

Upon Listening

Sherry Kloss, *Epsilon Upsilon, Muncie Alumni*

3510 West University Avenue, Muncie, IN 47303 phone: 765/287-8469 e-mail: sherryk@excite.com

Dark Winds Rising with the Equinox Chamber Players offers delightful listening and an upbeat compositional approach to personal expression and delightful listening. Composers John Lampkin, Beth Denisch, and Phillip Bimstein are all creative freethinkers who understand how to maximize the unique tonal qualities of wind instruments to convey their descriptive musical messages. The Equinox Chamber Players are flutist Paula Kasica, oboist Ann Homann, clarinetist Jeanine York-Garesché (*St. Louis Alumni*), bassoonist Donita Bauer, and Carole Lemire on horn.

John Lampkin's work *A Walk Through Shaw's Garden* is eight descriptive vignettes. "Dragonflies" features the flute in sprightly flight, playfully interacting with horn, clarinet, and bassoon. "Orpheus, Eurydice, and the Dancers" is simply beautiful writing. Lampkin uses the horn's deep timbre to state the theme and set the mood for the flute and oboe to sing the melodic song, each instrument sparkling in its own particular voice. "The Butterfly and the Rose" is a conversation, with the scintillating flute (butterfly) skittering about while the deep-rooted rose (clarinet) remains staunch and constant, finally joining hands and hearts. In "On the Tram" the horn depicts the revolution of tram wheels while the other instruments add rhythmic movement as they inch forward in their journey. These and the other movements are music that brings a smile and is a natural for a children's musical.

Lampkin's other work on the CD, *Migrations*, could be a film score, with settings about Salmon, Red Crabs, Broadwing Hawks, Three-Toed Sloths, and Spiny Lobsters. The composer has a gift for capturing the essence of living creatures in vibrant, fresh music with many effects including ornamentation,

trills, rich voicing, canonic writing, and more, masterfully maintaining the listener's interest.

Beth Denisch's *Jordan and the Dog Woman*, in five sketches, is performed with percussionist Henry Claude. "The Pools at Wimbledon" features solo bassoon, clarinet, and flute, with special effects of flutter tongue, unisons, and change of timbre producing an eastern Asian sound. "Jordan the Sailor" utilizes a wide vocabulary of sounds in dissonance and resolution, bringing to mind the rustle of waves. The composer employs fascinating combinations of style with elements of rhythmic swing and jazzy improvisation, concluding the piece with a rhythmic snare drum solo. This is dynamic, originally conceived chamber music.

Dark Winds Rising by Phillip Bimstein carries a social message and the philosophical wisdom of a nation, presenting in words and music the concerns of the Kaibab Paibab Indian reservation of northern Arizona. This is an innovative approach to storytelling, with imaginative musical backdrops. We hear native music partnered with sounds of human life: sighs, breath, pain, frustration, as well as bright beacons of wisdom and hope, all brought to life through musical tools like short sound spurts, rhythmic punctuation, repetition, and electronic techniques. All combine to intensify the pathos of an intimate story of the generations.

The St. Louis-based Equinox Chamber Players are individual masters of their instruments. Committed to education and bringing music with a message to communities of the world, with dozens of commissions and premieres to their credit, they have been heard on PBS and NPR and are included in the PBS documentary "Continental Harmony."



Ordering Information:

Dark Winds Rising
TROY946 - \$16.99

Albany Records

915 Broadway, Albany, NY 12207

518-436-8814

infoalbany@aol.com

CONTENTS:

John Lampkin, composer
A Walk through Shaw's Garden
Equinox Chamber Players

Beth Denisch, composer
Jordan and the Dog Woman
Equinox Chamber Players
Henry Claude percussion

John Lampkin, composer
Migrations
Equinox Chamber Players

Phillip Bimstein, composer
Dark Winds Rising
Equinox Chamber Players