

Arvo Pärt Lamentate

Da pacem Domine for a cappella vocal soloists
Lamentate for large orchestra and solo piano

Alexei Lubimov: piano; **SWR Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart;** conducted by **Andrey Boreyko;** **The Hilliard Ensemble:** **Sarah Leonard:** soprano; **David James:** countertenor; **Rogers Covey-Crump:** tenor; **Stephen Harold:** tenor; **Gordon Jones:** baritone

ECM New Series 1930

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New music of Arvo Pärt appears only on ECM. The close collaboration with the great Estonian composer that began more than 20 years ago with the epochal “Tabula rasa” – the recording that launched the New Series - continues with an album which incorporates, in the title composition, some of the most powerful and arrestingly physical music Pärt has written. It also embraces the tender prayer for peace, “Da pacem Domine”, beautifully performed by the Hilliard Ensemble, with Sarah Leonard singing soprano, which opens the album.

Pärt’s tenth recording for ECM, “Lamentate” is issued in time for his 70th birthday on September 11th.

Written for large orchestra and solo piano, and commissioned for a series of live events at Tate Modern, “Lamentate” was inspired by Pärt’s encounter with the enormous sculpture “Marsyas”, by Bombay-born artist Anish Kapoor. 150 metres long, “Marsyas” fills Tate Modern’s Turbine Hall. Named for the Greek satyr flayed alive by the god Apollo, the piece consists of three enormous steel rings joined by a single span of dark red PVC membrane. The colour is intended to suggest blood and the body, and the sculpture is so large that it cannot be viewed in its entirety from any single position: “I wanted to make body into sky”, says Kapoor.

For Arvo Pärt the dimensions of the work were breathtaking: “My first impression was that I, as a living being, was standing before my own body and was dead – as in a time-warp perspective, at once in the future and the present. ... In this moment I had a strong sense of not being ready to die. And I was moved to ask myself just what I could still manage to accomplish in the time left to me.”

“Lamentate” then, is a lament not for the dead, but for the living, who must struggle “with the pain and hopelessness of this world.” The solo piano role is designated by the composer to represent “one”, the individual, buffeted by fate. It can be viewed, he writes, “as a first person narrative”. Pärt: “The work is marked by diametrically opposed moods... Exaggerating slightly, I would characterize these poles as ‘brutal-overwhelming’ and ‘intimate-fragile’.” In the present recording, the solo protagonist Alexei Lubimov sails the sea of circumstance with extraordinary fluency, negotiating ferocious tidal waves and ominous calms. The luminescent quality to his playing, which recently served Silvestrov’s “Metamusik” and “Postludium” so well is very much to the fore, sustaining the sense of quasi-improvisational freshness that was one of Pärt’s original goals for this work. Conductor Andrey Boreyko, marshalling the instrumental forces of the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, maintains the

emotional pressure throughout a very engaged performance of a work that concludes in a dialogue of reminiscences, of laments and consolations.

Among the works Arvo Pärt has composed over the past 25 years *Lamentate* is exceptional, not least by virtue of its expansiveness. Through-composed as a single movement that lasts nearly forty minutes, it attains dimensions for which Pärt has not otherwise striven in his individual pieces.

“*Lamentate*” was first performed at the Tate Modern in February 2003, in a collaboration which brought together Pärt, Anish Kapoor and American theatre director Peter Sellars. At the time – on the eve of the Iraq War – Sellars said of “*Lamentate*”, “Pärt’s music transmutes pain to sorrow and then to repentance. It takes you through a whole series of actions, reactions and further stages of contemplation. It is about taking personal responsibility for pain and violence, and how to change your life, not pointing the finger at someone else. The apocalypse, which the work indicates, is a signal for every one of us to engage in a personal act of repentance and transformation.”

Whatever its outward form, Pärt’s spiritual message is consistent. On this disc, “*Lamentate*” responds to the plea for peace that is “*Da pacem Domine*”. Pärt composed the work to a commission from Jordi Savall for music for a peace concert, embracing the world’s musical and religious traditions, held in Barcelona on July 1st, 2004. Its musical point of departure was the 9th century Gregorian antiphon, an intercession in the liturgy which has inspired many composers through the ages:

*Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris
Quia non est alius
Qui pugnet pro nobis
Nisi tu Deus noster.*

*Give peace, o Lord, in our time
Because there is no one else
Who will fight for us
If not You, our God.*

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Alexei Lubimov was born in Moscow in 1944, and studied at the Central Music School and the Moscow Conservatory. He made his mark as a champion of contemporary composers in 1968, when he gave the Moscow debuts of works by John Cage and Terry Riley and it was through his endeavours – also as the founder of the important Moscow festival “*Alternativa*” – that many listeners in Russia became acquainted with the music of numerous western composers. He also premiered pieces by Silvestrov, Schnittke, Gubaidulina and other major figures in composition inside what was then the Soviet Bloc.

His ECM debut “*Der Bote*”, a recital disc which imaginatively brought together compositions by CPE Bach, John Cage, Tigran Mansurian, Franz Liszt, Michail Glinka, Frédéric Chopin, Claude Debussy, Béla Bartók and Valentin Silvestrov, received unanimous critical acclaim worldwide. It was followed by a moving account of the Schnittke Piano Quintet (with The Keller Quartet), and a second recital disc with Russian 20th century piano music, and compositions of Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Scriabin: “*Messe Noire*”. His recording of Silvestrov’s “*Postludium*” and “*Metamusik*” also received the highest praise.

Andrey Boreyko was born in St Petersburg in 1957. He is currently music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, chief conductor of the Hamburg Symphoniker, and first guest conductor of the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart. For the 2006/7 season, he has been appointed chief conductor designate of the Bern Symphony Orchestra. Boreyko regularly conducts the major orchestras at leading international music festivals. A focal point of his repertoire is music of contemporary composers from the former Soviet Union.

The SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart was founded 1946, and its great conductors have included Carl Schuricht, Sergiu Celibidache, Georges Prêtre, and, from 1998, Sir Roger Norrington. The orchestra was previously heard on ECM in performances of two other major works, Heinz Holliger's Violin Concerto and Helmut Lachenmann's "Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern."

The Hilliard Ensemble has been with ECM since 1987, their recording of Arvo Pärt's "Arbos" signalling also the beginning of their long association with the Estonian composer (including the discs "Passio", "Miserere" and "Litany"). The Hilliard Ensemble's reputation in the fields of both contemporary music performance and early music is unsurpassed; no other vocal group has addressed the "old" and the "new" so persuasively for so long.

Other Hilliard recordings for the New Series include music of Guillaume de Machaut (Motets), Victoria and Palestrina ("In Paradisum"), Gesualdo ("Tenebrae"), Lassus, Walter Frye, Thomas Tallis ("The Lamentations of Jeremiah"), "Codex Specialnik" (Josquin Desprez, Petrus de Grudencz, etc.), "A Hilliard Songbook" (Arvo Pärt, Barry Guy, Morton Feldman, Ivan Moody, James MacMillan, Veljo Tormis, Joanne Metcalf etc.). In 2001, the Hilliard Ensemble's collaboration with Christoph Poppen on "Morimur", based on the Bach research of Prof. Helga Thoene, intrigued many thousands of listeners around the world. On "Ricercar", again with Poppen, musical and spiritual affinities between Bach and Webern were explored. In the second half of 2005, the Hilliard Ensemble's ongoing work with Norwegian improvising saxophonist Jan Garbarek – heard on "Officium" and "Mnemosyne" – is the subject of much of their touring activity.

A new Hilliard Ensemble album, with music of Nicolas Gombert, is in preparation for 2006 release.