

ercises are creative, asking the beginning conductor to imagine wiping a table or picking up a can of beans in order to learn how to control the speed or resistance of a particular movement. Here, the companion website, with 61 videos of the movements Wittry describes, is particularly helpful. (<http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199354160/>)

After suggesting that the conducting student establish an awareness of the body's movements in general and of arm and finger movements in particular, Wittry moves on to the use of the baton. Many of these exercises take up the weight and speed ideas mentioned earlier, and here it would have been more efficient to refer back to Chapter 2 instead of repeating a description of, say, lifting a can of beans. This minor issue aside, the progression from body awareness through arm training to ideas of communication is logical. Wittry provides diagrams

Gail Archer, Organ: *The Muse's Voice: A Celebration of Women Composers*

Music for solo organ by Boulanger, Demessieux, Higdon, and Bingham. Recorded at the Central Synagogue, New York City, by Meyer Media, LLC (2014). Available for sale through [www.meyer-media.com](http://www.meyer-media.com)

LORI ARDOVINO

Known for her musical sensitivity and strong interpretations, Gail Archer again delivers with her latest CD, *The Muse's Voice*. She is a Grammy-nominated, internationally-renowned concert organist and recording artist with seven solo albums to her name. Archer is an advocate for women organists and is the founder of Musforum, a professional network for women organists that celebrates and promotes their accomplishments. Concert organist at Vassar College and chair of the music program at Barnard College of Columbia University, where she conducts the Barnard-Columbia Chorus, she also serves as director of the artist and young organ artist recitals at historic Central Synagogue in New York City.

Nadia Boulanger, distinguished 20th-century teacher, composer, conductor, and organist, penned *Three Pieces for Organ* in 1911. In each piece, Boulanger emphasized harmonic over melodic or rhythmic development. The first, *Prelude*, begins with a simple melody and a homogeneous

of conducting patterns, but they appear at a point where the student should already have some mastery of how to execute the gestures and what they might signify.

One of Wittry's preoccupations is with energy. There is no point in standing in front of a group of musicians and just making movements, she insists. We are there to communicate something, and we do this by transmitting energy. "[W]e are the music, and the music is flowing freely through us into that energy field that connects us to both the musicians and the listeners" (38). Wittry analyzes exactly *how* gestures communicate energy, then provides exercises to help develop this. She deals as well with calmness: the calm focus one needs before a preparatory beat, before speaking in a rehearsal, before a concert. Useful exercises are offered for this concept as well.

The book also addresses communication of emotion and character, score prepa-

## COMPACT DISC REVIEWS

harmonic rhythm that lulls the listener into a tranquil mood. This is misleading, for as the piece progresses, it becomes more intense, fortified by heavy pedal and dissonant chords. Just as the movement seems to have reached its zenith, the direction changes and the tension is released, leaving behind the condensed chromatics. *Petit Canon* is a beautiful work with fine harmonic nuances, while *Improvisation* is more rhythmically challenging and chromatic; the subtle melodic changes provide the listener with an array of tonal colors.

A student of Marcel Dupré, Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968) was hailed as an organ virtuoso and was the first female organist to perform at Westminster Abbey. *Te Deum*, written in 1965, and one of Demessieux's last works, is based on a Gregorian chant. I found this work to be electrifying, with its startling harmonic colors and unexpected powerful and chromatic chord progressions. The piece demonstrates Demessieux's knowledge of the organ's sonorous capabilities, and it provides ample opportunities for Archer to display her own dexterity, musicianship, and virtuosity.

*The Ceremonies Suite* (2001) by Pulitzer Prize and Grammy-winning American composer Jennifer Higdon is excerpted from an earlier seven-movement work entitled *Ceremonies* for organ and brass. "The title refers to the various ways in which we celebrate the many aspects of life

ration, and rehearsal technique. Mention is made as well of the elements of "inspired leadership," but this is treated in much less detail than are the conducting basics. I felt this topic would be best left as material for a different book. Wittry stresses throughout that technique must always be at the service of the music, and that conductors should look to themselves if they are not getting the desired results. I wanted to cheer when I read this.

