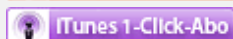


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## CD Feature/ Rodolfo Matulich: "Sinfonia della Croce"

The archetypal journey of faith being challenged, but returning victoriously.



tradition broken in the 20th century, were agnosticism was

considered to be a precondition for contemporary art. Slowly, but surely the situation is starting to change and Rodolfo Matulich is one of those leading the way.

The reason why this matters is simple: The re-appearance of the Christian composer mirrors the desire of religious listeners of no longer being left out of the cultural debate and of becoming part of a scene as well. A similar phenomenon in pop music has preceded this development, which has, in the USA at least, reached the status of an important economic factor. In Europe, things are still far from that. But even the "Sinfonia della Croce", a mostly instrumental orchestral work by a still relatively unknown artist, sold a staggering 30.000 copies in Italy alone. Of course Matulich, who has made a name for himself as a composer of film music, has had the support of a big recording company, which, especially in this segment, makes all the difference. But even then his success is remarkable. It would also be unfair of attributing it to the mere fact that churchgoers would like to have a suitable sound track for their Sunday tea. Rather, this is a melodically exuberant and luxuriously harmonic piece full of romantic influences, which keeps its inward tension for the entire length. Themes are presented and reconstructed, but in a clever and yet recognisable way – it was a decided intent to allow the listener to lean on a long tradition, as he is being confronted with new sensations. The main impression of the symphony is one of calmness, with warm layers of strings serving as a ground for melodic exploration. But underneath the surface, several disturbances can be felt, which reflect the feelings of its creator during the time of inception: anxiety, nervousness, weariness. In this respect, it is the archetypal journey of faith being challenged, but returning victoriously.

The inclusion of soprano Linda Campanella and strategically placed touches of harp add the necessary colour to an otherwise mostly meditative score and push the music gently on. Religious motives are everywhere, but they are never there for their own sake alone. The complete absence of missionary zeal is quite possibly one of the "Sinfonia della Croce"'s strongest points and so is the fine balance between overt emotionality and seriousness. This new Christian composer can be enjoyed by everyone.

By Tobias Fischer

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