

a wonderful sound world in which the piano timbre dominates, while the second movement gives the alluring impression of an improvisation by both the soloist and the wind orchestra.

The fourth composition is Jess Turner's *Rumpelstilzchen* (2010). This three movement composition delineates three aspects of the fairytale – "Spinning Straw into Gold", "The Maiden's Lament", and "Rumpelstilzchen's Furiant". Its imaginative scoring captures the essence of the fairytale, and the composer's new tonal style nicely avoids clichés that could easily mar such a work. Only for a brief moment in the second movement does the work lapse into sentimentality.

The next work, *La Concepción 1910* by the Spanish composer Francisco José Martínez Gallego, is a light piece in the vein of a large number of contemporary wind band works. The composition was inspired by a farmhouse which was built in Art Nouveau style in 1910 in Requena, Valencia, the composer's hometown. The building is a symbol of the village and its people. The composition has some nice melodies and is well scored, but is not very distinctive. There are too many ideas with too little development, and with a duration of almost a quarter of an hour, it is a little long for what it has to say.

The following composition is Carter Pann's *Hold This Boy and Listen*, which was the composer's first work for wind band. It was commissioned for young bands by a consortium of Colorado high schools organized by Matthew Roeder and the University of Colorado Symphonic Band. The composer calls the work an "unusually soft and subdued song for band". There is nothing in this Romantic composition with its Jazz influenced harmonies that you have not heard before.

The CD closes with Justin Freer's *Rio's Convergence*, which was inspired by the Rio Grande River, which converges with several other rivers as it makes its way from the Rocky Mountains of Colorado through New Mexico and along the border between Texas and Mexico to the Gulf of Mexico. The composition has lots of energy and drive but never seems to really get its bearing.

All of the compositions are excellently performed and the recorded sound is first class. One must be very grateful to GIA Publications for the numerous recordings it has produced with Eugene Corporon and the North Texas Wind Symphony. The Wind Works series, to which this recording belongs, the Composer's Collection, and the recording for Teaching Music through Per-

formance in Band provide a vast resource of high quality recordings for wind band conductors.

Leon J. Bly

Robert Groslot conducts his Concertos with Concert Band (The Royal Symphonic Band of the Belgian Guides, Robert Groslot, conductor; Steven Mead, Euphonium Soloist; Norbert Nozy, Saxophone Soloist; Peter Verhoyen, Piccolo Soloist; Carlo Willems, Marimba Soloist; Vlad Weverbergh, Clarinet Soloist) Groslot-Music Records, 1301

Robert Groslot is a well known Belgian pianist and conductor, who in 1991 founded the symphony orchestra Il Novecento, which has become famous throughout Europe for its Night of the Proms concerts. Between December 2009 and October 2012, Groslot composed fourteen concertos for various instruments. For five of the concertos, he has made versions with wind band as well as symphony orchestra. This recording includes the concertos for euphonium, saxophone, piccolo, and marimba and vibes, as well as the version for clarinet and wind band of *Achaé, la docile Amie*. All of the performances are outstanding with world class soloists performing with the wonderful Symphonic Band of the Belgian Guides under Groslot's assured conducting.

All of the concertos are in one movement and have an architectural form, which the composer tells us was inspired by Franz Liszt's *Piano Sonata in B minor* and is a combination of sonata and symphonic form. This is especially apparent in the *Piccolo Concerto*, but form is a predominant factor in all of Groslot's music. Symmetry plays a major roll in the form, melodies and harmonies. Groslot's eclectic style employs an extended harmonic language which uses twelve tone series in a tonal way and often

uses Jazz elements in an unobtrusive manner.

Each of the concertos was written with a virtuoso player in mind and places great demands on the soloists. Peter Verhoyen writes that the *Piccolo Concerto* "sets new standards in piccolo writing", and Norbert Nozy writes when Groslot asked about numerous technical possibilities on the saxophone, he was "unaware of the fact he was going to use them all in one piece!" Even Steven Mead, who has premiered a large number of euphonium concertos, writes that the *Euphonium Concerto* "takes us out of the comfort zone into new and exciting territory." Groslot takes in deed the solo instruments into new territories. However, for the listener, it is not the multi-phonics or extreme *tessituras* that make these works so fascinating but the unbelievable range of sonorities that the composer draws from the solo instruments and the wind band.

All of the compositions are wonderfully scored. Throughout most of these works, the soloist is constantly in dialogue with the instruments of the band and at no time does one get the impression that the wind band is simply relegated to serve as an accompanying ensemble. In some cases, as in the *Piccolo Concerto* and the *Marimba and Vibes Concerto*, the solo instrument and the wind band unit to form the very texture of work itself as does the solo instrument in Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*.

Despite the emphasis on virtuosity, some of the writing in these concertos is very lyrical and at times almost romantic. Like Gustav Mahler, Groslot can take a rather commonplace motive and turn it into a compelling subject.

Achaé, la docile Amie makes a delightful close to this fine recording. The composition was originally composed for two pianos in 1979 with the title *Paganini Rides Again*. In 1985, Groslot produced the version for clarinet and symphony orchestra with the new title and made the version for clarinet and wind band in 2009. It consists of a set of variations on Nicolo Paganini's famous *Caprice No. 24*. It is an absolutely captivating and humorous work, whose new title is even a double anagram of the theme – in German: A C H A E and in French: la do si la mi.

The only drawback with this recording is the accompanying booklet with its small print and in some places red on red printing, which is unfortunate since the booklet includes so much interesting information. However, this is a CD with fantastic playing and five remarkable works for solo instruments and wind band. It is a must have!

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