Without ever losing sight of the grand aims, *Baton Basics* provides a fundamental resource for learning the basic scales and arpeggios of conducting.

Monica Buckland Hofstetter is a conductor, currently living in the UK after many years in Switzerland and Germany. Among other positions, she has been Artistic Director of the orchestras of the TU Dresden; she has also lectured in musicology there and at the Palucca University of Dance.

through religious and secular ceremonies... from solemn and contemplative to joyous and dancing," explains Higdon. In *Prayer Song*, the soprano voice is prominent, with the organ's lower voices acting as counterpoint. *Meditation*, features a lovely interaction between the pedal lines and the other voice. *Celebration* brings this set to a close; the use of upward scale patterns and rich registrations highlight the uplifting nature of the final movement.

Edgy, dissonant, strident, and tragic are a few of the descriptors that came to mind as I listened to *The Everlasting Crown* by British organist Judith Bingham. The programmatic work draws on the mythologies and tales of famous and infamous owners of some of the world's most precious stones. The work is in seven movements (representing seven different stones). Some of the movements stand-alone and some segue into each other. Each movement offers a different style of organ playing. The first is a coronation scene with an angular opening motif in the pedals that is described by Bingham as "being in the shape of a crown." Extremely dramatic and dissonant, the mood is dark and gothic, thanks to close-knit chromatic harmonies interspersed with the pedal motif. *The Chinese Stone/The Russian Spinel* is represented by Chinese ceremonial music featuring a steady, march-like rhythm with a repetitive, pentatonic melody. *King Edward's*

*Sapphire* breaks from the dissonant harmonies and intricate melodic lines and creates a lighter, more relaxed environment. *The Peacock's Throne* brings the work to a dramatic close with a huge crescendo ascending from pedal tones, the intensity growing as the piece progresses. *Everlasting Crown* is a dramatic work of complexity, depth, and range. Gail Archer deftly navigates the various stylistic and technical requirements of this monumental work.

Lori Ardovino is Professor of Music at the University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL. She is a performer on clarinet and saxophone and is a published composer. Her works have been performed in Canada, Italy, Japan, and the US. She has three CDs to her credit, *From a Crack in the Wall*, Clarinet Music by Alabama Composers; *Between Walls*, Saxophone Music by Alabama Composers; and *The LeBaron Trio*, Music for Clarinet, Soprano and Piano.

### Violeta Dinescu: *Flutes Play*

Ion Bogdan Stefanescu, flute. Gutingi 254 (2015)

EVA WIENER

*Flutes Play* is a cycle of ten interrelated works gracing a new CD by renowned Romanian composer Violeta Dinescu. Six lengthy pieces, *Flutes Play I - VI*, are scored as follows: I for three flutes, II for six, III for eight, IV for sixteen, V for twenty-four, and VI for thirty-two. They frame four shorter works scored for solo flute: *Walk among*, *Walk about*, *Walk away*, and *Walk against*. The titles of the interludes are indicative of a gradual progression from harmonious interaction of musical elements to conflict between opposing forces. Dinescu states, "The soli are go-betweens and serve the dramaturgical purpose of enabling the listener to perceive the ten pieces as a curve." Dinescu takes the listener on an otherworldly journey into the emotional/intellectual realm of the dream state.

The fine Romanian flutist Ion Bogdan Stefanescu, a specialist in the performance of Dinescu's music, performs all of the music while *Tonmeister* (sound engineer) Stephan Schmidt does an impressive job overdubbing up to thirty-two flute tracks.

