

Krzysztof Meyer - String Trio String Quartets Nos. 11 & 12 (2007)

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1. *String Trio Op. 81, I* 2. *String Trio Op. 81, II* 3. *String Trio Op. 81, III* 4. *String Trio Op. 81, IV* 5. *String Quartet No. 11 Op. 95* 6. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Lento* 7. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Con Ira* 8. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Vivo* 9. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Dolente* 10. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Furioso* 11. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Largo* 12. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Adagio* 13. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Prestissimo* 14. *String Quartet No. 12 Op. 103, Appassionato* Kwartet Wilanów: Tadeusz Gadzina, Ist violin Paweł Łosakiewicz, IInd violin Ryszard Duż, viola Marian Wasiółka, cello

The Eleventh and Twelfth Quartets are Meyer's latest works in the genre. The Eleventh is a relatively brief piece in a single movement, whereas the Twelfth is a massive work in nine movements.

Meyer is a published authority on Shostakovich and completed his unfinished opera *The Gambler*, subsequently premiered in 1984. Not unexpectedly, and by Meyer's own free admission, Shostakovich looms large in these Quartets - no bad thing. The first Naxos volume noted Meyer's love of Bartók's chamber music, and the influence of his Quartets too is also in evidence. Given then these two eminent precursors, it comes as no surprise to discover that it is Meyer's fellow countryman and teacher Krzysztof Penderecki's later Quartets - '*Der Unterbrochene Gedanke*' and his Third - with perhaps bits of Schnittke's own grittier Third, which are among the closest cognates - compare recent review of Penderecki - though it is worth bearing in mind too that Meyer's Twelfth predates Penderecki's Third by a good three years. Like Penderecki, Meyer dabbled in avant-garde techniques and forms in the early stages of his career, before eventually taking a greater interest in the rich and vast heritage of art music.

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In any case, all the Quartets are intelligent and emotive, with a distinctive eastern European voice. This is expressive of melancholy and hope, restlessness and emptiness, darkness with glimpses of light that goes right to the heart of the turbulent human psyche. The lurching, searching character of the emotionally intense Eleventh Quartet perfectly encapsulates this, and it belongs to the finest single-movement Quartets of its time. --- Byzantion, musicweb-international.com

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