

# AllMusic

## Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose



### Review by Blair Sanderson

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American composer **Leon Kirchner** was a student of **Arnold Schoenberg**, though he did not use the 12-tone system or other strict organizational methods, and favored a generally dissonant and free atonal style with ambiguous tonal inflections. As a result, his music more closely resembles the flexible approach of **Alban Berg**, and the orchestral music on this 2018 release from the **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** bears this out. **Kirchner** was no avant-garde dogmatist, and his music was liberated from the "rule of the row," total serialism, aleatoric operations, and later experimental fads. While keeping his music out of the so-called "international style" of the mid-20th century, **Kirchner** let his ideas develop by their own logic, not some arbitrary technique, yet permitted his melodies and harmonies to hint at tonality without being reactionary. The titles on this program suggest abstraction rather than any programmatic intent, and the *Sinfonia in Two Parts* (1951), the *Toccat*a for strings, solo winds and percussion (1955), *Music for Orchestra* (1969), and *Orchestra Piece* (*Music for Orchestra II*) (1990) must be taken as pure concert music in a serious vein, with inventive dissonant counterpoint as the *modus operandi* and expressionism coloring the style. Only *The Forbidden* (2008), **Kirchner's** final composition, suggests a hidden story, though in this case, the music's references to a highly chromatic, post-Romantic tonality imply the title's most likely meaning. **Gil Rose** leads the **BMOP** in solid and committed performances, and considering the scarcity of recordings of **Kirchner's** works, this 2018 release may well be considered authoritative, judged by the convincing way these pieces are performed.