



than 30 years, the trio has defined the personality of the clarinet-violin-piano trio, creating a large repertoire for the trio by commissioning more than 200 new works from some of the world's most prominent composers. Their efforts are entitled "The Making of a Medium" because this is truly what has happened through the years.

These discs exemplify the consistently high standard we have heard in the Verdehr's numerous recordings through the years. Recording quality is excellent. Balance among the three instruments is superb. The trio gives tremendous attention to detail in the music, performing with an enormous spectrum of colors and expressions. Rhythm is incredibly precise. It is gratifying to hear these works performed authoritatively and convincingly. Each of the compositions is compelling and virtuosic for all members; each is exceedingly well performed. Therefore, I thought it most useful to give a brief sense of the composer and feel of the compositions featured.

Ricardo Lorenz is currently on the faculty at Michigan State University and has lived in the United States since 1982 while maintaining close ties with Latin America. Lorenz writes: "*Compass Points* alludes to the fact that each of its movements was composed in a different geographical location." The first movement, "*Verde que te quiero Verdehr*," is both rhythmic and fluid, featuring fast-moving technical passages in alternation with expansive, lyrical lines. The second movement, "In memoriam Robert Avalon," is somber, cantabile soulful. "*Scherzarengue*" is based on the fast gestures found in *merengue*. The composition is colorful and fun.

Kevin Puts is a member of the composition department at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. *Three Nocturnes*

is a compelling, atmospheric and beautiful work. "Con moto" features the clarinet in endless, soaring lines over an arpeggiated violin part. "Flowing: non troppo lento" now features the violin in soaring lines with rhythmic underpinnings in piano and clarinet accompaniment in imitative counter-melody. According to Puts, "Molto adagio" is a piano nocturne in the tradition of Chopin. The movement is slow and deliberate in contrast to the constant activity of the first two movements.

Augusta Read Thomas is a "University Professor" at the University of Chicago and was Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony from 1997 through 2006. Thomas writes: "Somewhat of a cross between 'Jazz' and 'Classical,' *Dancing Helix Rituals* can be heard as a lively dance made up of a series of outgrowths and variations." She even suggests that it may be performed with dancers. "Varied, colorful, crosscut, unexpected sounds are performed in a manner so as to feel inevitable in the way that a jazz improviser thinks spontaneously." Indeed, this work is energetic and really grooves.

Lee Hoiby studied composition at the Curtis Institute. His works have been recognized with numerous awards and grants. *Rock Valley Trio* is charming. Simple, gracious, flowing melodies trade among the three voices throughout.

Stefan Freund is on the faculty at the University of Missouri and cellist with the new music ensemble Alarm Will Sound. *Triodances* was inspired by folk dance, neoclassicism and the number 3. All meters of the work are either triple or compound meter; there are obviously three players, and key relationships in thirds exist. The neoclassical and clever "Freunuet and (Verdehr) Trio" movement is "full of quotes, inspired by Stravinsky's *Second Suite for Orchestra*." "Pastorale," is, as suggested, slower and more reflective while "Tarentelly" is the most involved movement of the work featuring a "Mixed meter theme on a wild ride through swing gestures, ominous rumblings, triumphant climaxes and flashy runs."

Margaret Brouwer taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music and has received numerous awards for her compositions. Each movement of *Trio* is meant to represent an emotion or state of mind. "Joyful Moment" is indeed joyous and displays a bright spirit, perpetual activity in all parts and a glowing, sparkling color. Introspective in feel, "Reverie" "maintains a mood

of calmness, stillness and sadness." "Escaping" is active and electric with sharp punctuations and gestures.

Born in Puerto Rico, Roberto Sierra is professor of composition at Cornell University. The translation of Sierra's work, "Remembrance of a forgotten melody," gives great insight into the inspiration and structure of the work. Sierra states, "The way we remember and try to reconstruct a long forgotten melody is the concept that generated the form of the work." A melodic fragment is introduced then transforms and changes through rhythm, harmony and textural colors as it is "remembered."

Gernot Wolfgang resides in Los Angeles, California where he is active in the film and TV music industry as a composer, arranger and orchestrator. *Sketch Book* is a collection of three short programmatic pieces. Upbeat and cheerful "Green Island" is dedicated to jazz saxophonist Michael Brecker and contains improvisatory-like passages for all. Of "Night Breeze" Wolfgang describes, "A slight, warm breeze is rustling in the trees, accompanying the dialogue of the violin and clarinet." "Chromatic Train" contains obvious references to a train on a journey.

William Wallace taught at Rutgers University in New Jersey and McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. He writes, "Harmonically, *Sonata a Tre* is easy on the ears, with little dissonance. Its claim to this century lies in rhythm." "Allegro" is aggressive and serious, "Andante Semplice" repetitive, slow and languid, and "Dance," presto and vital.

These discs are fabulous additions to the clarinetist's library. The compositions are interesting, varied and significant additions to our repertoire. The Verdehr Trio's playing is stellar, demonstrating the very best in chamber music performance.

by Scott Locke

**Jesús Rodríguez Picó – Concerts per a clarinet i Orquestra.** Josef Fuster, clarinet; Barcelona Symphony Orchestra – the National Orchestra of Catalonia, conducted by Manel Valdivieso. Jesús Rodríguez Picó: *Concerto No. 1*; *Concerto No. 2*; *Concertino for clarinet and strings*. COLUMNA MÚSICA 1CM0261. Total time 47:56. www.columnamusica.com

Jesús Rodríguez Picó was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1953. Upon receiving