Heitor Villa-Lobos - Orchestral Works (1994)

1. Genesis 18:31 2. Erosao (Origem do Rio Amazonas) 19:44 3. Amazonas 13:02 4. Dawn in a Tropical Forest 10:02 Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava) Roberto Duarte (conductor)

Concerning his orchestral music, this is one of my very favorite Villa-Lobos cd's. If you are finished with the overrated Bachianas and discovered the supremity of the Choros, then the next step is to the ballets, symphonic poems, and symphonies. Villa-Lobos wrote a lot in each of these catogories. Genesis and Erosao are two late masterpieces, written in the fiftees. Both Genesis and especially the suprising uncommon austerity of Erosao give the listener a sense of remote, vast and humanless regions, more than any other orchestral piece by Villa-Lobos. Erosao shows influences of Bruckner in its contrast between broad brass chorales and soft playing solo instruments. The latter are at some moments accompanied by beautiful strange waving sounds in the lowest strings, a typical Villa-Lobos orchestration invention. Genesis contains more of those highly original orchestrations. Villa-Lobos really enjoys playing with sound and strange but effective combinations of instruments. In Genesis there is one nostalgic melody which permeates the piece halfway, first played by the clarinet, then by full orchestra with a suprising original contrapuntal writing, and finally in a faster tempo with Brazilian rhythms and percussion. All the four pieces on this cd contain birdsounds, but in Genesis they are the most exuberant, including a luxurious glissando of lots of instruments. You didn't hear such a thing before! At the end the music of this wonderful piece becomes more and more quiet and lonely, except for the the last few bars, when there is one large crescendo of a chord to end the piece. Amazonas (1917) belongs with Choros no. 8 and parts of Choros no. 11 to the composers most complex orchestral pieces. It is premiered only in 1929 in Paris, together with the premiere of Edgar Varese's Ameriques. Contrary to the vast spaces of Genesis and Erosao the music of Amazonas throws you in a fascinating almost claustrophobic dense web of music full of junglesounds that surrounds you in a sultry atmosphere. The waving and cradling motives of string-harmonics like sounds of insects together with clarinet birdcries somewhere in the middle of the piece give a wonderful hallucinating effect. The piece ends in an almost Ivesian soundweb of simultaneous music. After the fascinating but oppressive and sultry atmosphere of Amazonas the cd ends relieving with Dawn in a Tropical Forest which starts with a long

gradually evolving introduction, consoling and beautiful rising upwards. The fast section which follows is with its fugal Bachianas influences less interesting and a little dissapointing, but the supreme beauty of the introduction makes this short piece very much worth to listen. --- A. Berenschot, amazon.com

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