her great brilliant capacity to render the virtuosity as well as the lyricism of the piece and, even stronger, her mastery in choosing precise colours and nuances.

The violin voice is treated in a very poignant and lyrical way, accompanied by all the orchestra with the voice of the percussions (vibraphone and timpani) emerging particularly. From the very beginning of the concerto, the listener is struck by Borenstein's personal system. As he stated in the "note of the author" in his CD booklet, the musical material is organized in a " *'multimelodic' counterpoint, using complex juxtapositions of rhythms to create a multiplicity of different atmospheres*".

This distinctive feature of Borenstein's language appears again in the second work of his CD, which presents a specific title: *The Big Bang and Creation of the Universe, Op. 52*. Despite the title, that can be seen as a reference to the 'program music' inherited by Berlioz, Liszt or Holst, Borenstein's music is pure and abstract and doesn't want to recall or evoke other than music itself.

The composer himself explains in an interview that " *For my one-movement pieces, after I have completely finished composing the piece, I usually try to find a title that is evocative of the atmosphere of the composition. If we take one of the other pieces on the Ashkenazy CD, The Big Bang and Creation of the Universe, the reason I did not call this work Symphony No.1 is that with its prominent, nearly soloistic vibraphone part it was almost like a vibraphone concerto. Being somewhere between a vibraphone concerto and a symphony, I had to call it something else!*"

As it is written in the booklet, however, the *Big Bang and Creation of the Universe*, is divided into three movements entitled *Light, Peace, and Adam and Eve*, which are a reflection on both the *Book of Genesis* and recent scientific thinking on the origin of the universe. Therefore, there are some explicit suggestions in Borenstein's music that recall the Big Bang explosion, as in the first movement, or the harmony of love and the idea of multiplication and variation in the Creation of the world, as in the continuous expansion of the instrumentations and the motives. The colour of the orchestra is always very refined, again with a predominant use of the vibraphone and pizzicato strings, which contribute to drive the listeners on dreamlike atmospheres.

This work was commissioned for the seventy-fifth birthday of the international businessman, lawyer and philanthropist Zvi Meitar, as well as the last piece of the CD, entitled *If You Will It, It Is No Dream, Op. 58*, which is also a tribute to an intense journey into the struggle and wonders of the will. The title refers to a specific sentence *If you will it, it is no dream* by Theodor Herzl in his famous

book *Altneuland* (Old New Land - 1902), in which the writer outlines his vision of a Jewish state in Israel. In this way, Borenstein's piece is also an homage to his homeland, Israel.

This work is full of contrasts, with an explosive and struggling introduction, “*with fireworks of unrestrained energy*”, as Borenstein says in his booklet, conveyed by a fight between brass and wind. In contrast, his personal *multi melodic* counterpoint appears in the middle of the piece based on pizzicato of strings in a dialogue with the wind instruments. The presence of a defined rhythmical pulse creates a sense of tension, where each melodic and rhythmical pattern constantly overlap with one another to give this sense of ride to the end.

Borenstein's orchestral works are also highlighted by the conduction of the well-known pianist and conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy, who, as the composer himself said in an interview, was suddenly fascinated by his music during a brief meeting, destined to become, later, a strong artistic collaboration.

Nimrod Borenstein received the attention of another important and big name in the present music world, *Quartetto di Cremona*, for whom he wrote *Cieli d'Italia, Op. 88* (2019), world-premiere recorded in this CD *Italian Postcards*.

In only seven minutes, *Cieli d'Italia*, which clearly took inspiration from the iridescent colours of the Italian skies, captures the listeners for the extreme sense of suspension and tension that Borenstein's musical language is able to create. Borenstein is particularly attracted by the Italian cultural heritage, landscape and language that he knows very well since he is married to an Italian woman. He uses a multilayer of colours and contrasts in the articulation of the voices of only four instruments, mainly with the technique of pizzicato and vibratos. The performance is also enriched by the warm timbre of the historical Italian instruments played by the *Quartetto* (violins by Testore, Amato, Torazzi).

As written in the booklet, the composer himself declared to “*become fascinated by what I call suspension which is about creating a sense of tension and then letting go – it's akin to pedalling furiously in order to accelerate on a bike before going into free-flow, which creates a sense of pure simplicity, as though time itself has become suddenly suspended. As experienced in Cieli d'Italia, one way of creating this effect is to achieve a sudden transition from several voices sounding together, to one voice emerging alone. The result is quite magical, as though one is gliding*’.

Nimrod Borenstein, born in Tel Aviv in 1969, is both a composer and a violinist. While living in Paris, he won the prestigious competition of the Fondation Cziffra aged fifteen, impressing György Cziffra with the cadenza he had written for Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3. Initially student at the Royal College of Music in London as a violinist, later he won the Leverhulme Fellowship for composition at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Paul Patterson and is now an Associate.

Nimrod Borenstein

Borenstein's productions are "*Contemporary works full of grand gestures and soaring melody*" - The Strad.

<http://www.borensteinarts.com/>

Giusy Caruso