

Mp3 Stirling Newberry - In The Year Of Storms



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A rich soundscape, which touches Bach, Stravinsky and Copland, but presses on to the 21st century in painting the dark swirls of clouds, and memorializing those stricken by Hurricane Katrina. 10 MP3 Songs

CLASSICAL: Contemporary, CLASSICAL: Traditional Details: In the last thirty years there has been a revival in music, as composers sought to write music that would reach out to audiences and bring people back into the concert hall. Dubbed "minimalism" and "post-minimalism", composers such as Phillip Glass, John Adams and Aaron Jay Kernis won both awards and listeners with their works. However, all too often these works left many followers of classical music hungering for more depth and development, and asking "is there any there there?" Stirling Newberry belongs to a new generation that is ardent in its desire to win people over to new music, but equally committed to providing the internal unity and formal coherence that is the mark of works destined to last. While filled with infectious melodies and appealing surfaces, the power of musical argument is not diminished or ignored. With his two recent string quartets, in Eb and B, he has broken new ground in creating large scale structures, creating a flowing river of rhythm, harmony and melody that has people playing these works over and over again on their CD players and iPods. The Quartet in Eb, written in a flood of inspiration in August and September is a memorial to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, set in five movements, it has a rich allegro, as its first movement, followed by two movements which break out and dance. The first of these is Katrina's Raindroplet Rag, where rain and the spirits of those who lost their lives swirl about, culminating in a climax mixes the old Gregorian Chant of "Dies Irae" with spidery, fragile melodic lines. The second, "Creole Waltz", uses complex rhythms to depict the spiraling bustle of the city that was lost. The fourth movement is a tone poem: "Waves from Distant Storms", that stands on a grey deserted beach, feeling the pulse of both nature, and the stream of images from radio, internet and television. The last movement

is a heart felt elegy, that circles the chromatic circle, with ripe polyphony and fluid inspiration. The Quartet in B, which the composer describes as "a concerto grosso for string quartet", features a long arc between its first two movements, that touch on Prokofiev and Stravinsky before heading into more distant waters. The fourth movement is the infectious "Groove for String Quartet", a just shy of three minute dance that pulses with the energy of Bach and the liveliness of the present. The last movement, Sinfonia, takes the listener on a voyage through all of the faces of the work, before ending with a rushing and satisfying close. Mr. Newberry grew up in Schenectady New York, studying voice and piano under Jim Lazenby of St. George's Church, but has done most of his composing in the Boston area. He now lives in Lowell Massachusetts.

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