Sulkhan Nasidze: String Quartet No. 5 - Sulkhan Tsintsadze: String Quartet No. 6 (1995)



1 Sulkan Nasidze - String Quartet No. 5 "Con Sordino", In Honor Of S. Tsintsadze 19:56
Sulkhan Tsintsadze - Miniatures For String Quartet (Based On Georgian Folksongs)
2 1. Indi Mindi 1:44 3 2. Suliko 2:27 4 3. Shepherd's Dance 1:32 5 4. Firefly 1:52 6 5. Sachidao 2:08 7 6. A Nagging Wife 1:31 8 7. Sisatura 3:15 9 8. Rural Dance 1:06 10 Sulkhan Tsintsadze - String Quartet No. 6 19:24
Georgian State String Quartet: Konstantin Vardeli – I Violin Tamaz Batiashvili – II Violin Nodar Zhvania – Viola Otar Chubinishvili – Cello

This is a rather enticing and certainly enjoyable release presenting two of the major Georgian composers of the twentieth century, Sulkhan Nasidze (1927-1996) and Sulkhan Tsintsadze (1925-1992). It certainly makes me want to hear more of their music (several of Nasidze's symphonies, say, have been recorded, but the recordings are relatively difficult to obtain). Nasidze's fifth quartet was written in 1992, is entitled `Con Sordino' and was dedicated to the memory of Tsintsadze. It is cast in one movement with a tripartite structure where the first and third episodes are linked by a viola theme. The work is a strangely absorbing, elegiac (and rather anxious in the third episode) but generally very light and airy creation. The shadow of Shostakovich (and perhaps Schnittke) is discernible, but Nasidze's compositional work sound rather individual and he is quite successful when it comes to merging Western and non-Western elements into a convincing whole.

Tsintsadze's music is a tad more conventional, but still quite individual. There are echoes of Bartók in his music's incorporation of Georgian elements, but the influences certainly don't drown out Tsintsadze's own voice. The sixth quartet is a finely constructed, effective and engaging work cast in one movement with five discernible sections. The first section is a poignant Andante sostenuto, presenting the thematic material further developed with intensity in the ensuing Allegro assai, which turns into a fugato section. The third section, also an Andante sostenuto, takes up the now transformed theme in a sorrowful, almost desperate manner but accelerates into a grotesque, spiteful Allegro scherzando before returning with stirring,

desperate strength in the final Andante molto sostenuto. Though the work isn't memorable enough to compete with the Bartok or Shostakovich quartets it is still a rather stirring and rewarding work that deserves to be heard by fans of any of those composers.

The ten miniatures again seem to take their cues from Bartók but with a sprinkle of Khachaturian. They are generally sunny and tuneful affairs, but Tsintsadze shows real skill in utilizing the polyphonic structure of folksongs for a quartet setting. Throughout the Georgian State String Quartet are strong advocates of this fascinating music and the sound quality is good (if not without its rough edges). All in all, this is a very much recommendable release for anyone with a sense of adventure. And I certainly hope that other recordings of music by these composers will become more generally available. ---G.D., amazon.com

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