

Eric Chasalow - Over the Edge

New World Records

This disc gathers together mixed works for tape and solo instrument. The instruments range from percussion through flute and cello to voice. Also included is a solo work for horn and string quartet.

In listening to this CD, one is struck by the personal harmonic universe and the pointillistic manner in which Eric Chasalow 'deposits' the sonic events on his canvas. This compositional virtuosity causes us to listen to the pieces as musical entities, and doesn't just take the ear on a non-stop tour from the instrumental world to the electronic world and back again. The tape/instrumental links are reinvented constantly and never relegated to a 'who does what' aesthetic, the main pitfall of many mixed works. The Furies is a sort of accompanied melody for soprano and 'electronic continuum' accentuating and punctuating the poem by Anne Sexton. For Fast Forward, the tape is composed as an extension of the range of the percussion instruments, not as an illusory fusion of timbres, but as a real musical fusion of two worlds.

The sonic resources used are relatively sober and never chattery, the instruments do not park beyond conventional registers, but it is the strength of Chasalow's writing that makes his works so alive and poetic. In The Furies of Rainstorms the drama and the derision are so close to the universe of Berio.

I must also underline the excellence of the performers and the high quality of the recordings. In summary, I really enjoyed listening to the music and not simply the results of some technology being put into play.

A booklet, written by Mike Silverton, recaptures the journey of the composer and each of the performers while drawing up a portrait of the pieces.

Olivier Cussac