

CLASSICAL CD REVIEW



KIRCHNER: *Sinfonia in Two Parts. Toccata for Strings, Solo Winds, and Percussion. Music for Orchestra. Orchestra Piece (Music for Orchestr11). The Forbidden.*

**Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose, cond.
BMOP SACD 1060 TT: 62:39**



CHEN YI: *Spring in Dresden for Violin and Orchestra. Suite for Cello and Chamber Winds, Fiddle Suite for Huqin and String Orchestra. Xian Shi for Viola and Orchestra.*
**Boston Modern Orchestra Project. Mira Wang, violin. David Russell, cello. Wang Guowei, huqin. Lizhou Liu, viola. / Gil Rose, cond.
BMOP SACD 1058 TT: 69:09**

Leon Kirchner (1919 - 2009) was totally American, a major figure for a half century. He was a respected teacher and won a number of awards for his music. A prolific composer, Kirchner wrote primarily chamber music, much of which has been recorded. His orchestral works will be new to most listeners, although they have been championed by major conductors. The New York Philharmonic premiered *Sinfonia in Two Parts* in 1952 (Dimitri Mitropoulos), *Toccata* premiered 1956 with Enrique Jordá and the San Francisco Symphony, *Music for Orchestra* premiered 1969 with the composer leading the New York Philharmonic, *Orchestra Piece* was premiered 1990 with the composer leading the New England Conservatory Orchestra, and James Levine conducted the Boston Symphony in the premiere of *The Forbidden* in 2008. Now we have all of these works, most of which doubtless are first recordings, in sterling performances by the superb Boston Modern Orchestra Project under its dynamic conductor, Gil Rose. In spite of this, it seems Kirchner's orchestral music has yet to develop a following. I've listened to his recording three times,

and three is nothing here that I would care to experience again. I'm sure Rose and his ensemble do what can be done, but limited interest here. Superb audio, as usual wi BMOP.

Another **BMOP** SACD offers unusual works by virtually unknown composer, Chen Yi. Born in 1953, she was a violinist and focused on composing music for string instruments. She met conductor Gil Rose when they were members of the Board of Advisors of the American Music Center. Rose, intrigued by Yi's music, suggested they make these recordings. The major work is Yi's Violin Concerto No. 2 called *Springtime in Dresden*, written in 2005 for Mira Wang, soloist on this recording. The 16-minute *Xian Shi* is the earliest work of the composer (1983) composed for Yi's graduation ceremony, scored for viola and orchestra. The premiere was played by Lizhou Liu, also heard on this recording. In this music the viola is used to suggest the sound of the the two-string fiddle *yehu*. *Fiddle Suite* features 3 types of *hugin* (Chinese fiddles). Recordings were made in different venues 2010 - 2014, and engineers have provided a satisfying, well-balanced sound. This is an opportunity to hear unusual music for string instruments, and we may be sure these performances are exactly what the composer intended. Yet another unusual SACD from **BMOP**!

R.E.B. (October 2018)