

traverses the liturgy reverently, imaginatively, and (with help from the engineers) powerfully.

Some interludes go as you might expect. The 'Dies Irae' kicks up a major ruckus, and the 'Lacrimosa' is luminous and sad. But 'Exaudi', the plea for prayer to be heard, comes out of the silence. The trumpets of Judgement Day do sound at "Tuba mirum", but differently than you might expect. The Sanctus scampers past, and it's the Offertory that takes the suppliant for a wild ride past the lion's mouth to the depths of Tartarus. The Jeths Requiem is, to put it mildly, a work of dramatic extremes.

This performance recorded in concert at the Concertgebouw in 2017 was an exciting one with all of the elements coming together nicely under Maestro Gaffigan's baton. The performance, like the piece itself, is the real deal.

GREENFIELD

**JOMELLI:** *Mass; Te Deum*; see HAYDN

**JONES:** *Symphonies 3+5*

BBC Welsh Symphony/ Bryden Thomson  
Lyrita 390—69 minutes

"The feeling I always have is that what I'm setting myself to write already exists and that what I have to do is unveil it, discover it." Thus the Welshman Daniel Jones on his composing. Jones (1912-93) was born into a musical family in Swansea. He held an MA in English literature and studied music under Sir Henry Wood. During WW II, his linguistic skills got him a post in the decoding staff at Bletchley Park. The core of his output is his 13 symphonies. In these, the musical logic is closely argued with scant regard for surface appeal. They're like the symphonies of Robert Simpson, though less hermetic. You may not always like the music, but you'll always respect it. An expert orchestrator, he scores to reinforce harmonies or more often lines. The work is tonal, but often derives its dramas from a clash of two tonal centers, sometimes "resolved" only to a fragile truce. He never fell for the serial cult; no doubt his years in intelligence gave him his fill of ciphers. Roger Hecht, in his overview of the English symphony (Sept/Oct 2010) suggests Jones symphonies are "tough, rugged works, whose drama and gloom reflect the Welsh coast and countryside". Jones was even friends with Dylan Thomas (plainly he was a man of much patience) and dedicated his Symphony 4 to Thomas's memory.

In Symphony 3 (1951) the main theme is

first heard in an inversion; the music has an underlying edginess. Though modern in language, its form is comprehensible. After an angry climax, grumbling basses and timpani bring the movement to an uneasy close. II opens with a unison violin line to be played "with firmness". The introduction derives from an inversion of a theme from I. The music becomes agitated before its enigmatic ending. In III, the pace is faster, with a sense of purpose. Motor rhythms help unify the movement even when its themes are fragmented. Jones opposes the tonal centers of B-flat and B natural; the latter "wins". Barely.

Symphony 5 (1958) begins on a confident gesture, with four horns in unison playing its main theme. The solo oboe begins the second theme, in irregular meters like 5/8 and 3/4, leading to a concentrated development. II, the scherzo, has the glockenspiel play a pitch three times. Jones' use of this as a linking device curiously recalls a similar touch from the Gablenz Piano Concerto reviewed earlier in this issue. It's one of Jones's more traditional movements, whose delicate sounds enhance its appeal. The slow movement, like I, uses mixed meters—5/4 and 3/4. After an opening timpani rhythm, the strings have a long-breathed melody running to 54 bars. Much of the music is like a dignified cortege. The development has some fascinating sounds, as when a variant of the main theme has a woodwind accompaniment of strangely trilling figures or when, over a descending bass line the music builds to a powerful peak. The opening timpani pulse is now played *ff* and staccato, before things quiet down. The final bars are picked up without pause in the final movement, with an athleticism recalling Hindemith. Its interweaving lines form a substantial crescendo in a relentless drive to the end.

Bryden Thomson leads the forces with his customary TLC and attention to detail. Performances and sound for both works are excellent, as are Paul Conway's booklet notes.

