

Fred Lerdahl, Volume 4 - Spirals in Form

Friday, July 12, 2013

Volume Four in Bridge Records' ongoing Fred Lerdahl series features works from different stages of the composer's career. And what an interesting career its been!

Wake, a setting of Finnegans' *Wake*, was Lerdahl's first major composition. Finished in 1968, it's Lerdahl at his most atonal. Written (and performed here) by Bethany Beardslee, *Wake* is a jagged, spikey work that moves along like an wobbly wheel, threatening to spin out of control at any moment.

Fantasy Studies, a 1985 work commissioned and performed by eighth blackbird shows how much Lerdahl's own compositional voice developed. Rather than academic serialism, Lerdahl uses his concept of spiral development, continually revisiting motives that fold back on themselves.

The third major work included is *Spirals*, a 2006 orchestral composition. Here the linear nature of *Fantasy Studies* is replaced by sound clouds -- further developing his idea of spiral forms. The music wavers and flows, groups of instruments interweaving with each other in fascinating ways.



Fred Lerdahl, Vol. 4. Odense Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Chamber Players eighth blackbird, Argento Chamber Ensemble. Bridge Records.

Some smaller -- but no less appealing -- works round out the release. There *Diatonic Studies* (2009) bubble along, proving that just using the white keys doesn't always result in bland music. *Imbrications* (2001) is more aggressive, with noodlely lines working with and against each other in a sparkling mixture.

Posted by Ralph Graves at 12:27PM

source: <http://wtjuclassical.blogspot.com/2013/07/fred-lerdahl-volume-4-spirals-in-form.html>