The cycle of works is based on the intervallic play among major and minor seconds and thirds and perfect fourths. (Javanese gamelan music, a major inspiration for these pieces, prominently features seconds and thirds). Dinescu creates an ingenious soundscape through her expansion of the

motivic material, employing microtonality, counterpoint, stylized stretto, and chordal masses. She also utilizes solo lines with accompaniment and extended flute and vocal techniques. Her use of registration is masterful. The music evokes visual images, its timbral colors ranging from muted hues to metallic brightness. Continuity within the cycle is often achieved through the introduction of shared thematic material at the beginning and/or end of different pieces.

The CD opens with *Flutes Play III* (eight flutes). Here Dinescu presents a moderately paced motivic design, characterized by seconds and thirds tinged with microtonality. Two concert flutes interact in an interweaving, dance-like counterpoint in their mid-to-high register. This music returns in the fourth and tenth pieces, *Flutes Play I* and *VI*, respectively. The spare texture is frequently punctuated by outbursts of loud runs and flurries of dissonant clusters, performed by the entire ensemble in the highest register of the instrument. In addition, there are sounds that bring to mind an otherworldly chatter of birds, harmonics seemingly suspended in air, and the occasional undertone of the performer's voice played through a flute, all trademarks of Dinescu's flute writing. *Flutes Play III* and the next piece, *Flutes Play V*, end with one of the main motifs of the cycle, an ascending minor third followed by a descending minor second that fades away with microtonal inflections.

*Flutes Play V* (twenty-four flutes) and the following interlude, *Walk among* for concert flute, begin with the same meditative line, tinged with Romanian embellishments, though played more vigorously in the former work. The splashes of bright colors in *Flutes Play III* develop into whizzing kaleidoscopic polyphonic and chordal masses in *Flutes Play V*. These masses collide with a solo flute line, played at a moderate pace, which continues to move in its own orbit. The flutes sometimes recall sounds of twittering birds that seem almost electronic, yet never mechanical. The player as vocalist uses extended flute techniques to produce a rustling sound that calls to mind the timbre of a distant snare drum.

Dinescu uses the element of surprise very effectively. In *Walk among*, for example, the composer presents the first interval of a quiet motif in the flute's low range. It is immediately followed by a run that

begins with mid-range vocal sounds and grows into a metallic splash of color in the flute's highest register.

*Flutes Play I* (three flutes) marks a turning point in the cycle, as its profile is markedly different from the preceding pieces. It has a more pensive mood than the works that lead up to it. Using the extended flute technique of singing into the instrument, the performer as singer often doubles the concurrently played flute line, either in the same register or an octave below it. Opposite ends of the registral palette are employed, simultaneously and in alternation. The composer presents sharp attacks in the piccolo's highest register, and also quiet harmonics. In the following piece, *Walk about* for solo piccolo, bright sparkling lines are juxtaposed with glittering harmonics.

*Flutes Play IV* (sixteen flutes) begins with muted tones in the bass flute and voice. Dinescu presents a polyphonic motivic design consisting of oscillating patterns with music faster-paced than that of the preceding pieces. As in *Flutes Play V*, runs and chordal masses played by the piccolos in their highest register collide with single and multiple flute lines. In this work, interactions between the parts occur more frequently. The return of the opening motif of *Flutes Play III* and *I* is one of many elements that unifies the cycle.

The timbres that open *Flutes Play IV* immediately return in the next work, *Walk away* for bass flute. The most striking element of this short piece is Dinescu's transformation of the performer's voice from an instrument, humming and producing otherworldly sounds, into a human singing voice. The player sings along with the flute line, using the vocal syllable, "da," on each pitch. *Flutes Play II* (six flutes) resembles *Flutes Play I* in its slow pace and meditative flute lines. Dinescu introduces a new type of event that has its roots in *Flutes Play V*: The material that previously collided with a solo line, yet left it intact, now interrupts the line. The composer neatly creates the effect of a musical conversation.

In *Walk against* for concert flute, a solo line occasionally divides into two distinct elements due to the assignment of contrasting dynamics to different registers. This enables a dialogue to take place here as well, structurally linking this work with *Flutes Play II*.

*Flutes Play VI* (thirty-two flutes), the