O'CONNOR

**KAMINSKY:** *Piano Quintet; Fantasy;*

*Reckoning; Piano Concerto*

Ursula Oppens, Jerome Lowenthal, p; Cassatt Quartet; Arizona State University Orchestra/ Jeffrey Meyer—Cedille 202—70 minutes

Ursula Oppens is one of the great pianists of our age. She has left an indelible mark on contemporary piano music, with numerous composers from Elliott Carter to Charles Wuorinen

writing works for her. Now we add Laura Kaminsky (b. 1956) to the list. Kaminsky's music often juxtaposes agitated, near-atonal dissonance with tonal serenity. Socio-political critiques can be found in many of her works. *Reckoning: Five Miniatures for America* (2019) for 4-hand piano comments on the divided state of America. The atonal-tonal opposition is strong here; acerbic violence is met with what sounds like ghostly flickers of a patriotic song in serene moments.

The piano quintet's (2019) commentary on current events is more implicit. I, 'Anthem,' is set in a 13/8 amalgamation of Ghanian and Eastern European rhythmic patterns. Sometimes the piano seems completely out of alignment with the groove—perhaps a statement about our society. II 'Lamentation; coming into the light' is self-explanatory: music of rumbling darkness gives way to lyricism in the strings, leading directly into III 'Maelstrom.' It is more meditative than stormy, though violent flurries of notes do sometimes erupt from the piano.

There are excellent sections in each work—I in the quintet is spectacular—but neither piece really stuck with me. Though I admire the impetus behind both pieces, their opacity and one-note commentaries on the political stress and uncertainty of the last few years felt predictable and hampered their potential. I may be harsh here—but I would love to be left with more than a feeling of agreement with the composer's political feelings!

The two more abstract works are better and more substantial—each a single movement about 20 minutes long. *Fantasy* (2010) for solo piano is the only piece here not written for Oppens (for Jenny Lin), though she plays it with undeniable authority and personality. The work is exploratory, each episode following another idea down the rabbit hole. Some ideas are persistent, rising to the surface in later episodes. This is certainly an accomplished work, but also the most challenging to the ear. Kaminsky's style can verge on the esoteric, which is more apparent here than in any other piece on the album. She mostly avoids these pitfalls in her exciting piano concerto (2011) with her superb handling of the orchestra. The music is much more direct, with the orchestra's colorful commentary illuminating the solo piano.

So here are two pieces that I like and two that leave me unsatisfied, all in masterly performances by Oppens.

FARO

## KANCHELI: *Simple Music*

Jenny Lin, p; Guy Klucevsek, acc  
Steinway 30173—63 minutes

Giya Kancheli (1935-2019) is known primarily for his orchestral and choral pieces, works of austere beauty that can burst with vitality or violence at a moment's notice. Rodion Shchedrin called him "an ascetic with the temperament of a maximalist—a restrained Vesuvius." Like many American listeners, I'm sure, I was introduced to his music by way of Kim Kashkashian's account of his extensive, elegiac viola concerto *Mourned by the Wind* (ECM 1471, M/A 1993). "Large-scale" and "Kancheli" are, then, two words that belong together in my head.

This disc offers something very different: *Simple Music*, a set of 33 light-hearted miniatures for piano, drawn from his music for theatre and film. Many of these fall into one of two stylistic categories: rainy-day cafe jazz and tongue-in-cheek oompah marches. All are ordered with variety in mind. Kancheli goes further by encouraging improvisation and creative interpretation from the performers. In this way, pianist Jenny Lin recruits accordionist Guy Kulcevsek, who adds imaginative counterpoint to the piano pieces and transcribes some for solo accordion. Both add tasteful flourishes and dissonances to the pieces. In all, a lovely diversion with just the right amount of charm and humor.

A note about the recording: as this was during Covid lockdown, the instrument parts were recorded separately: Lin in Virginia in July 2020, and Kulcevsek in Staten Island the following month. You would never guess they were not in the same room. I commend both performers and the recording engineers on a job well done under difficult circumstances.

FARO

## KENINS: *Symphonies 4+6; Canzona Sonata* Santa Vizine, va; Latvian Symphony/ Guntis Kuzma—Ondine 1354—53 minutes

Talivaldis Kenins (1919-2008) lived his early life in Latvia, fleeing to France during WW II to escape the invading Soviets. At the Paris Conservatory he studied with Tony Aubin and Olivier Messiaen. In 1951 he emigrated to Canada, where he taught at the University of Toronto for 32 years. His music has appeared in ARG from time to time (see index); the last time was March/April (Ondine 1350).

The notes describe him as a "contempo-