

Viola Concerto (1995)

- I. Moderato-Prestissimo
- II. Andante
- III. Presto

Difficulty: Level 6

Duration: 23 minutes

Premiere: Rivka Golani with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra

By Peter Paul Koprowski (b. 1947)

I found this work to be innovative and creative, but never too dissonant or offensive, and always

attractive and intriguing. I became aware of this work through the recording of it that I bought [SMCD 5206 CBC Records] featuring Rivka Golani and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The opening movement begins very slowly and darkly, with mysterious harmonies that reminded me of Martin's Symphony No. 3. This mood quickly changed into a more aggressive one with the percussion crescendo that leads into the opening viola solo entrance. There are extended viola cadenza-like sections in the beginning of the work that have

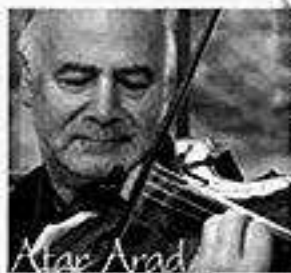
a dark C in the cellos and basses being held during the cadenza. The Prestissimo section reminded me of the ending of Colgrass's Variations for Viola and 4 Drums, the sixteenth note passage at the end. The ending of this work was incredibly spooky!

This darkness of the ending of the first movement transitioned very nicely into the second movement, Andante, which kept a somber character throughout the movement. The accompaniment was very thin, sort of like the minimalist accompaniment Shostakovich uses for his Viola Sonata. The third movement, Presto, begins in a fast 3 meter, and brings to mind the Penderecki Viola Concerto, the Shostakovich Cello Concerto,

and the Kabelevsky Violin Concerto. His percussion usage, especially that of the xylophone and gong is very intriguing and adds colors not often heard in viola concerti. The double-stop trills and ricochet also were very unusual effects in the solo part. The ending in this concerto goes out with a bit more of a bang with more Colgrass-like fast sixteenth notes at the end, and an uproar in the percussion which will certainly bring the audience to an ovation.

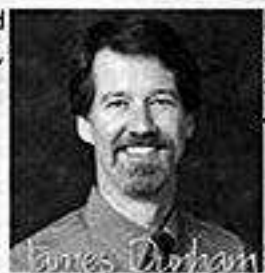
This concerto received the Jean A. Chalmers National Music Award in 1997, and in 2002 it received a JUNO nomination. This work is available directly through the composer at: e-mail: ppkoprowski@sympatico.ca.

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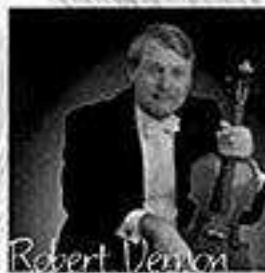
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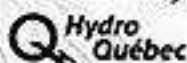


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