

Corona Gtr Qrt: TAUT on ALBANY



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TAUT • Corona Gtr Qrt • ALBANY 1540 (47:41)

MASON Filibuster. GREEN Quartet for Guitars. HINDMAN Taut. SBACCO Cori Ballenti. FRITH Álfanes



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In 1995, Volkmar Zimmermann and Per Dybro Sørensen founded the Corona Guitar Kwartet. Mikkel Andersen became a member in 2000, and a year later Kristian Gantriis joined the group. Having

played together for many years, these artists respond as a single unit. Their touring and recording has enabled them to assume an important role in the development of the guitar quartet repertoire. On their recording entitled Taut , Charles Norman Mason's Filibuster opens with bold rhythms that suggest warring political factions and opposing orations. The music gets softer, possibly because the orators are girding themselves with the new arguments they spout in Mason's furious finale. It's definitely a tour de force for the fine players of the Kvartet.

Edward Green, a professor at the Manhattan School of Music, wrote his three-movement quartet more than 30 years ago but surprisingly this is its first recording. He speaks of his desire to unite unlike qualities, in this case energy and thoughtfulness. For the first movement, he writes a robust allegro that starts and stops as it lurches toward its finale. Members of the Kvartet dialogue back and forth comfortably as they play this difficult music. The second movement, Fantasia, has a memorable melody with a rhythm that sounds like gentle raindrops falling on the glassy surface of a still brook. The rainfall becomes heavier before slowing to a stop. For the final Rondo, a wind whisks away the clouds and a warm sun warms lightens the surface of the brook.

Composer Dorothy Hindman says the inspiration for her piece Taut is the tightness of the guitar strings as well as the personal tensions felt by players in very tight ensemble situations. She speaks of their heightened emotional states and their ability to draw listeners into their musical milieu. To do this she presents four motives at the beginning of the piece and develops them by various means. It makes for a dramatic, highly strung piece.

Since 1983, composer Franco Sbacco has held the chair of harmony and analysis at Rome's Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music. He is known for the use of electronics, but he did not use any in Cori Battenti (Beating Hearts). He did, however, ask two of the Kvartet's guitars to tune down a quarter tone. That tuning produces blocks of solid tone when all four play together. When they play separately, the music has a bell-like timbre. Sbacco never lets listeners forget that live artists with constantly beating hearts are giving a most ardent and technically expert performance of his music.

English rock guitarist Fred Frith, a founding member of Henry Cow , is the oldest composer represented on the disc. Having composed for electric guitars for a long time, Frith was not used to the narrow parameters of the acoustic instrument. Only after a stay at Álfanes, in Iceland, did he relate the less flamboyant possibilities of the acoustic guitar to music inspired by nature. He opens with music that sounds like tumbling waters that come from snowmelt. The birds pluck food from sea and land to feed their young. Frith brings us the rhythms of wind and water as he describes the profusion of wildlife that inhabits Iceland. Since all the works here are being presented for the first time, there are no comparisons. The sound is clear and the instruments are well presented on this most enjoyable recording. Maria Nockin

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