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Trio Acuarimántima, *Tríos Americanos para clarinet, viola y piano*

Don Bowyer (</index.php/58-2/itemlist/user/444-donbowyer>) Published online: 20 September 2018

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Tríos Americanos para clarinet, viola y piano. 2018. Trio Acuarimántima: Javier Asdrúbal Vinasco, clarinet, Braunwin Sheldrick, viola, and Andrés Gómez Bravo, piano. Recorded at StarTrack Studio in Mexico City, October 23-26, 2017. 14 tracks (53:21). www.acuarimantima.com.

Trio Acuarimántima consists of three members of the music faculty at the Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, Columbia. The trio of Javier Asdrúbal Vinasco, clarinet, Braunwin Sheldrick, viola, and Andrés Gómez Bravo, piano, play very well together, with a mature blend that ranges from richly powerful to lightly ethereal – occasionally even harsh and edgy – whatever the music demands. Vinasco received his Doctor of Music degree from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Sheldrick and Gómez-Bravo received their Doctorate of Musical Arts degrees from the Eastman School of Music.

The four pieces on this recording are all by contemporary composers from the Americas – from Canada, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and an Italian working in Columbia. Collectively, these pieces effectively showcase the expressive talents of this ensemble.

In the delightful and energetic, *Trio in Jest*, a three-movement work of about 22 minutes, composer Marjan Mozetich borrows and develops material tastefully from Rossini. The first movement is full of expressive, soaring melodies accompanied with rhythmic energy and punctuated by unexpected syncopations. The second movement is more controlled, yet playful throughout. The final movement is fast and frantic, but again delivered with disciplined, expressive playing. The composer writes that a close friend was murdered as he

was finishing the piece. Reflecting this tragedy is the “dark and somber” mood for the final minute of the movement, which develops organically, flowing from the earlier playful material to a very satisfying conclusion.

Marcus Alunno’s *Janus* consists of six short movements designed to give performance options to the musicians. The instructions state that the musicians may perform all six movements in sequence, play the odd-numbered movements as a set followed by the even-numbered movements as a set, or begin with the even-numbered set followed by the odd-numbered one. Beyond this modular set of possible orderings, the musical material exhibits additional aleatoric elements along with extended techniques.

Ofrenda (“ritual offering”) a short single-movement work by Leonardo Coral, was originally written for violin and piano, with this transcription prepared by the composer. Beautiful and haunting, the music is evocative of its title as an offering for the *Día de Muertos*.

The fourth and final piece in this recording is *Cuatro sombras de una palma* (“Four shades of a palm tree”) by Carlos Alberto Vázquez, who says that the four movements of this composition are meant as tributes to “four outstanding writers of the great basin of the Caribbean Sea: Derek Walcott (Saint Lucia), Luis Rafael Sánchez (Puerto Rico), Gabriel García Márquez, (Colombia) and Ana Lydia Vega (Puerto Rico).” These movements vary widely in character, technique, and mood, ranging from strong ostinato patterns to ethereal-sounding extended techniques and chromatic passages. The overall narrative structure of the work helps to tie it all into a symbiotic whole.

Throughout this recording, Trio Acuarimántima displays the seasoned musicianship, flawless technique, and the ability to blend that marks the highest caliber chamber ensembles.

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