



11/03-(5)

Title:

Artur Lourié (1892-1966)
Suite, Concerto da Camera
Nikolay Roslavets (1881-1944)
String Quartet No. 3

Musicians:

Leipziger Streichquartett
Christian Ockert, double bass

Number of CDs: 1

Order Number:

MDG 307 1192-2

UPC-Code:



Interpretive Domain

The Leipzig String Quartet has already taken the standard literature by storm and now makes undiscovered musical territory its interpretive domain. Three unknown, supremely interesting works serve as the occasion: Arthur Lourié's *Suite* and Nikolai Roslavets' *Concerto da Camera* and *String Quartet No. 3*. Both composers belong to the group of musicians who were drowned out by post-revolutionary Russia's propagandistic drum-beating.

Original System

"I come from an earthy peasant family" was Nikolai Roslavets' modest self-description. The career of this immensely talented violinist took him first to Kursk and then to Moscow, where he also studied composition. In 1919 he formulated a "new system of tone organization", the basis for a kind of serial composition that he linked to the time-honored tonal sphere.

Controversial Masterpiece

It was precisely Roslavets' masterpiece, his String Quartet No. 3, that brought him sharp criticism from the Association of Proletarian Musicians. From then on Roslavets' music was classified as a "product of the corruption of bourgeois society" while he had to make ends meet as the leader of a gypsy ensemble. In 1937 his family, fearing police searches, destroyed a suitcase containing manuscripts of his early compositions.

Man on the Run

Arthur Lourié began his study of piano at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1909 and received instruction in composition from Glazunov. He too was soon no longer satisfied with the tradition. In his "ultrachromatic system" he set forth a theory for the addition of quarter tones to the traditional scale together with an appropriate notation. After experiencing some initial revolutionary euphoria himself, Lourié soon realized that a "steadily increasing twilight in Russian life" would not leave him unscathed. In March 1923 he moved to Paris, and in 1941 he emigrated to the United States. When he died in Princeton in 1966, he was a forgotten man both in his native country and in his second home.

Timeless Models

Though an avant-gardist at heart, Lourié also availed himself of historical models. His *Suite* for string quartet employs a series of old dance movements as a backdrop for the unfolding of his own unique musical language. The *Concerto da camera* (1947) composed thirty-three years later also demonstrates the stability of neoclassical models in its pursuit of new formal paths. In the epilogue Lourié anticipates Astor Piazzolla's style long before the great Argentine composer's tangos filled the world's philharmonic halls.

Charles Ives, String Quartets No. 1 + 2 etc.

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Hindemith/ Weill, String Quartets

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